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THE FALKLANDS ROUNDTABLE

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Participants
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General Paul Gorman, Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Admiral Thomas Hayward, Chief of Naval Operations
Jeane Kirkpatrick, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
Harry Shlaudeman, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina
Edward Streator, U.S. Chargé D’Affairs, London
Admiral Harry D. Train, Commander in Chief, Atlantic Command
Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of Defense

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Other
Melissa Higginbotham
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Knott: I want to thank you all for being here. Let me just introduce our audience to our interviewees here, very briefly. This is Michael Kandiah of the Institute of Contemporary British History in London. Harriet Jones, from the same institution. Jim Young, from the Miller Center at the University of Virginia. Chris Collins from the Thatcher Foundation. Michael Parsons from the University of Pau, who is a scholar on the Falklands conflict. Tracey Crehan in the back; Tracey is the one who has been in contact with a lot of you about the details of the conference. She really pulled all this together. And Melissa Higginbotham, who is Lieutenant Colonel in the Joint Staff. At some point during the course of the day, we’re going to open this up to the audience to ask some questions.

I think the best place to begin is if I could ask you all to go around the table and just identify yourself and briefly give a description of the role that you played during the Falklands crisis of 1982. I think the best place to start would be with Caspar Weinberger.

Weinberger: I’m Caspar Weinberger and I was Secretary of Defense during the period involved.

Knott: And Harry Train.

Train: I’m Harry Train and I was Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Atlantic Command during the Falklands conflict.

Streator: Edward Streator, I was DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] at the embassy in London.

Shlaudeman: I’m Harry Shlaudeman; I was ambassador in Buenos Aires when this painful business took place.

Knott: And we have Duane.

Adamson: My name is Duane Adamson; I’m a graduate student at the Miller Center at the University of Virginia.
Schoen: My name is Kelly Schoen; I’m also a grad student and note taker.

Kirkpatrick: I’m Jeane Kirkpatrick and I was the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations at the time that these events took place.

Hayward: I’m Tom Hayward; I was Chief of Naval Operations at the time and was visiting with Harry the evening they decided to land.

Gorman: Paul Gorman, I was Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs at the time.

Knott: I think perhaps the best place to start would be to ask a question of Caspar Weinberger. Oh, Mr. Gompert, thank you for coming. Glad you’re here.

Gompert: Thank you for having me.

Weinberger: I guess the way to start would be the fact that I believed at the beginning—and did not change my views later on—that this was an attempt by a corrupt military dictatorship to interfere with the rights that had been exercised by one of our oldest and closest allies, and among other things, a fellow member of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] to whom we had treaty obligations under the NATO Atlantic Treaty Agreement.

For that reason, I’m quite sure my views were colored and prejudiced, biased as they are so often in so many matters of gravity, and so it seemed to me to be a fairly simple matter. Mediation is one of the things that everybody turns to, to begin. War is of course the last resort. The questions with mediation have been in many incidents since: will the various promises made be kept? Will there be any way of ensuring that they be kept? Was it simply a method of delay and postponing what would ultimately be agreed to? Would it be possible to maintain the basic idea that we should not abandon an ally such as Great Britain in the interest of mediation? And if their view was that they were going to resist this and try to make sure that the Falklands were not taken from them by invasion, that we should support them.

So I was a little ambivalent about what mediation might lead to, but I suppose it’s fair to say that everybody was agreed that initially some efforts could be made. But I was very skeptical about the results, and also very worried that in the course of mediation we might forget some of our basic obligations to Great Britain and to the fact that she was a NATO ally. The NATO treaty required that an invasion or an attack on one was an attack on all and should be similarly treated. As well as Great Britain being, aside from a NATO treaty member, one of our oldest and closest friends, whom we had worked with and who had supported us, and we had supported, in every general dispute or activity from the beginning.
So that was my feeling at the beginning. I must say that the various proposals that came out of the mediation attempts all involved some willingness, or required some willingness, on the part of Great Britain to give up claims of sovereignty which they had made for at least 150 or 200 years and would not necessarily lead to any result other than Argentine succeeding through mediation what they were attempting to do by force.

**Knott:** David Gompert, could you perhaps give us some of the perspective from the Secretary of State’s office and his attempts to mediate this conflict?

**Gompert:** I actually knew nothing about the prelude to this conflict. Was sort of thrown into it, literally, a couple of days before the Secretary launched. So there’s a good deal of the first several innings that I missed. But as of the time I got on the scene, I think the Secretary was convinced that mediation made sense in two respects, even though the odds were very long.

First, there might be a possibility—this is before the first conversation with Margaret Thatcher, mind you—there might be a possibility of finding a way to get the Argentines to leave the island and to open up a process leading to a permanent settlement. There was a possibility of that because, again, at the outset we didn’t see that the stakes were all that high except in terms of politics and principles. But the stakes themselves were rather modest. So we thought there might be a chance. Also—and the Secretary was clear about this, and I certainly was clear in my mind as was my boss, Larry Eagleburger—that while we did have the option of outright support, including material support and any support requested from the British, and ultimately I think all of us knew that we would go there if we had to, that it would be better to end up there having made an attempt to mediate and negotiate a conclusion without further violence, prior to swinging totally behind the British.

I don’t think this was because the Secretary or anyone close to the Secretary of State disagreed with the basic principles as Secretary Weinberger just suggested, but at least as a tactical matter it was felt that we would be in a stronger position, especially with Latin American countries, if we had shown that we went the extra mile to avert an Argentinean defeat.

The last point I would make is that as it became increasingly clear that the British meant to send in a force and meant to use force, deadly force, to recover the islands, we never had any doubt about the outcome based on the standing of the respective military capabilities, including the erosion of whatever capabilities the Argentines might have had under the junta. So the only question for us, until we had our first meeting with Margaret Thatcher, was whether the British really were going to go all the way there and follow through and use deadly force. That doubt was dispelled within moments of the first meeting with Margaret Thatcher.

**Knott:** Jeane Kirkpatrick, could you give us some sense of your perspective from the United Nations?

**Kirkpatrick:** Well, in the beginning I would have to say that my perspective was not from the United Nations. It was from, in fact, my personal relationships with some Argentine officials. Also, more than that, with some study I had done of Argentina. I had written my doctoral dissertation on phases of the Peronist movement. It was published, by the way, by the MIT Press.
under the name *Leader and Vanguard in Mass Society*. That’s a strange title, but then academics do some strange things. My principal advisor had recommended that title to me, and it seemed not objectionable to me, so naturally I accepted it.

I had a long-standing interest in Argentina as one of those Latin American countries that reflected a Mediterranean style of politics transferred to the new world. That interest had caused me to follow a number of Latin American governments and politics, political traditions. It’s how I became interested in Central America, for example. It’s how I became interested in Venezuela and Chile and Argentina, because they all represented—as I was seeing the world in those days—a kind of a transfer of a Mediterranean-style politics to the Western world.

Not many Americans write books on Argentina. I found that as I was interested in Argentina, there were Argentines who were interested in the fact that I was interested in Argentina too, which made it easier to get acquainted with some of them. I had made a trip to Argentina at the President’s request. I made a trip to Latin America visiting three democratic Latin American regimes and three dictatorships. The dictatorships were all Southern Cone at that time, they were Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The democracies were Venezuela and Ecuador. . . . Who else, Harry?

**Shlaudeman:** Colombia—?

**Kirkpatrick:** It wasn’t Colombia. I’ve never been to Colombia, actually. But there was another democracy, anyway. Peru. That was when [Fernando] Belaunde was President.

**Shlaudeman:** That’s right.

**Kirkpatrick:** I found him an enormously interesting man. Anyway, I met a number of Argentines in the course of that trip and one of the Argentines I met was the Argentine ambassador to the United States. I met several people at the Argentine embassy and we became acquainted, though not very well acquainted. One of the more startling invitations I’ve ever had in my life was a request from the Argentine embassy, the Argentine ambassador, to host a dinner in my honor, which turned out to be the night of the Argentine attack on the Falklands.

So far as I was concerned, at the time that he made the proposal and I accepted, this day had no particular significance. I had no notion that there was any special significance. But by that day I learned, of course, and I didn’t know quite what to do about it. One thing I did was call the Secretary of State and I told him two things that I recall, one was about this dinner, that I knew a good many people who were involved in the policy level in Latin American politics, especially the Argentine politics, were invited. Not just Argentine, most of the U. S. officials working on Latin American policy were present, were invited to this dinner. Second, I left a message because I didn’t talk to Secretary Haig himself, but I left a message to remind him that I had written a book on Argentina and that I had rather more than passing knowledge about the politics of Argentina. If I could be of any help, I wanted to let him know that I was available.

I examined my mind and memory in some detail afterward to see if there was anything that the then-ambassador of Argentina had said to me in relationship to having a dinner in my honor or
anything else. Whether there should have been any hint that there was any special significance in this date. I couldn’t find anything in my memory. There was a lot I didn’t know about the diplomatic world then, let me tell you. I’m an academic, not a diplomat. One of the things I had learned about the diplomatic world was that a principal activity of diplomats at the United Nations is giving and receiving dinners in each other’s honor. I spent a significant portion of my evenings giving and receiving dinners in some other ambassador’s honor. So it didn’t strike me as as unusual as it would have had I been living a more normal life, is what I would say. So I didn’t really ponder over why he was doing it. He was saying he wanted to get better acquainted.

I was quite unhappy and upset when I heard about the landing of Argentine forces on the Falklands. I was at a dinner at the Georgetown Club. I wasn’t in New York at all that night, I was in Washington with several people, including the new Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. This was a dinner in her honor and my honor that just some friends were having. I had a call from the White House while I was at this dinner and they told me what had happened. I thought it was a ploy. I mean, I was absolutely stunned. I later had a conversation with Peter Carrington, who I guess was then Foreign Minister.

**Shlaudeman:** Briefly.

**Kirkpatrick:** Briefly, right. The conversation I had with him was simply me saying to him—or I’ve forgotten which of us said it first—that we had been wholly stunned by this development. I remember I said it to Peter Carrington; I said I hoped he knew more than I did about what was about to happen before it happened, because I said I’d known absolutely nothing at all. He said it made him feel just a little better that I had known nothing, because he had known nothing about what was in the works.

I felt—when I became aware of this—I had to respond to a toast that night. I remember saying something to the effect that I had found Argentina an interesting country for a long time, and an attractive country, and I found the Argentines interesting people. I told them about why I’m interested in Mediterranean politics on a new frontier. And I said I had concluded after my first visit to Argentina, after having read quite a lot about it, that the Argentines were a people who were good at almost everything except governing themselves. I don’t know whether anything quite like that had ever been proposed in a toast before that night.

But in studying Argentina, (the period I was studying was that of the Peronist return.) There had been, I recall, 41 radical parties present in one national election. Well, obviously a country where you’ve got 41 candidates from 41 national parties participating in the same election has got some problems with governing itself. I was angry at them when I learned what they had done. I felt badly used by them. I thought that was a poor way to treat anybody.

**Knott:** Did you say this to anyone that night?

**Kirkpatrick:** I don’t think I said it to anyone that night. I said it to some people later. I’m not sure I didn’t say it that night, frankly. I was very shocked by their behavior. Listen, I believe that the Argentines responsible for that Falklands war were a little crazy, more than a little crazy. I had some very interesting conversations with them through time, actually. Every conversation I
had confirmed my sense that they really didn’t know what they were doing in the most specific kind of way. They had no notion of what the world that they were getting into was like. I tried several times to persuade them that they were making a terrible mistake.

You might wonder why I was a U.S. ambassador to the UN engaging in such conversations. Because I was asked to. And why was I asked to? Because there were still a number of Argentines who were pleased at the fact that I was ready to talk to them and that I knew anything about them. My government, quite frankly, encouraged me to participate, to be responsive to conversations with high-ranking Argentines who approached me. And, of course, to report my conversations to the appropriate level at the White House, which was what I did.

**Knott:** Who was encouraging you to do this?

**Kirkpatrick:** Who was urging me to do this? Nobody urged me to do it. What happened was that I was—because when I was approached by high-level Argentines, for example, General [Basilio] Lami Dozo, former—I was trying to remember.

**Shlaudeman:** He was the Air Force Chief of Staff.

**Kirkpatrick:** Right, right, right. Oh, I know who he was, believe me. I haven’t been able to call up the name of the Naval Chief of Staff.

**Shlaudeman and Streator:** Jorge Anaya.

**Kirkpatrick:** Anaya, of course. I don’t think I ever had a conversation with Anaya, but I had several conversations with General Lami Dozo. And I had any number of conversations with the Foreign Minister, Nicanor Costa Mendez, who was probably the biggest Anglophile in Buenos Aires. Also with Enrique Ros, who was Director General of the Foreign Office, when they came to New York. And in these conversations, basically I listened. When things began to get very bad, I talked.

Sometime you should talk to, he’s a Latin, he’s Cuban-American and he was with me at the United Nations. He was a political ambassador, as I was. He was a Georgetown professor, as I was. I have a lot of confidence in him, in his discretion and judgment. I was happy to have him in New York. Of course, his Spanish is indigenous.

**Knott:** I’m sorry, who is this?

**Kirkpatrick:** This is Professor José Sorzano. He is not a professor today. Today he works for the U.S. government someplace; I am not entirely sure where. His name, by the way, is Dr. José Sorzano. He was then a Georgetown professor, appointed as a U.S. political ambassador. I usually brought José along on everything I did with Latin America because his Spanish was so perfect. I understand Spanish reasonably well, speak it a little, but José’s was perfect and so I usually brought him along.
I was talking to him today, by chance, as a matter of fact. I had an appointment with him before I came here. I told him I was coming here. We were recalling the most dramatic conversation of all that we had, when we made our last effort to try to persuade Nicanor Costa Mendez and Enrique Ros they were just about to make a dreadful, dreadful mistake. This conversation went on till three in the morning. It was at my residence at the Waldorf Towers. It was a sad story. That was the conversation at which Nicanor Costa Mendez and Enrique Ros and Ambassador [Eduardo] Roca, who was the Argentine ambassador to the United Nations, were present. I guess [indecipherable] was present at that conversation as well.

This conversation was reported by me to the White House. That’s what I would say, simply. The British permanent representative, Sir Anthony Parsons, who was a very good man and a good friend and I considered a personal friend—anytime I heard anything from high-level Argentines that I thought was interesting enough to report to the White House, I also shared with Tony Parsons, because he and I were that close, I felt, anyway. That day he had shared with me Mrs. Thatcher’s final proposal for a negotiated settlement. He shared it with me because he knew that I was going to be seeing Ros and Costa Mendez. He thought it was a very generous proposal from Mrs. Thatcher and he also thought it was the last chance that Argentines might have for a negotiated settlement. I must say, when I heard it, I thought so too. I thought it was a very generous proposal and I thought that they were very lucky to be offered such a proposal at such a late stage, particularly when they were clearly in water over their heads and about to go down for the third time, I believed.

In any case, that was the subject of our conversation that night. That and my own efforts, just personal efforts, to persuade them that they were incompetent to make the decisions that they were trying to make for Argentina. I kept trying to remind them that Argentina had never even fought in a major war and that Britain was a major military power. They obviously didn’t understand it. In order to understand why this was a point I kept trying to make to them, you have to understand how utterly unaware they were of it. How very distorted their view was of the relative strength of Argentina and the UK. It was nearly incredible.

In case that night until about 3 o’clock in the morning. We changed nothing. Every conversation I had, I reported to the White House. Sometimes, usually also to Tony Parsons if I thought there was anything interesting to them that they might not have gotten from that perspective. That was the most interesting part, and I think probably the most significant part, of my relationship with the whole issue. You know, I never was part of the decision portion of the war.

Knott: Secretary Weinberger, were you aware of all of the efforts that were going on at the UN? The press image at the time was that there was some disarray perhaps, certainly disagreements between yourself and Secretary Haig and perhaps with Ambassador Kirkpatrick.

Weinberger: I knew that there was disagreement between us, of course. I don’t know to what extent it influenced any of the general discussions. I know that the British were quite horrified at one statement that Al had made to the effect that both countries were very good friends and something to the effect we would treat them equally, or we didn’t want to offend either one, or some remark like that. There were all kinds of calls the next day from Ambassador [Nicholas]
Henderson and from Peter Carrington and later Mrs. Thatcher, to the effect that this surely didn’t really represent the American viewpoint. In my conversations with them, I said I didn’t believe it did.

But there was an understanding that Al was, I think, sincerely trying to get some kind of mediated solution. Flying back and forth between London and Argentina was the way that he tried to go. I think he had a very difficult time of it and I think they undercut most of his attempts to do that. There was disagreement within us and I think that was known.

**Burk:** If I could ask Mr. Weinberger, you’re well known in Britain, of course, for manifesting great—not loyalty precisely—but willingness to help. Obviously in supplies and so forth.

**Weinberger:** That’s fair.

**Burk:** The chronology is slightly woozy in my mind. Now two things, or three things, connected. You must have begun your funneling of supplies to Britain whilst the mediation efforts were going on, but one gets the impression—and I may be wrong, and I’d like you to clarify this—that you did this even before President Reagan said we should help as much as possible. Now if that’s the case, was it because either you knew he’d say go ahead anyhow, or were you fearful that some of Reagan’s aides would possibly have tried to block what you wanted to do?

**Weinberger:** I never had any doubts as to where the President stood. I had one or two general conversations with him about it and he was very sympathetic to Great Britain at that time. He’d made films over there; he’d visited many times. He had great admiration for Mrs. Thatcher, so I never had any doubt as to where he actually stood. I understood that he had to be publicly viewed as supporting an attempt to get some kind of a non war-like solution, but I didn’t have any doubt as to where he would ultimately stand.

It is correct that I responded to British requests for military assistance, very specific sort of items, as quickly as we could. This was done from the beginning when it became quite apparent that the Argentinean arms were on the move and that there was going to be an invasion and that the matter was not going to be able to be settled if you took the statements of the Argentine leaders at face value.

**Burk:** I understand that some of the aides around the President thought this was not precisely Gilbert and Sullivan, but something with which the U.S. ought not to get involved. I was wondering whether you thought it was best not actually to force President Reagan to take a stand.

**Weinberger:** No, I did not think so. I thought he should take a stand and I was confident of what stand he would take. But I knew that he had to be publicly perceived as trying to get the mediation attempt to succeed and that he would therefore be publicly supportive of the attempts to reach an agreement. The first meeting we had, there was always the statement at the end that if mediation fails, of course we would stay with Great Britain. That was the statement I would have
made and Al Haig, as I remember, basically concurred with that. He at that time was about to embark upon his mediation efforts.

Kirkpatrick: May I just add one thing to that. That is, it was my privilege during this period when I was in the Reagan administration to sit, along with Secretary Weinberger, in a very small, the inner group of the National Security Council, which was called the NSPG, National Security Planning Group, which is where the most closely guarded conversations took place. I would like to say that I confirm precisely Secretary Weinberger’s impression, or his report of what the President was saying and making clear at the time. There wasn’t any question about where President Reagan stood on this issue, from the start until the finish.

Weinberger: Thank you, Ambassador. There were others, Ambassador [Thomas] Enders, two or three others who were almost always raising the point of what it would do to our other alliances or to our attempts to maintain our good relationships all through Latin America. I kept making the point that I didn’t think there was any support in Latin America for a corrupt military dictatorship. General Gorman remembers how many times I probably said that.

Gorman: Yes, sir.

Weinberger: In any event, the request for military assistance came directly to me, I guess through the British embassy or directly from the Defense Minister [John] Nott. We honored those.

Knott: William Clark was the National Security Advisor at this time, I believe. Could you give us any sense of the role that he played in this crisis? A lot of the written accounts, he’s just not there.

Kirkpatrick: Well, I certainly have an impression of the role he played.

Knott: Please.

Kirkpatrick: I think that his overriding concern was to keep the President as thoroughly informed as it was literally possible to do. To ensure the continuing free flow and full flow of information to the President.

Weinberger: I agree with that completely. If all the security advisors had been as careful as Bill Clark to make sure that all the arguments that were made were presented to the President and presented in timely fashion for the President to make the ultimate decision, it would have been very much better. He did that better than anyone as a security advisor that I’ve known or worked with. I agree with Jeane completely on that.

Knott: Harry Shlaudeman, could you give us some sense of the mood in Argentina in the weeks leading up to the invasion? Also, the message that you were attempting to convey from Washington to the leadership in Buenos Aires.
Shlaudeman: Let me say at the outset that this was the most painful period of my 37-year career. I have spent a good deal of time since then beating up on myself for not having foreseen this crazy endeavor. In preparing for this session, however, I found in my own file a copy of the Franks Report. I must say, it really made me feel a lot better that that distinguished commission came to the conclusion that the decision was made only at the last minute to invade the Falklands-Malvinas.

Weinberger: Which report was this, Ambassador?

Shlaudeman: This is the Franks Report. He’s got a copy of it.

Weinberger: Oh I see, okay. I’m sorry.

Shlaudeman: The mood in Argentina, as I’m sure you all know, on the 31st there was a massive demonstration. There were signs, “¡Evita vive!” Evita lives. If I had been an Argentine general, I would have felt the rope coming right around my neck. The Peronists were obviously out in force. I must say that there were some indications that the Falklands-Malvinas problem had become a preoccupation. There was a newspaper columnist, [Jesús] Iglesias Rouco, who was apparently acting as a voice of the Navy. He had published some really crazy things. As you may remember, one of the schemes the military government had was the so-called South Atlantic Treaty, sort of like the North Atlantic Treaty. They really, as Jeane says, were living in another world, on another planet. They thought this was important, that it would be important to us.

Iglesias Rouco was printing this stuff. I frankly didn’t pay much attention to it. Beyond that, I can’t say. The mood was bad anyway you looked at it. They had shoved [General Roberto] Viola out and put in this [General Leopoldo] Galtieri, essentially because the economy had soured so. I mean, that was why it was possible for them to do it. They had a new team in there and a new Finance or Economy Minister, Roberto Alemán, who was in the process of applying the traditional sort of measures you apply to an economy that’s suffering from very high inflation. But you know, that’s a long process. Things were not very good at all. The military themselves—this little piece that I distributed—the military themselves were fixated on this question of what Viola called Nuremberg, which is what would happen to them when the civilians came back and they had to answer for the “dirty war.”

This was all very much, this was an enormous preoccupation. Their hope of course was to turn Galtieri into a second Perón, which was really what they had in mind. Crazy, crazy.

Knott: Thank you. David Gompert, you wanted to say something.

Gompert: I just wanted to comment on the Argentine diplomats, including, and maybe above all, Costa Mendez. What we discovered in the negotiations in Buenos Aires was they had played and were playing an ambiguous role. We got this from the military, we got this not from Galtieri but the Navy and Army chiefs of staff. They claimed—and Harry would know whether there’s anything to this claim—they didn’t claim that the invasion was the idea of the diplomats, not at all. But they claimed that they had asked Costa Mendez how the Brits would react, because
Costa Mendez was very much in the picture. Costa Mendez, according to the junta members, said, “There’s nothing to worry about.” Now that’s the simple version.

**Kirkpatrick:** Pardon me, I didn’t hear that.

**Gompert:** Costa Mendez, according to the military, said, “There’s nothing to worry about.”

**Weinberger:** They had apparently forgotten to talk to Mrs. Thatcher.

**Gompert:** Right. In other words, fait accompli. But the other thing we picked up, not about the diplomats, not via the military, but directly from the diplomats—because they were involved in almost all of the negotiations, Costa Mendez was in almost every meeting—was that they really, really, despised the British. I mean, the diplomats even more than the military. Because the military, as has already been characterized, I mean, these people were sort of out to lunch. But the people who knew the British and had negotiated with the British and felt that they’d been stiffed by the British again, and again, and again, rightly or wrongly, were the diplomats. There was a sort of a sting to their attitude about the British that didn’t even show up in conversations with the military because they were so far removed from reality.

So I think that I’m just not ready to accept the argument that the Argentine diplomats—you didn’t make the argument—but that they were caught by surprise. That if anybody had asked them, they would have straightened the military out, or that they were entirely attempting to be a constructive force in the negotiations. We didn’t find them to be any of those. So you had this bad combination. To explain it, it almost took this bad combination of very worldly and well informed diplomats who made a terrible misjudgment and also really didn’t like the British, and a poorly informed, poorly led military junta that was having difficulty taking reality into account. I think that’s a pretty dangerous combination.

**Knott:** Tom Hayward and then Harry Shlaudeman.

**Hayward:** Some of the perspective of what they were thinking, maybe I can add from the U.S. Navy’s point of view.

**Knott:** Please.

**Hayward:** At that time I was on a well-planned visit to a number of Latin American countries, which service chiefs do as they visit various allies and friends around the world. In the planning for that, I had the staff trying to schedule it all and make it all fit. The timing to go by Buenos Aires was a real problem. It got to the point where I said, “Just cut them out. We’re not going to go,” because we couldn’t arrange it to meet their schedule.

At that point in time they changed their mind and said, “Come on, we’ll meet the schedule you have.” Whether that was significant or not, I don’t know. But I suspect some people in there knew there was some plan. So I flew from Chile on over to Buenos Aires, having been briefed of the activity that had been going on in the Georgias, the islands well out to sea from the Falklands.
Shlaudeman: South Georgias.

Hayward: Oh, South Georgias. So I knew that operation was taking place. My general guidance was, we’ve established better relationships, we want better relationships with the Argentines and the military-to-military generally tends to be a pretty good way to initiate certain formats and the like. So I was prepared to bring this relationship along. On landing, it was a classic. The band’s out there with all the honor guards and the rest of that. We then went to stay at the ambassador’s place, and the first day of my arrival, that evening, there was a big military reception at some hall. Probably several hundred of the Argentine military, mostly naval, we’re all in our whites, toasting each other and how great things would be.

I had met earlier for about an hour or so with Admiral Anaya in his office, talking about the kinds of things we could look forward to in the way of progress between us and exercises, and helping out with modernization. The subject of the Falklands really never came up.

I went over from there to visit with General Galtieri. On leaving that meeting, which lasted maybe 25 or 30 minutes, your naval attaché, whose name I don’t remember—

Shlaudeman: I don’t remember, either.

Hayward: —who accompanied me at the time, as we were driving back in the car, said, “You know, something’s going on. I’ve never seen the general so nervous. His foot was bouncing all the time.” He made the comment, “Something is going on.” Well, that night, while we’re toasting, they were landing. My reflection on all that was that not 10 percent of the top military Navy guys who were there knew that. I really think it was just a very, very few who were aware that these invasion orders had been given and were being executed.

The next morning, the ambassador woke me up about four or five o’clock, I guess, when he had found out about it. We decided I should leave the country, which I did. But prior to that I had responded to an invitation from Admiral Anaya to come over and get an explanation from him. During the time that I was with him, which was very brief, because I’d just told him I was landing—he literally couldn’t believe that that would be my reaction. Never in the world would he have imagined that we would react offensively to this taking advantage of—if they were, I don’t know if they were necessarily timing anything around me—but I let him know I was offended by that.

During the time I was in his office, I saw a great deal of commotion outside. Helicopters coming and going, coming and going. Everybody is all dressed up in their whites. So I inquired as to what’s taking place out there. He said, “Those people are all being flown down to the Naval Academy. It’s graduation today.” So the most important thing of the day as far as headquarters was concerned was—

Kirkpatrick: The graduation.

Hayward: —the graduation ceremony down at the Naval Academy.
Knott: Harry Shlaudeman?

Shlaudeman: I just wanted to comment about Costa Mendez. It is true that people like Enrique Ros were terribly frustrated by the British, but there was more to it with Costa Mendez. He belonged to a clique, a group of prominent people in Buenos Aires, intensely nationalistic, intensely anti-Peronist. This was a very identifiable group of people and he was a prominent member of that group.

During this crisis, at some point in April, [Juán] Gabriel Valdés, who had been [Eduardo] Frei’s Foreign Minister in Chile, called me from the Ezeiza airport. He said he just wanted to give me his sympathy. He said, “You know, we understand what you’re going through. We had Costa Mendez in Chile, too.” He was the ambassador.

Just to finish. On Admiral Hayward’s visit, he gave me a book, which I still have at home with an inscription in it, saying that history will tell if this day is the beginning of the second battle of the Falklands. I’ve kept with great pleasure.

Knott: Harry Train.

Train: I had occasion to visit Buenos Aires about six months before the Falkland Islands conflict. The ambassador was out of the country at that time but I had a number of occasions to talk to Jorge Anaya. During the course of those conversations, he said very clearly and unequivocally that it had been his life’s ambition to recover the Malvinas for Argentina. I didn’t give it that much thought; I never even reported the conversation. It’s the type of thing you hear from military leaders: their life’s ambition to do this or do that. That had been his life’s ambition.

As those of you that know him know, he is short, pretty good looking, dark. He is of Indian heritage, married to a very striking, tall blonde, as many short people are prone to do. [laughter] He clearly said this was his life’s ambition. After the Falkland Island conflict, in December 1984, I was given permission to visit Jorge Anaya in the Mechanics School, the prison. He agreed to see me at that time. I asked him many questions—I was writing a case study of the Falkland Islands for National Defense University.

In the course of these post-war conversations with him, I asked him why in the world he thought he could attack British territory and get away with it. He said, “Let me take you back to 19—” When was the Dennis Healy white paper, 1964?

Burk: Sixty-four.

Train: Sixty-four. Dennis Healy’s white paper that said the British had no strategic interest east of Suez and they would withdraw east of Suez. So that was the first step.

Streator: Fifty-six.

Train: Fifty-six?
Knott: Sixty-six?

Train: It was in the ’64 to ’67 time frame, I knew that.

Then he said that the next thing that happened, they withdrew from the Mediterranean. Malta, gone. Masira. Then they declared that they were going to decommission all their aircraft carriers. Then in November of 1981, the Secretary of State for Defense Nott declared that he was going to decommission 24 percent of all the service combatants in the Royal Navy. He said, “What am I supposed to believe with that history? What I believed was that we were dealing with a country that had neither the national will nor the capability—were that will to be resurrected—to defend their interests 8,000 miles from home.”

Then I said, “Why did you do it at this particular time?” He said, “We heard on BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] that the British had said, after the South Georgian Island incident, they had sailed two SS-N (nuclear powered attack submarines) from Gibraltar.” That was a false story, but it was a story on the BBC. He said, “When I heard that, I realized that if we were going to make a landing in Port Stanley, it could only be by surface ship. If those submarines had arrived before we did it, then the opportunity is lost. So I went ahead—wrong time of year, with all the commanding officers having just been in their positions since January—to go ahead and invade Port Stanley.”

One other piece of this story, to pick up this South Georgia thing. We picked up on our intelligence, and the British picked it up also, that when the scrap dealer [Constantino] Sergei Davidoff was making plans to go to South Georgia Island to dismantle the old whaling factories, that the Argentines were going to put commandos in that party. The party numbered about 40 people, I don’t know the exact number, about 40 people. The Argentines called it Operation Alpha. The British picked up on it, we picked up on it. Tom Hayward probably saw it but didn’t recognize it as anything significant.

I did not think it was significant until I went to the NATO nuclear planning group meeting in Colorado Springs. I was there with [Admiral Sir] John Fieldhouse and we were walking around the lake after we had breakfast and before the meeting started. This young Navy lieutenant ran up with his hair on fire and handed him a message. Fieldhouse read the message and he handed it to me and said, “Look at this.” One sentence. He said, “The Argentines have landed.” It was from the British Antarctic Survey Team in the South Georgia Islands.

On the basis of that one sentence he directed that lieutenant to tell his headquarters to have the HMS Endurance with the Royal Marines on board proceed to South Georgia Island to take custody of the Davidoff party, not realizing that Operation Alpha had been canceled. I didn’t know it had been canceled, he didn’t know it had been canceled, but it had been. That was the step that really led to the next series of steps, any one of which, had it been interrupted, the war wouldn’t have occurred.

Knott: I see. Go ahead.
Weinberger: I think it’s a very interesting point the Admiral made, because it emphasized and supported the idea that Mrs. Thatcher had discussed once with me, that all the military people in Great Britain, all of her professional military leaders told her that the attempt could not succeed. They did not have adequate means of supplying or launching a convoy that far—it was 7,000 miles when the only thing in between was the Asunción Islands. That there’s no way that could be done. What they all overlooked was the fact that one person could make quite a difference, because while that had been the standard approach I think of previous governments, many of the officials, many of the professionals, who had every reason to make such a statement, that recommendation to her, all of that was completely changed by one person, who changed the whole basic approach of the British government.

What she said to me was what she said to them, that the possibility of defeat simply does not exist. Because of that she went ahead, on her own, against the professional advice, and managed to put together a force sufficient to do the job. But an invasion of a defended island 7,000 miles from home with a depleted force—and you’re right about John Nott’s decision just a short time before. To meet budgetary requirements, he was going to cut way back on the Royal Navy. So it means that you have to take into consideration more than a number of statements. You have to look at the composition of the government. If the government has changed, as it did about as drastically when she came in as it could, that the previous experience and the previous guesses were almost sure to be wrong.

Knott: Edward Streator, could you give us some sense of the mood in London and of your own work at that time, in the early days of the crisis?

Streator: Yes, I would like to make one comment. Something that was said earlier, about the British capability to win. It was far from clear and I don’t know anyone in a significant position of authority in the UK who was convinced that they were going to win. Had it not been for the American effort to support them, I think they would have lost.

Hayward: Yes.

Streator: And as a matter of fact, even at the end of the day, the battle was won by a group of Marines humping the material overland under the most arduous conditions, which served to prove a number of things, but particularly how useful NATO-inspired cold weather training can be in difficult circumstances.

With that having been said, my involvement was probably greater than it should have been for a number two at the embassy. But my ambassador, John Louis, was in Florida at the time the wind started blowing. Certainly, the South Georgia episode had given the British considerable reasons for concern, so I think it’s fair to say that there were tremors which they probably should have followed up on. As I learned subsequently, there were no satellite photographs to support concerns, nor was there any other intelligence which was—

Weinberger: We had to turn the satellites to get it.
Streator: That’s right. So as things began to get very troubled, Peter Carrington, who had just returned from a very long trip and was exhausted, called me into the Foreign Office. He was irascible, to say the least. He’s one of my best friends and I’d never seen him quite so agitated with the United States and me. I told him I was not personally responsible for the attitude of the United States. Nonetheless, he made it perfectly clear to me, in the strongest possible terms, he’d like Washington told that they were deeply concerned and that they’d like the embassy to put some pressure on where it might matter. He even planned, as I recall, to leave for Israel the next day, which of course he didn’t do.

His return to London was just a brief one from a long trip. I think we met at the Foreign Office at about 10 or 11 at night.

Well, the events transpired as they did and I’d like to skip a little bit to the point where Secretary Haig arrived at the airport, where I met him. We got into an antiquated Cadillac, a bulletproof Cadillac and some idiot driving it set off the alarm, which we couldn’t turn off because nobody could find it. Which made the circumstances of our conversation in the car on the way into town somewhat difficult, especially since the British have a deep, deep aversion to sirens on vehicles. This didn’t seem to deter the motorcycle escort, which plowed us through the traffic.

In any case, the first thing I said to Secretary Haig was, “I think you have taken your career into your own hands by coming here on this mission. I think that the political downside for you personally could be very great indeed.” And he said, “Yes, I realize that.” Then I said to him, “Before I talk to you about the attitudes here, may I ask you a question. Are we going to support the British?” So we had no inkling, certainly, at the embassy in London, that the attitude was generally favorable to the British at that point. Indeed, the British had the distinct impression that there was a degree of animus in certain sectors of the administration toward them. They were not at all happy about the notion of a balanced approach to the negotiation.

Haig said to me, “We will support the British.” I said, “Against that background, let me tell you what I think.” The first point I made to him, and very directly, was that, “She’s not going to budge.” And I do recall—and it’s important to note that at this point—I had sent a cable, I don’t think it got very wide distribution in Washington, in which I had said that given the attitudes in London I did not think that anything except the very highest level approach would sway her in the slightest. British blood and treasure were at stake and she was determined. For those of you who know her at all, she’s a ferocious plodder and remains that to this day. I happen to think very highly of her and like her personally a great deal, but she is tough.

I said that to Secretary Haig. We went on from there and that evening, I think it was that evening, we had dinner at Number Ten. Her firmness of character was certainly evident in that discussion. She was the kind of person, though, who is likely in the midst of a tirade to turn suddenly and look at you and say, “Al, I think your gravy is getting cold. Bring the Secretary some warm gravy.” There’s a motherly instinct in her which comes through frequently.

In any case, I think I’ll stop there at this stage.
Knott: As Secretary Weinberger has to leave in about 20 minutes, I was wondering if there was anyone in the audience who had a question specifically for Caspar Weinberger before he leaves for the day. He will not be coming back.

Weinberger: Everybody is stunned.

Hayward: Are you not back tomorrow?

Weinberger: Unfortunately not, I have to go to a conference.

Knott: Could you please, if you could just step up to the microphone here and just identify yourself? Thank you.

Collins: Good afternoon, my name is Chris Collins and I actually worked for Lady Thatcher and was involved in writing her memoirs and still am on the payroll running her web site.

Shlaudeman: She’s got a web site?

Collins: Thank you for speaking; it’s been fascinating. I wanted to ask a question about the U.S. tilt on the 30th of April, when formally in public the U.S. announced that it was going to support the British at the end of the Haig mediation.

Obviously, a great deal of material had already been sent to Britain through the help of Mr. Secretary Weinberger. I wanted to know actually whether that increased the pace or flow of it. In particular, there was discussion almost immediately after that of a U.S. carrier being made available to Britain.

Weinberger: Yes.

Collins: I want to know perhaps a little bit about the origin of that rather extraordinary but very helpful idea.

Weinberger: You could separate the two. The pace was increased, primarily the speed of delivery. I found that when the first requests came in, that it was taking quite a long time for me to hear anything about it, and on further inquiry it turned out that there were 31 separate in-baskets that had to be cleared before any actions would be taken. So I said I didn’t want that to continue, that when a request came in from the embassy or from the Ministry of Defense, I wanted it to be brought directly to my desk. We would have one in-basket and there would be one question. Can we do this? If not, why not? And if not now, when?

So the speed of the process was markedly increased. Up to that time we had been filling normal requests and carrying out decisions made many months before that had nothing particularly to do with the Falklands situation. But after it became apparent that they were going to mount an invasion, that they were going to need a lot of help, then the speed of the process increased very dramatically.
The carrier question was always sort of interesting. I’ve never been able to trace it all the way back. I think in some discussions with the ambassador and with probably Mrs. Thatcher and two or three others, someone jokingly put to me, “What if we want a carrier?” And I said, “Why of course, no problem.” I think both of us understood that there would be quite a few problems if anything like that ever materialized. No request for a carrier ever came in, but we did give a great deal of help. We gave a great deal of intelligence help. We turned the satellites so that we could find out what was happening down there, because as was just said, we did not know. We did not have the intelligence at that time.

We fulfilled all requests all the way down to, I remember, one in particular, when they wanted some particularly heavy wire fencing, netting, which would be used to create and maintain a runway for small planes, because of the nature of the soil. This would be basically a very heavy, thick fencing material, rolled up. We got that within four or five hours. Things of that kind. Also signaling equipment, radio equipment, communications equipment, all of that was necessary and it was provided. It was provided far more rapidly than a normal request would have been.

**Hayward:** Mr. Secretary, do you remember about when the decision was made to move the satellite?

**Weinberger:** Very early on because we wanted to know for ourselves.

**Hayward:** Before they actually had gotten—

**Weinberger:** They did not ask for that. We wanted to know what was happening and we had to flip them around. We didn’t have as many as I thought we should have had at the time. We were blocked out for a few hours, but we needed to find out what was happening down there. Ordinarily, you did not include the Falklands in the normal trajectory of one of the satellites.

**Gompert:** The significance of that particular announcement I think had more to do with the logic of the negotiations than with the actual pattern of the support. Because as Secretary Weinberger said, we were providing the support and we were getting better and better at it and more requests were coming in. In the meantime, we were telling the junta that a number of bad things would happen if we reached the conclusion that negotiations were fruitless. There would be a war and the United States would support the UK in that war.

So we presented it to the Argentines in a much more sort of binary situation. We never told them, and I don’t think we ever announced, that there was support ongoing, prior to the breakdown of the negotiations.

**Weinberger:** Actually, one step in the other direction. Al put out a statement, which to this day I find extremely enigmatic and I never really fully understood it, but it is listed here in the notes that we have, the time line. “On the 14th, Secretary Haig says the United States has not complied with any British requests—

**Gompert:** Yes.
Weinberger: “—that go beyond the bounds of customary channels of cooperation.”

Gompert: Right, carefully drafted.

Weinberger: I have no idea what that means.

Gompert: Well, it was meant to—

Weinberger: If it means what I think it means, it was quite wrong.

Gompert: Yes, well, it may have been quite wrong in the sense of accuracy.

Weinberger: Yes, quite right. That’s all I had in mind.

Gompert: But whether it was wrong in the sense of negotiating tactics is a different question, because we did want to really drive home to the junta that one reason they could expect the British to win, notwithstanding whatever comfort they might have taken in the reduction of British capabilities, was that they would get support if we concluded the negotiations were going nowhere. So that’s why we presented it much more in stark black-and-white terms, which required a rather tiny drafting of that statement that the procedure—

Weinberger: I’m glad finally to know what it meant.

Jones: I’m Harriet Jones from the Institute of Contemporary British History. There are a couple of points I’d like to hear considered before Mr. Weinberger leaves. First of all, on the question of the significance of the personal relationship and friendship between the President and Mrs. Thatcher. Something that British historians are always ruminating about is the extent to which the special relationship can be influenced by the personal relationship between the Prime Minister and the President. Of course, their friendship is well documented.

The second point I wanted to make has more to do with the position of the Thatcher government at the time. Of course, before 1982 Margaret Thatcher’s hold on the Conservative Party and also on British politics as a whole was by no means secure. At a time when the cold war was particularly sensitive and the opposition in Britain was being led by a Labour party that Michael Foot was controlling and was a controversial and left-wing party, I wondered about the extent to which American decisions to support Britain over the Falklands was influenced also by considerations of the importance of supporting the Thatcher government at that stage in the cold war.

Weinberger: I think that as far as I was concerned, as far as I knew, I knew of the enormous admiration that Mr. Reagan had for Mrs. Thatcher, and the identity of views that they had on a great many subjects. I never really had any doubt that in the final analysis, in the absence of Britain accepting one of the mediation offers, that we would come down pretty solidly where we did.
I think that there were other relationships, besides. For example, I knew Peter Carrington quite well and had worked with him in NATO. I knew Ambassador Henderson very well and John Nott quite well. These were all relationships that enhanced the confidence that we had in dealing with each other. There was trust; there was complete trust. I think Secretary Haig expressed it somewhat colorfully when he said that he felt that the British Foreign Minister was quite duplicitous. It wasn’t precisely the way he phrased it, but that’s what he said. But basically, there was a trust and a friendship, personal friendship as well as professional friendships, all the way along the line. Certainly, the admiration that President Reagan had for Mrs. Thatcher, I would have found it almost inconceivable that in the final analysis, he would not have supported Britain in this situation.

I think it was important. It was not totally and completely decisive, but it was very important.

Burk: Can I just ask how would you rate the personal relationship—perhaps you can’t—comparatively with NATO membership, for example. Or questions of the Labour party’s anti-European—

Weinberger: The relationship preceded NATO, and the relationship had been further sealed in World War II. Also the formation of NATO came about to a considerable extent because of the warmth of the relationship before. I think that the idea of our abandoning, as it would have been seen, a NATO pledge, a NATO requirement, would have been basically inconceivable. A lot of efforts were being made to avoid reaching that point. When that point was reached, there wasn’t any doubt whatever in my mind as to how it would go or how it did go.

Knott: Edward Streator, do you wish to comment on Harriet’s remarks?

Streator: Yes, I think again the British found themselves in a very difficult position publicly. They made it very clear that they were not happy about this notion of equal treatment. It was a little tough being at dinner parties in London for a few weeks. Having heard what I did hear from Secretary Haig, I was comfortable. I tried to make the point to my British respondents that they had to understand that if there was going to be a negotiation, the impression certainly must be created that we were treating the parties to the conflict equally. That didn’t go down too well, I can assure you of that.

They were handicapped too at that time, I must say, in that Mrs. Thatcher did not conceal her disdain for the British Foreign Office, which I’ve always regarded as a Rolls Royce among Ministries of Foreign Affairs. There’s a story about Parsons briefing her one day and she said, “That was the most wonderful briefing, Tony, just wonderful. Why can I not get a briefing like that from the Foreign Office?” He said, “But Prime Minister, I am from the Foreign Office.”

Peter Carrington’s departure—I don’t know how off the record we are at this point, but I think we must be a little careful. His departure left a gap because he had a relationship with her which was unique, in the sense that because he was who he was, and because he’s a very clever man, he could talk to her the way almost nobody except Willie Whitelaw could talk to her. Willie concerned himself with domestic affairs and Peter was very interested in foreign affairs. But
between the two of them, they managed to rein in some of her instincts. I think Francis Pym, who succeeded Peter, did not have the same standing in her eyes, which meant that she was really operating, I had the sense, largely alone with her war Cabinet. She had no confidence, as far as I could see, in the Foreign Office at that point. She was relying very heavily on Frank Cooper, who was number two at the Ministry of Defense, who was Permanent Undersecretary.

It is interesting in this connection, that Frank took me to lunch once a week at the Athenaeum during this whole period. I think he was trying to find out how much I knew about what the Pentagon was doing at that point, which was being carefully held within the embassy by the military and naval attachés. In any case, the sense that I had at the time was that there was doubt generally, both within the British government and abroad, about our equity in approaching this. It wasn’t until the negotiations collapsed that I think they could be reassured on that score. Maybe I’m overstating it, but I had that feeling.

**Gompert:** I think there were two British concerns. There was an initial concern that was based on comments made in particular by an absolutely fabulous diplomat, the late Walt Stoessel.

**Streator:** Um-hum.

**Gompert:** He said, “We’re going to be right down the center on this one.” And that really drove the British right through—all the British, not just the Prime Minister—right through the ceiling. So we started in a hole with the British. It took a lot of talk with Nico Henderson, and then also the dinner and so on, to convince the British that that in fact was not the view of the United States. But I think that rather early on they were satisfied as to where we stood and where we would end up. Okay? I may be naïve in that regard.

But Mrs. Thatcher had a second fear, and that was that the negotiating process itself, particularly if the Foreign Office types and the Americans who were looking for a deal, if that logic of the negotiation took over and started applying pressure on her and on her government to slow down the fleet—that was a big issue, the speed of the fleet—that maybe she would indeed be left alone, having to basically overrule what might appear to have been a productive negotiation. She was very, very alarmed, not so much about the attitude of the United States, but about the very idea of a negotiation. Because she felt she was already at war and there was nothing to negotiate. There was simply the withdrawal of the Argentine forces to be arranged.

**Streator:** The basic problem with the negotiation was that the issue was sovereignty and she wasn’t going to budge on that. She never budged throughout the negotiations, so far as I know. I’m sort of surprised to hear that there was a final offer. I’m sure it didn’t entail any yielding of sovereignty in the final analysis. I don’t think I ever saw that text.

**Kirkpatrick:** Well, as I understood it, it did as a matter of fact.

**Streator:** Did it?

**Kirkpatrick:** It is ambiguous. It depends a little, as all things do, on how you interpret how an offer is likely to be operationalized. Now, I’m a long way from these conversations and these
documents. My memory of this was as transmitted to me by Tony Parsons, simply that her offer suggested that she could accept, that Britain could accept a settlement which involved the withdrawal of the Argentines without their humiliation, let’s put it this way. Which would have entailed, as I recall—I would never write simply from the basis of my memory, as I am now speaking simply from the basis of my memory. I would seek some documentation of my memory.

But my memory, flawed as it may perhaps be, is that she indicated that what might be acceptable was a settlement that involved not changing the flags, but in fact flying three flags over the Falklands. One of which would be that of the UK, one of which would be that of Argentina, and one of which would be that of the UN. One of the things I would want most carefully to check if I were going to be writing this myself, would be the relationship of this to Javier Perez de Cuellar’s negotiations at the same time. Because Javier Perez de Cuellar is a figure that needs to be taken full account of in these considerations. He was of course then the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He was a thoroughly seasoned diplomat. I think some people don’t think that, some of these great foreign officers don’t think that diplomats from Lima would be absolutely first class—

Shlaudeman: Absolutely.

Kirkpatrick: —but you know he was first class, Harry. A man of great intelligence and I believe also of great integrity. He was very upset, personally, by this oncoming war between Argentina and the UK. He first proposed himself undertaking negotiations, as I’m sure some of the people here remember. His offer was, he felt, rebuffed by our Secretary of State. He thought Secretary Haig was not just not enthusiastic, but that he rebuffed it. Javier Perez de Cuellar felt, as he told it to me, as I recall it, that as the UN Secretary-General with some ties to both civilizations, he might have a somewhat higher degree of acceptability to the Argentines than, let’s say, an American as a mediator and a negotiator.

So he persisted in his efforts at negotiation or mediation, in spite of his understanding that Secretary Haig did not welcome them. That was another reason, by the way, that I became involved in the conversations about the negotiations with the White House.

Weinberger: There’s a small footnote here. It doesn’t directly bear on what I said, but a point was made earlier, how many people in Mrs. Thatcher’s government opposed her and her government, the professionals and all that. She was on the other hand buoyed very greatly by polls that were being taken at about the same time, private polling organizations that had very large majorities that favored taking action against—

Streator: I hope I didn’t give the impression that there was any—

Weinberger: No, no. She was buoyed by many things, including faith in her own judgment that that was the right thing to do. But then she was helped by the fact that there were very large percentages of people who were being polled in Britain, who supported the basic idea of launching an attack.
Streator: I actually don’t know of any faction within her own Cabinet that opposed her on this issue.

Weinberger: Not publicly.

Streator: There may have been those who counseled restraint.

Weinberger: All right, but that’s the same thing as opposing her.

Streator: In her book it is.

Gompert: Francis Pym was much more enthusiastic about the negotiation than either the Defense Secretary or the Prime Minister herself.

Kirkpatrick: Who was it?

Gompert: Francis Pym.

Streator: He paid for it, too.

Gompert: He paid for it on the spot, because she absolutely brutalized him, I think is a fair enough verb.

Streator: Yes, I didn’t say earlier, because I worry about recordings, but she was downright rude to him in the dinner buffet. I mean, I’ve never seen anyone dressed down so severely by a senior figure as he was at that dinner. She brushed him aside as though he were a fly on her bread.

Gompert: I can remember her words. She said, “Francis, I don’t think I should have to remind you that the good Lord did not put me on the Earth so that I could place British subjects under the heel of Argentine dictators.” [laughter]

Weinberger: That sounds right.

Knott: Let’s take a short break here. Caspar Weinberger needs to leave, so let’s break for 10 minutes.

Weinberger: Thank you very much.

[BREAK]

Knott: I think I’d like to begin this session by asking David Gompert to give us some sense of what it was like shuttling back and forth between London and Buenos Aires. You were a veteran of [Henry] Kissinger shuttle diplomacy, but I understand that this had a somewhat different feel to it. If you could just share with us your recollections of that time.
Gompert: Well, I’ll start with London. Incidentally, Harry in Buenos Aires and Ed in London, I believe, participated in all of the negotiations, with the exception perhaps of a one-on-one here and there. So they will be able to reflect on this, too. The most memorable of the several stops was the first stop in London, when Mrs. Thatcher made it clear that she had grave doubts about a negotiation. She had to be convinced even to allow one to proceed. The Foreign Office was keen to have a negotiation and the United States, for reasons we’ve already described, had decided that negotiation, making the effort, was important.

So it was a matter of the Foreign Secretary, who did not have high standing with her as Ed Streator has already said, and General Haig, Secretary Haig, who I think did have some considerable standing with her, convincing her to permit a negotiation to proceed. After dinner and brandy and so on, she in effect said—and again, I wouldn’t write this down without checking the record, but I would say it—she basically said, “Well, you can do two things if you’re going to go on to Buenos Aires from here. You’re perfectly free not to proceed with this negotiation, as far as I’m concerned. But if you’re going to, I would say try to do two things in Buenos Aires.” She said in so many words. One was, “Deliver a really strong message to them. Tell them what’s going to happen and tell them how strongly I feel about this.” Secretary Haig said, “You can count on that. If nothing else, they need to hear that.”

The second thing, which was agreed, was that we would attempt to determine under what conditions the Argentines would withdraw from the island. Now that was very difficult for her to even sit still for, because she thought it ought to be unconditional. It was an act of war, and one shouldn’t negotiate with someone who committed an act of war, at least to her. But she did agree that we could at least see what the Argentines would set as the price for withdrawal. In the ensuing back and forth, one or two cycles, what we discovered at first looked kind of promising, but the more we talked to the Argentines, the less promising it appeared.

They said, “We’ll take the troops off the island if the following conditions are met. First of all, the British must stop that fleet.” I thought it was very telling that the Argentines were really concerned about the British fleet and the British force, which told me at the time that they had it about right in terms of the respective capabilities. What they had wrong was whether the British would send the force in the first place. But they were getting more and more terrified, actually, about this British force that was bearing down on them. So every conversation began, “Look, if there’s going to be any discussion with the British, a precondition of an agreement has got to be that the British stop in place.”

So you could tell the pressure was mounting. We told the British—not that they needed to be told—we told them, “Do not slow down that force.” The Argentines then laid out the following sort of deal. It turned out to be much less than met the eye, but they said, “We’d like to fly a flag—if we withdraw, we’d like to leave a flag, we’d like to leave an official in place. We would like there to be a negotiation beginning after our withdrawal that would culminate on a certain date. We’d also like to have the British to agree now to loosen up these constraints on the movement of Argentines to and from.” It was that set of propositions that we were batting around among ourselves and then with the British.
With the British, we basically came up—with her acceptance—with what I call a really, really
tight version of what I’ve just described. That under conditions of complete withdrawal, there
would be an Argentine flag as one of three flags. There would be a liaison, an administrative-
level liaison person. That the British would be willing to consider the existing set of restrictions.
They made no other undertaking. And that there would be a negotiation, and that the negotiation
would end as of the date certain. Period.

We thought that maybe, just maybe, this was going to be enough, depending on how frightened
the junta was. We discovered that the junta was frightened. They were frightened about the
Peronists; they were frightened about the British fleet. We definitely had their attention by then,
but they also divided. In being divided, actually, the hard-liners had a veto. The hard-liners
within the junta had a veto—Harry can correct this if I’m wrong—and the Chief of Staff of the
Navy was one such hard-liner. We found the Air Force general much more flexible. Interestingly
enough, in the war itself, the Air Force played a pretty robust role and in the negotiations the Air
Force was the most creative. The Navy was a big, big disappointment. I had, as a junior officer,
sailed with the Argentine navy, and I was stunned at how badly that had eroded. The Army was
sort of in between.

When we really pressed the Argentines, we said, “Maybe, just maybe, you can get out of this
along these lines.” We basically said, “This is what we think the British can accept.” We were
very careful not to say that the British had accepted it, even though we got the right winks and
nods to know that if we could get the Argentines to accept it, the British would. We also said that
the United States would accept this. I just want to make a comment about Tom Enders. In a way,
on the negotiating team, Tom and I were meant to be adversaries. I was meant to watch out for
the Atlantic interests, and Tom was meant to watch out for Latin American interests. At one
point, Tom said, “Mr. Secretary, even if the British were willing to accept something closer to
the Argentine position, I don’t think we should.” Because the very same principles are involved
that Mrs. Thatcher and others had identified.

So Tom, I think, was a very creative force. He was very concerned about the Latin American
reactions, which I’ll come to in one second as I close, but we finally presented to the Argentines
on visit two or three that this is it, this is it. It also involved not stopping the British force, but it
involved an arrangement in which the British force would continue over a certain period of hours
until the withdrawal began, and then it would spring back to a certain line. But what we
discovered, the real Argentine position was that the flag was OK, but they wanted that liaison
officer in fact to be the Argentine Governor. They wanted these restrictions to be lifted so they
could flood the islands with people and just sort of swamp the British presence there. Most
importantly, they wanted the negotiations to conclude with a handing over of sovereignty. They
wanted it understood that the negotiation would be about handing over sovereignty.

It was at that point that we knew it was fruitless to proceed. I lost track of the chronology, but
must be somewhere close to mid- to end-April by that time.

Burk: April 30th, I think.
Gompert: The one point I wanted to make about the Latin American aspect is that we did get—let me put it this way, I don’t think there was any love for the Argentine junta in most Latin American countries but there was a deep concern about a conflict, about even the political consequences of the war, where they would be forced to side with the junta. I am now talking about the vast majority of Latin American countries we were hearing from, some of whom were very close friends of the United States. So the State Department was getting a very, very strong wind from not just our Latin American experts, but directly from Latin American governments, saying, “You’ve got to do everything you possibly can to stop this short of the use of deadly force between Britain and Argentina.” And that’s an important consideration. It didn’t alter our view as to where we would end up, but it was another reason to have made the effort, I think, clearly. In the end, I think the OAS [Organization of American States] basically sided with the Argentines and condemned the attack and so on, but I think we earned something for having made the effort, which I think we would not have done had we simply aborted it at the beginning.

Knott: Harry Shlaudeman or Edward Streator, would you like to comment on this?

Shlaudeman: The negotiation with the Argentines was terrible. When Dave says that their hard-liners had the veto, it wasn’t just the hard-liners. Everybody in that government had a veto. There was simply no way around it. One of the aspects of the negotiations that I thought was quite interesting was Costa Mendez’s idea of the Argentines buying the Falkland Islands Company, when buying the Company would have in effect turned over the islands to the Argentines.

On the basic outline of the negotiations—and here my own memory conflicts with some of the reading—I looked up in my calendar and I went to see Galtieri in the evening of the 26th of April. In Secretary Haig’s account, he says that he sent me instructions to tell Galtieri this was the last chance. I don’t remember any such instructions.

I went to see him and I told him that we were at the end. I said, “Why don’t you take the troops off the island? Leave your Governor and leave your flag and see what happens. Who knows?” So he said he thought that was a great idea. He said, “I’ll let you know tomorrow. You come to the Casa Rosada tomorrow and I’ll let you know,” which I did. He said, “The Navy won’t let me.” That was the end of that.

Knott: You mentioned the Falkland Islands Company. I read somewhere that they had a fairly powerful lobbying effort in London. Perhaps Edward Streator could comment on this?

Streator: Yes, there was a distinct lobby in London for them, and paid for by them, and that’s what did Nick Ridley’s scheme in. He came back from an excursion to Argentina with a proposal that he tried to sell. It smacked of, in effect, turning over administrative responsibility and other things to the Argentines. This stirred up the Company, which in turn put pressure on their friends in Parliament, who in turn—

Train: Their stockholders in turn—
Streator: Well, probably some had some stock, too. In any case, the Ridley scheme died. It probably was because they didn’t pursue anything significant after that was killed with the Argentines. The Argentines were in part emboldened to pursue the course that they did. I felt all along that if they had kept the door open, and just kept talking, this wouldn’t have happened. Maybe I’m wrong.

Train: When the possibility arose that a Hong Kong-type lease back sovereignty deal might be made with Argentina, it was the Falkland Islands Company seeing their profit base being either destroyed or eroded by this that created the Falkland Islands emergency committee, which stormed the halls of Parliament. It essentially achieved a cease and desist on that form of negotiation from the government.

Knott: So they played a very important role in this.

Train: Yes, it was a profitable company because most of the support costs were paid for by Argentina.

Streator: It’s very similar to Gibraltar. The same kind of lobby exists for Gibraltar. It’s very powerful. That’s why there hasn’t been an agreement with Spain over Gibraltar.

Knott: I know that Kathy has a question, but if I can ask you to just hold for one second while I ask General Gorman, Paul Gorman, a question about your assessment at the time of the Argentinean military’s capabilities. You had had, and went on to have, significant experience with various Latin American militaries. Could you—

Gorman: Well, we don’t have the folks here who would have the kind of in-depth assessment at the time that I think you’re looking for, but I’ll say three things. First of all, Tom Hayward’s visit was typical of the operations of the chiefs of the services. One of the key players at that time, as you will recall, Harry, was [General Edward] “Shy” Meyer.

Knott: Yes.

Gorman: Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. Meyer was one of the people who was at the dinner with you with the ambassador that night. Shy Meyer had a West Point classmate who was the Argentine attaché in Washington. He had a direct pipe, if you will, to the embassy over there. Shy had been down to Argentina on a number of those visits, much like you. He had had Galtieri up to the Council of the American Armies for a very short time. So we were getting direct insights from these visits and from the reports of the attachés, which told us that what was going on in the Air Force and the Navy was technologically pretty impressive, but what was happening in the Army was desperately poor. So the general assessment was that these guys may raise hell with the British fleet, but they probably were not going to be able to mount a winter warfare campaign that far away from their home port. That assessment proved to be fairly sound.

The second thing I would say is to reinforce all of the comments you heard here about our rush to get better intelligence. This was crucial, because we really didn’t have enough information to form a judgment on how rapidly they could move, and to what extent these Exocets, or some of
these other toys, would factor in the conflict when it broke. There was a lot of concern that the British might not be able to put it all together. In the event, they did a remarkably competent job in dealing with the situation. That was a great relief to those of us who spent a lot of time trying to think through the problem. But I would say that one of the aspects of American assistance to the British that was probably most useful was the information that we were able to get to them in terms of helping them figure out what to do. Even on some aspects of the technology that they were up against, we were able to help them.

Secretary Weinberger’s remarks about the early action that he took to help the British were right on the mark. The first inkling that we got of what the DoD policy was going to be was his pointing the finger at the Chairman and saying, “We’re going to give the British everything that we possibly can, and we’re going to start with the pipeline: we’re going to accelerate material and other assistance that they’ve already ordered. That’s going to happen or I want to know the reason why not.” He was after the chairman almost daily on those issues and you guys in the tank heard some of that same sort of—

**Hayward:** One of the specific issues that came up right away was Sidewinders.

**Train:** Right.

**Hayward:** Which turned out to be very important to transfer, but the U.S. Navy has always—our own services were far from ready for much of anything. I mean, we were a worn-out crowd.

**Train:** They took every one of my A-9L Sidewinders.

**Hayward:** So we took them all.

**Train:** Every one.

**Hayward:** So we stole, I mean, really we didn’t have very many in the first place.

**Gorman:** We had teams out searching for—

**Hayward:** There wasn’t a great deal of enthusiasm going on.

**Train:** Certainly not on my part.

**Knott:** Did any of the military folks in the room think that the Argentineans stood a chance at the time or were you all fairly convinced—

**Train:** They scared the hell out of me. But I didn’t really think they had a—

**Gorman:** The difficulty—
Hayward: At our level, in the Pentagon, I wasn’t paying any attention to it. I never would have thought that it would have gotten to that point in the first place. So the whole concept of a fight in the south Atlantic was just not there, it wasn’t part of—

Gorman: In the dead of winter.

Hayward: The dead of winter. We were having some very significant issues with the Russians on all kinds of things, east and west, that from a strategic point of view was where we put all of our real thinking. We had huge readiness issues of our own in terms of people and parts.

Train: Which made me think it wasn’t a good idea to take all my A-9L missiles. [laughter]

Hayward: But we do conduct—did then, and I suppose we still do—conduct these Unitas training exercises, where every other year or so a half dozen of Harry’s ships, I guess they come from both fleets, don’t they?

Train: No.

Hayward: They come all from the Atlantic fleet?

Train: Because I had both sides of South America.

Hayward: Unitas was a noble effort to train with Latin American navies. Other navies are always considerably less capable than our own. After the war I reviewed, I remember at the time getting a report right away that we had just conducted a Unitas a few months earlier with the Argentines and they got pretty good marks. So reports didn’t come back that they were really in trouble and they were in bad shape, but in fact, they did pretty darn well during the exercises. And that their submarines, I think there was only one in the last exercise, the Santa Fe, but it had done well in communications and command and control.

This is all before the war starts, so once it started, it’s all retrospective. Now you look back on it. At the time, we would have said the British were going to pull out. One more ship down and it’s over. There were all kinds of reasons to believe that there would be at least one more British ship to be sunk.

Train: Like 14 unexploded bombs in the hulls of British ships.

Hayward: I mean, there was a lot of luck. A lot of fog of war going on down there.

Knot: General Gorman, you mentioned that we provided assistance to the British in terms of telling them how to deal with certain weapons systems, did I hear that correctly?

Gorman: There’s a case in point. We had a fusing problem, as I recall, those were American bombs and American fuses.

Hayward: Right, I think it was just time of flight.
Gorman: Yes, I think so.

Train: It was the arming delay, Tom. The Argentine Navy asked the Argentine Air Force what you do to make a bomb better able to penetrate steel. The Argentine Air Force misunderstood the answer, and instead of timing their fuse delay for 14 thousandths of a second, they timed them for 14 seconds.

Hayward: Oh, so they weren’t armed.

Shlaudeman: They weren’t armed. [laughter]

Knott: Kathy, you had a question. We’re a little off track at this point.

Burk: I was interested in the Latin American discussions. I think you, Mr. Gompert, mentioned the OAS desire that there not be any fight at all for all sorts of reasons. What struck me, what I want to know is, what about Chile? I can’t think that Chile had the same interest in Argentina not getting hurt as some of the other states did. Was there any sort of particular—

Shlaudeman: Oh, absolutely. The Chileans cooperated with the British, gave them all sorts of help.

Burk: Intelligence?

Gorman: They also went out and picked up the survivors of the Belgrano, the Chileans did.

Shlaudeman: They were as active as they could be in making sure that the Argentines didn’t win.

Train: Did they ever offer to enter the war?

Shlaudeman: No, not that I know of.

Streator: The sinking of the Belgrano did create terrific ripples. Not only in Latin America, elsewhere too. As a matter of fact, I think Thatcher still carries that albatross around her neck. There are still a lot of questions as to why that was done, on humanitarian grounds. It has assumed the proportions of the Gulf of Tonkin in some minds.

Burk: There is an argument that in fact came out at the equivalent witness seminar session amongst the British officers, in particular, last year. Their argument is—I mean, besides the fundamental ones that ships can turn around again, of course—that there are a lot of intercepts that can’t be revealed now that showed in fact that the ship was on patrol, it wasn’t going back to base. Indeed, even Tam Dalyell, whom you all know, wrote this book called One Man’s Falklands, more or less said it was mass murder on the high seas and so forth.

Kirkpatrick: Right.
Burk: Apparently, once they showed him the intercepts, he then stopped talking about it. So I don’t know what they were, perhaps you do.

Train: They’d been steaming home for 14 hours. They were headed home for 14 hours while the Prime Minister was given the question of could they attack it. The Conqueror was steaming right alongside it for all those 14 hours. She reported it. Sandy Woodward asked for permission to attack it outside the 200-mile exclusionary zone, but then no one reported that it had turned around when the attack by the Veinte Cinco de Mayo and Belgrano was aborted. So they turned around, heading for home. After John Fieldhouse went to Chequers and briefed the Prime Minister, got the permission to sink it, transmitted it to Sandy Woodward, who transmitted it back to London, to submarine headquarters, who transmitted it back to the Conqueror, Belgrano had been heading home for 14 hours.

Burk: So you’re saying—

Train: And that’s why they had a House of Lords committee that was put together to examine the merits, or lack there of, of the sinking of the Belgrano. As Mr. Streator says, it was a hell of a big albatross around her neck.

Burk: So your argument is in fact that there wasn’t the reason that’s implied in last year’s seminar, that there were not intercepts that seemed to demonstrate that the Argentineans were going to do other than what was publicly obvious.

Train: The attack had been aborted because the Veinte Cinco de Mayo, their aircraft carrier, had lost one of its engines and could only make 15 knots. They were going to have to download the A-4s from four bombs to one bomb and then Admiral [Juán José] Lombardo said, “There’s no reason to go ahead with the attack. We’ll scrap it.” So both task groups turned around and headed back home.

Gompert: The Argentine Navy never did mount much of a threat to the British force.

Shlaudeman: They stayed in the harbor.

Train: Naval air did.

Gompert: Yes, right.

Train: Naval air, then.

Gompert: Yes, and I guess land-based air with the Exocet missiles, too.

Train: Right.

Gompert: Much of the Navy stayed—
Train: They sank three ships with five Exocet missiles.

Streator: Did you ever talk to Sandy about his reaction to the sardine can impact of the Exocets? It turned out that their ships really were not equipped to handle—

Train: Yes, I talked to him about it.

Streator: And what was his feeling, that it was a real setback at that point? The reverberations in London of those sinkings was just horrible.

Train: Yes, the Exocet that hit Sheffield did not explode.

Streator: Yes.

Train: It was fired at very close range. It went into the compartment where all of their damage control parties were located, killed all the damage control party. Went through the next bulkhead and wiped out all the fire pumps and spread burning missile propellant all throughout the inside of the ship, so the ship just burned to the water line and sank. They took it under tow to try to save it. If the missile had exploded, the Sheffield probably would have been saved.

Gorman: Can I correct a possible misconception?

Knott: Please.

Gorman: I didn’t mean to suggest that the majority of the Latin American countries wanted the Argentines to succeed. I think there was a wide spectrum of views about the Argentine government and about this particular adventure and what should happen in the end. But all of them, with the possible exception of Chile, wanted there to be a negotiation. That was the point I wanted to make.

Kirkpatrick: I’d like to say, from in the United Nations, the impression was very much the same. In the United Nations, everyone, literally everyone, with the exception of Chile to some extent—Chile, however, it’s very interesting to recall that the support for Argentina, or opposition to the United States and the UK, or opposition to the UK and the U.S. joining the UK, was so strong that even Chile did not, in fact, state a position that was friendly to Argentina. They never did, I think, right to the very end.

Streator: That’s right.

Kirkpatrick: Nor did they vote for a position that was acceptable to the Americans. This was true from the beginning to the end. It was not just the OAS. I think we have to bear that in mind. The Europeans did what generally the EU does today, they abstained. I have just come from the Human Rights Commission, and you know, that’s what the EU did on several of the tough issues. For example, the Cuba issue. But so did we. That’s what governments usually do. It seems as if it is much more common for governments that do not have a direct interest in an issue to take no position.
In the case of the UK and Argentina, the feeling that was overwhelmingly expressed in the UN was supportive of Argentina. All of the historical prejudices against the United States in this hemisphere, and against the UK for its imperial past, got collected and expressed in a situation such as seemed to be developing in the south Atlantic. It was very clear. There was no question, I personally felt dismal about this, because I’d been working very hard, for months, trying to get some better U.S. support from Latin America. That’s one of the places that we can look for votes, sometimes successfully. Africa is another. South Asia is another. All of the places that we might look for votes were down the drain basically on this issue.

Now the issues that were involved in these votes were not very strong, were not very important. But if it’s your job to be able to get votes when they need them, you feel a little sad about losing all those potential votes down the drain. There was not, as I recall, any real disagreement at all in the United Nations, certainly not among the Americans. But if you think about all of the Americans, all of the non-aligned, all of the Soviet bloc, it comes down to the Anglo-Saxon democracies on one side and the rest of the world on the other. That’s the way it was.

Gorman: It was cast in terms of colonialism.

Kirkpatrick: Right.

Gorman: And the end of colonialism.

Kirkpatrick: Absolutely.

Gorman: And so it was the colonial powers against everybody else.

Streator: The strongest voice that I recall from Latin America, and it may have been [Fernando] Belaunde’s own prejudices coming through, but certainly the Venezuelans as he portrayed them were rabid on the issue.

Kirkpatrick: A year later, [Luis] Herrera Campíns was still not permitting most American diplomats to visit, to be received in the most respected place. Herrera Campíns felt intensely about this, as did Venezuelans generally, I think.

Shlaudeman: In both Venezuela and Peru, there was very strong popular support for the Argentines. In Peru, of course, it is all related to Chile. As far as the Chileans were concerned, they had this problem of the Beagle. They were very much concerned that if the Argentines were successful, they would next turn their attention to them.

Train: Of course, the Peruvians had one of the diplomatic initiatives, Belaunde’s initiative, which followed Haig’s.

Streator: Could I ask another question, please? It’s really of David, because my memory is hazy on this. But if you were to make a thread, a negotiating thread, from landing in London until
things ran out, as I recall, the first thing that was put forward was a two flags notion by Haig, wasn’t it? Embellished somewhat to conceal that reality, but nonetheless, it boiled down to that.

Gompert: That was an aspect of it, right.

Streator: And what was the second round? I’ve forgotten what the offer was.

Gompert: No, it wasn’t only that. As I suggested earlier, based on my memory only, not going over the records, but that early on there was a certain structure to an agreement, which involved a promise to negotiate, an Argentine flag, an Argentine official, and the opportunity for Argentines to come to the island to have economic and cultural activities on the island. I think that structure was in place from the very beginning and then the negotiations were over how each of those conditions might be fulfilled. These were conditions for withdrawal.

Streator: But the UN hadn’t entered into it as a notion at that point?

Gompert: No, but as I recall, what happened was when we went back to London and said, “What if they had a flag, you know, next to your flag?” And the British reaction was, “Absolutely not. What does that mean?”

Streator: Did we ever offer a flag?

Gompert: I don’t recall, I don’t recall. But they wanted to know what that meant if it didn’t mean some sort of shared sovereignty. So it was at that point that we introduced the idea of a third flag.

Streator: We did offer to have the coordinator be an American.

Gompert: Yes.

Streator: And Bob Sayre, I know, thought he was going to be the coordinator.

Knott: Jeane Kirkpatrick, there were reports at that time that because of the administration’s covert support—although it was pretty overt at this point—of the contras in Nicaragua, and I suppose the involvement of the Argentine military in helping to train that force, that this was a factor among some members of the White House and the Reagan administration in terms of perhaps tilting a bit towards Argentina. Do you have any comments on that? Is there anything to that?

Kirkpatrick: Almost nothing, as far as I know, let me say. I heard stories—I was in the Reagan administration from the time the President was inaugurated. I very quickly heard stories that there were people in Washington—I never heard the White House, I heard that there were people in Washington—I read it, I didn’t hear it—who had worked out a deal with the Argentines. The Argentines were going to help provide some military support to some “Central American unstated,” but yes, El Salvador probably, certainly Nicaragua, but El Salvador particularly because it was still uncertain how it was going to end.
I never heard a name associated with this. I never saw any plans. Though I will say that I was pretty much involved in our Central American planning with the President. Though I didn’t have any formal role that was relevant to that, but I was informally much involved. There’s nothing that I ever heard or saw or knew—maybe Harry knows things I don’t know—that suggested to me that there had ever been a conversation relevant to the Falklands, or a subsequent tie that linked the Falklands and Central America. Maybe somebody in this room knows something, but I don’t know it.

Shlaudeman: Well, there was, in fact, an Argentine presence—

Kirkpatrick: See, I didn’t even know that.

Shlaudeman: —in Honduras and in El Salvador. Aid to the Contras was negotiated with the Vice Chief of Staff of the Argentine Army, I happened to know him quite well. As far as I know, the subject of the Falklands never came up.

Burk: Could I ask how important was the proposed element of the United States in some sort of peacekeeping aspect? How serious was the suggestion that they be part of some sort of force that would go down there and more or less keep the two sides apart?

Gorman: I don’t recall that being a first order issue.

Streator: I don’t recall it ever been mentioned.

Shlaudeman: Did you, at your level?

Gorman: No.

Knott: I guess we can dismiss that.

Train: At least Paul would have known about it.

Knott: Yes.

Gorman: Never heard it proposed.

Knott: Never heard it proposed. Harry Shlaudeman, could you discuss the relationship, if any, that you had with the British ambassador, Ambassador [Anthony] Williams?
Shlaudeman: I saw that question. As far as I know, I always thought I had a good relationship with him. One of the interesting things about Tony Williams was his enormous love for Argentina. In fact, he talked about retiring there. I looked back on my calendar, and I saw that I saw him on March the 15th and on March the 29th. I assume on the 29th that we discussed the Falklands-Malvinas issue. When I first arrived, he was the first ambassador I called on. He asked me if I had any instructions about the Falklands-Malvinas.

One problem I had was that I had come to Argentina from Peru. I had been up in Washington in the early fall and had had a discussion and what I regarded as my marching orders from Warren Christopher; I was a nominee of the previous administration. But then I came directly from Peru. I really, for a while, felt myself somewhat at sea because you had the change of administration in there. I really didn’t have anything in the way of very firm instructions. But I’d be interested in knowing why the question arose.

Knott: Well, Kelly? I’m going to pass the buck.

Schoen: Because there wasn’t much on it, so we wanted to see if there was something.

Knott: In case there was something there.

Schoen: Yes.

Shlaudeman: I felt for him, I really did. This was another thing I blame myself for.

Knott: I’m sorry, you blame yourself for. . . ?

Shlaudeman: For not really going into this issue. You know, I’m like everybody else here. I couldn’t believe it, I absolutely could not believe it. You know, one thing that hasn’t been mentioned is what this was all about. I don’t know if they ever did find oil there. But without the oil, this is just an extension of Patagonia. The Argentines, they have millions of acres of Patagonia, why do they want more?

Kirkpatrick: Makes no sense at all.

Knott: Jeane Kirkpatrick, you mentioned earlier, you discussed your relationship with your British counterpart, Ambassador Parsons. Is there anything more to add to that? Can you tell us a little bit more about how that worked? Perhaps you’ve exhausted the subject.

Kirkpatrick: You mean with regard to the Falklands-Malvinas?

Knott: Yes, please.

Kirkpatrick: I don’t think so. I felt that I had a good relationship with Tony Parsons. Insofar as there was any problem, it certainly didn’t relate to the Falklands. Insofar as there was any problem, it came later and it was with the evolution of the EU. Tony was the president, chair, of the EU in the first term. In the UN, they took a common position and negotiated a common
position and then stuck to it. It was interesting to watch, I’ll just say that. I was observing it really, in the very real sense, more in the Security Council. But there floated up to my office at the UN a really interesting memorandum, which was composed by foreign service officers at the lower levels in the U.S. mission, beginning with the lowest level and making its way on up, about the “emerging British problem.”

It went from the ground floor to the 11th floor, which is where my office was. By the time I read it, it was a really interesting memorandum. This commentary on the British problem. What was fascinating about it was that it was expressing itself on a wide range of issues and topics within just a few months of the same period. In a very real sense it foresaw all the potential problems that the emerging European Union could cause in principle to the European-U.S. relationship, but in particular the UK-U.S. relationship.

Tony Parsons was a very serious man, had a great wit, was a good companion, all those good things. I made the decision to send him a copy of this very interesting document composed by our foreign service. There were a dozen foreign service officers who had taken part in this composition. He suggested that maybe we’d better have a meeting. So he brought two or three of his guys and they came and visited us. We had a really interesting, cordial, sometimes a little tense, but mainly cordial discussion of where this relationship was going. I guess from the U.S. point of view we ended with a sense that we understood what he was doing and we also understood the potential problems this might cause us.

Obviously we respected his right to pursue his country’s interests in the way he saw fit, but that we wished he would do it a little less competently than he was pursuing it, because nobody else had ever done it at all in the UN context. The Falklands didn’t even figure. This was the most significant conversation that I ever had with Tony Parsons or John Thompson, who was the UK perm rep who replaced him, about U.S.-UK relationships, besides the Falklands. But we never had a serious conversation about the Falklands, except when we would exchange information from time to time. This was all in the spirit of exchanging information. I would share with him any information I thought was relevant that he might not have heard, and he did the same with me I think.

**Knott:** Kathy, did you want to follow up on that?

**Burk:** I was going to ask about that precise occasion, in fact. Was there any change in the Anglo-American relationship at the UN? Did the British expect the Americans actually to vote as frequently for their interests as obviously the Americans expected the British to do?

**Kirkpatrick:** Yes.

**Burk:** I mean was there any sort of tit for tat?

**Kirkpatrick:** Yes, the answer was yes, they did.

**Burk:** And were the Americans doing so?
Kirkpatrick: Yes, we were doing so. The only one of those votes of any special interest was the one that is mentioned in the book, that I received over a period of a day, instructions that contradicted themselves, let’s put it this way, and put me in a position of contradicting our position. This was the last resolution, when it was perfectly clear—the outcome of the resolution was never in the slightest doubt, it was perfectly clear that the Argentines were going to win it hands down. The only question was whether the resolution was going to get one veto or two vetoes. It was going to get the British veto without any question. The question was whether the U.S. would abstain or whether we would join the British and veto.

I think, Harry, it is probably fair to say that everyone concerned with any aspect of Latin American relations favored an abstention. I certainly favored an abstention and recommended an abstention. Tom Enders certainly favored an abstention. Everybody I think in the Latin American bureau did, and a lot of other parts of the State Department did. But this was a period when the President and the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State were all in London, negotiating—I’ve forgotten what now—for a negotiation, anyway. They were out of the U.S.

They had left instructions. The President had presumably left instructions that in case the resolution came to a vote, we were to veto. We were to join Britain in a veto. They were perfectly clear instructions, but events didn’t stop with those instructions. Things kept happening and we kept checking with the State Department from time to time to see if we’d had any different instructions. We hadn’t had. Nobody had any different instructions. I talked to Tom Enders two or three times that day or he called me. He hadn’t heard anything. I hadn’t heard anything. Both of us thought that it would be no concrete damage to Britain, but that it would damage us in Latin America for a good long time, because there were lots of messages from Latin American countries coming to us loud and clear about how they felt about the U.S. position. They suggested if we vetoed, we would be behaving just like they thought the Yankees were likely to treat the Latins in any kind of difficulty.

Anyway, nobody had heard anything. The instructions were very clear, that if we hadn’t heard anything, we veto. The instructions hadn’t been changed and the instructions stood. For the last couple of hours there were two phone lines open, at least, to my knowledge, between the U.S. and the UN—I was in the Security Council all day, so the phone line was open from the Security Council to the Department, to Tom Enders’ office, and from Tom Enders’ office to London. In London, what we were trying to do was get either Secretary Haig or the President. What we both really wanted was to get Secretary Haig. The answer kept coming back: they couldn’t find him, they couldn’t find him, they couldn’t find him. And so I voted, because my instructions were perfectly clear. I was to veto.

Now, you know that in the UN Security Council, once a vote is cast, it is irrevocable. If you veto, you have vetoed forever. I vetoed as instructed. No sooner had I vetoed than the message came, the line was suddenly unstuck and Secretary Haig had suddenly been found and his instructions suddenly were “abstain.” I said, of course, “I can’t do that.” I explained to whomever I was talking to that you can’t do that in the Security Council. You can’t change a vote, ever. Then the person on the other end came back, and I’ve forgotten who it was, and said to me—Tom Enders was always involved in this conversation at that end—came back to me and said, “If you cannot
change our vote, then you are to announce that if you could change, if the United States could change its vote, it would. So you are to tell them that.”

I said, “Look, this is impossible. I won’t do it.” Then I thought about what I was saying and I said, “This will make us a laughing stock,” because there’s so much attention focused on the Security Council, because the interest had developed all that day while the effort was made to find Al Haig who had disappeared and so forth. So I decided I would do just exactly as I had been told to, which was to announce that if I could change our vote, I would. This was a matter of little importance but great comment on all the wire services of the world, as you can imagine.

Now I’m going to tell you something that’s really off the record. Everything’s off the record here I suppose, but one thing that was off the record was that I got a back channel cable at that point from Bill Clark, asking me to provide the President, immediately, soonest, with a description of what had happened that led to this extraordinary development, which was creating a lot of comment in Britain I guess, as well as in New York and a lot of other places. So that’s my story on that.

**Knott:** Could I ask you a question, Mrs. Kirkpatrick? About a year or so later, in October of ’83, you had the invasion, or the liberation of Grenada—however you want to refer to it—

**Kirkpatrick:** Thank you, I appreciate that correction.

**Knott:** I knew you would. I think at the time you were quoted as saying something to the effect in regards to the British and Mrs. Thatcher’s complaints—

**Kirkpatrick:** Mrs. Thatcher was very unhappy with Ronald Reagan and the U.S. government about that.

**Knott:** You were quoted at the time as saying something to the effect of, “This is the thanks we get.”

**Kirkpatrick:** No, I didn’t say that.

**Knott:** Could you please, what was your feeling at that time of the Grenada—?

**Kirkpatrick:** You know, I think I wrote something, actually, a Charlton piece. I think I wrote something at the end and I think that represents my memory. Yes, I wrote it all right. It’s been a long time, I’ve already said, it’s been a long time. I wrote, I said [flipping through pages], all right, [reading]: “I believe Britain emerged from the Falklands war stronger, her reputation enhanced. The U.S. emerged from the Falklands war weakened in the hemisphere and no stronger in Europe.” And that is my judgment, even today. “I came away from the experience convinced that we Americans are not very good at thinking and acting coolly in support of our interests in the way that the British and the French regularly do.” That is also my opinion.

“When the time came that Ronald Reagan dispatched troops to deal with the threat to Americans in Grenada, Mrs. Thatcher was besieged by recommendations from the Commonwealth
“bureaucracy” —I knew this because I was hearing it at the UN— “that she take account of the Commonwealth sensibilities and criticize U.S. actions. She did. I rested my case.” That’s right. That represents, I think, my coolest evaluation of that.

**Knott:** You don’t wish to add to that?

**Kirkpatrick:** I don’t think so.

**Streator:** Let me say one thing. Mrs. Thatcher in this particular circumstance had a slight problem. This should be off the record too. Mrs. Thatcher had a problem over Grenada and it was called the Queen. Just that simple.

**Kirkpatrick:** The Queen?

**Streator:** The Queen.

**Kirkpatrick:** Really.

**Shlaudeman:** Yes, because of—I know why.

**Kirkpatrick:** You know, she also had a problem that may not have even been included with the Queen, and it was the Commonwealth secretary, of course, in the Caribbean at that time.

**Streator/Shlaudeman:** Sonny [Sir Shridath Ramphal], you mean.

**Kirkpatrick:** He was a real problem.

**Streator:** The less said about him the better.

**Kirkpatrick:** You said that, I didn’t.

**Knott:** Whom are we referring to?

**Burk:** The Secretary-General—

**Kirkpatrick:** The one time that I ever saw absolute secrecy maintained in the U.S. government—I saw many times when it was presumably maintained, but the one time I saw it actually maintained—was on Grenada. I think it was because everyone understood that the lives of the students were almost surely directly at stake, because they were under guard at that time. We knew that these were cold-blooded murderers who had already killed five members of the existing government in Grenada.

**Streator:** Well, in retrospect, my view on that is that we could have explained that to the British and they could have sat on it just as well as we did. But a few people should have been told.

**Kirkpatrick:** I believe the President was simply not willing to run that risk.
**Streator:** Could be.

**Kirkpatrick:** And I’m sure it was his decision. Although I think he would have done anything that seemed to him reasonable in support of Mrs. Thatcher, or the UK for that matter.

**Streator:** Well, no permanent damage was done.

**Kirkpatrick:** That’s right, that’s right.

**Knott:** David Gompert, I was wondering if I could ask you a question about Alexander Haig. This is part of our Ronald Reagan Oral History Project. We’re looking specifically at the Falklands today, but I wonder if we could just take it a little bit beyond the Falklands and ask you to give us some thoughts or reflections on Alexander Haig as Secretary of State, somebody you saw up close and personal.

**Gompert:** He was not afraid to enter a fight or indeed to pick a fight if he thought he was right, if he thought there was some basis for the fight. But he wasn’t at all selective in the fights that he picked. As a consequence, his tenure, during which I was Larry Eagleburger’s deputy, was—what I remember was one fight after another, some of which had deep roots within an administration that had ideological differences within, and some were purely bureaucratic. But I do remember the Secretary never turned his back on a possible fight, the possible opportunity for a fight. We who worked for him and with him felt that in most cases he was right. But we often had to wonder why he wasn’t more selective.

In the Falklands negotiations he impressed me as being a very good negotiator. I had been on most of the shuttle diplomacy trips with Henry Kissinger after the 1973 war and he was a pretty decent negotiator himself. I thought Secretary Haig was a very, very good negotiator, strong, clear, revealed what he needed to reveal but not what he didn’t need to reveal. Always looking a few steps ahead. I won’t say I was surprised by this, but I wasn’t really prepared, because this was a person who had not spent his career in diplomacy, but had spent his career as a soldier and also inside politics of the national security establishment.

In my experience on the Falklands and some other things that I did with him, he showed great respect for the President and the Presidency and deference. This came out especially in the course of the negotiations, because he insisted every single day that a thorough report to the President was prepared, on which he usually signed off around 3 o’clock in the morning. Much, much greater detail in reporting to that President than I’ve ever seen a Secretary of State report to
any other President. I mean, he was inviting guidance. He certainly laid it all out, taking care to separate out what had to be objectively stated and then his judgment as to what we ought to do.

So the President and Judge Clark did have the benefit of very detailed and careful and objective reports, plus recommendations.

So the long and the short of it is that of all of my exposure to Secretary Haig, the episode that impressed me the most about him was, in fact, these negotiations.

_Burk:_ Could I ask just who you thought was giving him guidance from Washington? I mean, to what extent was Reagan actually making these decisions himself?

_Gompert:_ We did not actually receive any guidance, but that didn’t surprise me. The guidance we received was acknowledgment of the reports we were sending and the indication we offered of what the next step was. We didn’t expect that we were going to get guidance back like, “Approved,” or, “I’d rather you have four flags than three flags.” That’s not the way that President operated. It wasn’t the way that National Security Advisor operated. So again, neither Judge Clark nor the President being of the sort to attempt to micro-manage something happening 18,000 miles away, that’s more or less what we expected. But we never got an indication that we were on the wrong track in general or specifically throughout the negotiation.

_Knott:_ Jeane, please.

_Kirkpatrick:_ I should have added something else to my account, actually. It was just simply that I was told—obviously, I only know what I was told—I was told at the end of this rather dramatic episode involving the resolution, that neither the President nor Judge Clark knew that the issue was being settled in Washington at that time. That they were not informed about it, that they did not know that it was pending, that they were in fact not very busy at the time. I was further told that the President was very unhappy about this. Obviously, those accounts are quite incompatible, but there they are.

_Gompert:_ Well, I was only referring to the actual shuttle. Did that vote occur while the American negotiation was under way?

_Kirkpatrick:_ It occurred when Haig was in London and President Reagan was in London,. They were in London for, what was it, the G6—

_Streator:_ The G5.

_Kirkpatrick:_ G5 meeting, I think, probably right. I simply was told that they were not informed and did not know that the vote was pending and that the President was pretty unhappy about it when it came.

_Knott:_ Would you be willing to give us your assessment of Secretary Haig, any reflections or observations?
Kirkpatrick: I didn’t know Al Haig before he was appointed Secretary of State. I had already been appointed UN permanent representative, and I learned later he did not appreciate that I had been appointed before he had been appointed. But I didn’t have anything to do with that either. The President called me when he was still President-elect and asked me to take the job. And, by the way, to be a member of his Cabinet, at the same time he asked me to become U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations. I had a rather good impression of Alexander Haig before I ever met him. I felt he was quite unfriendly to me from practically the time that I met him. I never knew why. We agreed on most issues, in fact, and had many positions through time in common, but I always felt that he was not friendly to me.

So what? So there’s no question—the President not only invited me to be a member of the Cabinet, but he invited me to be a member of the National Security Council, and a member of NSPG, which was the senior circle of the Security Council. I often felt, when and if I spoke in those sessions, that the Secretary of State was not entirely happy about what I had to say, usually, no matter what I had to say. That’s really about all I can say about that.

Knott: I know that Melissa Higginbotham had a question she wanted to ask.

Higginbotham: Right. I’d like to direct it first of all to Ms. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Shlaudeman, and then to the rest of the round table. From a political and military perspective, and in regards to the alignment of the U.S. with Britain, what impact did this have on subsequent relations with other OAS members and their perception of how trustworthy the U.S. would be as a defense partner? As an addendum to that, was there a perception of our switching allegiances, in their viewpoint, from working on being a good neighbor to supporting a nation’s incursion into our hemisphere, coming in from another country?

Shlaudeman: As a general proposition, I would say that the Falklands-Malvinas crisis, what happened, was consumed by the debt crisis in Latin America. People forget that this was an enormous problem, a terrific blow to countries like Argentina. All these other questions seemed to disappear in this intense concentration on how they were going to get out of this thing. I wrote at the time that in all my years, it was the worst period. I guess in some ways, and certainly in Argentina, it’s even worse now. It’s the same problem.

But that would be my reaction to it. Jeane is absolutely right. The issue really is the hemisphere issue. One of the strange things, I noticed in reading back over some of this, that some of the Latin American leaders, I think Herrera Campins is among them, said that we were not upholding the Monroe Doctrine. Of course, the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America is regarded as an imperialistic big stick. So all of a sudden they switched sides.

Kirkpatrick: And they cited it quite often at the UN, let me say.

Shlaudeman: On whether we were seen as credible, this also is really consumed by our military stature in the world and was then. I mean, if we aren’t credible, who is?

Burk: In other words you mean they have no choice but to assume, to hope that the U.S. would come through if necessary.
Shlaudeman: Yes.

Burk: What about in terms of the relationships between the various members of the military services, those who were training with the South American countries, or those who were having to sort of negotiate what might happen in various—

Gorman: Let me go back to a comment that Admiral Hayward made. In the total scheme of things in Washington, the Malvinas affair was just part of a much larger unfolding drama. That unfolding drama did involve many of the nations that were so critical of us in the OAS and elsewhere. But in terms of holding the moral high ground, this was aggression. This was an issue of self-determination. In other words, the very principles on which the OAS had been founded and the IATRA [Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance] treaty had been put together were being played out. So it was very difficult for these people to maintain a position of—

Burk: Moral outrage.

Gorman: Yes, of moral outrage. And I would point out too, that what was unfolding in Nicaragua and in Central America probably loomed larger in the OAS and in our hemispheric relations than did the—

Train: I think that’s true. That’s the way I saw it.

Gorman: Yes.

Kirkpatrick: I think that’s true too.

Gompert: We did an analysis in the State Department after the war of what the impact, lasting impact, would be in terms of our interests in Latin America and what, if anything, we should do about it. I was involved in that analysis and the recommendations. It was done within weeks of the end of the war. But even by then we felt that the dust was really settling, because as Harry points out, there were bigger fish to fry in Latin America. There were for the United States certainly in Central America. And the problems we were having with Cuba at the time, because we were really in a confrontational mode vis-a-vis Cuba.

I think that the actual impact on our interests in Latin America, while certainly not favorable, were not as catastrophic as some might have felt. But I’ve seen time and time again, in the midst of a crisis, where the United States needs to take a position or action, the arguments are always a bit exaggerated. You know, if you deploy those Pershing missiles to Europe, the cold war is going to turn hot. If you expand NATO, the Russians are going to put the pressure on Ukraine. I mean, every time, it always sounds worse than it turns out to be. I’m not a Latin Americanist; I don’t think the consequences of our policies in Latin America were really so bad or so lasting, but given a lot of other things that were going on, it’s just my impression.

Train: I think the flies settled back on the meat very rapidly after that.
Gompert: And the junta was gone quite rapidly, too.

Burk: Then why do you suppose—I mean, one thing I’ve never really understood is why the so-called hemispheric solidarity so easily overrode the principles in IATRA for example, the Rio treaty and so forth. Especially when the question of borders can be so difficult in Latin America, for reasons you’re all more familiar with than I am. In other words, longstanding interests, let alone moral principles, seemed to be contravened by the support of the OAS countries for Argentina. Why do you suppose?

Gompert: Was it not cast in terms of the end of colonialism?

Burk: Then why is that particular principle so important, when the British empire A) was rather old by that time, and B) had disengaged voluntarily and most times aimlessly.

Gompert: It’s one of those words. You say it and you get some people to stand up and cheer, or scream.

Burk: It just seems so self-defeating in terms of a position. A position supporting a military junta or an aggression over a boundary that’s disputed.

Train: The Arabs do this all the time, don’t they?

Gompert: They say one thing and think another, right?

Train: Or, how does the saying go, “I’m having a fight with my brother but don’t touch him.”

Burk: All right, but Dr. Kirkpatrick’s point about the Monroe Doctrine. It turns it on its head, how can they then say that the U.S. cannot do it, because they tried to invoke it for U.S. support?

Shlaudeman: Well it—

Burk: Because of the word?

Shlaudeman: It may be in a strange paradoxical way that this whole incident helped promote the idea of peaceful negotiated settlements of what they call “diferendos,” their border problems. It’s notable that in the dispute with Chile over the Beagle, the papal resolution of that problem held, and that the Ecuador-Peru problem actually has been resolved without any further bloodshed. I don’t know, maybe this was the first of the series of these things.

Hayward: It seems to me that a lot of it comes back to what Harry said Admiral Anaya told him. These guys, this is one of their objectives, career objectives, a nationalistic desire. It’s perfectly logical that there’s no reason for Great Britain to own something way down here. So for them to be able to gain this back for their own nation is a big, big victory, huge victory. Then when you combine that with the economic problems that they were confronting and other issues where they were about to be thrown out and recognize it’s their neck if they are, they took it. Said, “We’ve got to do it.” And Anaya was undoubtedly part of that decision process in the forefront of that. It
had to be pressures of tremendous magnitude in my professional judgment because they chose an extremely poor time to do it. By all good sense, if they had waited six months or a year, they’d have gotten away with it. The British Navy would have been up in mothballs.

Gorman: The weather would have been better.

Hayward: The weather was in their favor here. They thought they were okay because the weather would be so bad they’d get away with it.

Gorman: They wouldn’t come down.

Train: Exactly, exactly.

Hayward: But any professional analysis of where the British Navy was going would have told them just stand by, guys. We won’t have an enemy here. But they did it. They had to do it because they have their own necks at risk here. They had to do something, so they did what they really always wanted to do, was go after it. Absolutely convinced that they could do it. The British weren’t going to sail seven to eight thousand miles and try to get down there. They’d roll over it.

Knott: I know they—

Hayward: And I’ll bet they would have rolled over it with any other leader besides Mrs. Thatcher.

Kirkpatrick: I think there’s maybe something more in the differences that derive from *latinidad*. I think there’s a strong sense of Latinity in Latins in this hemisphere.

Shlaudeman: Absolutely.

Kirkpatrick: I can’t prove it but I believe it. And I believe it’s more important than treaties and borders—more basic, and therefore more unreachable.

Train: That’s what I was trying to say about the Arab example. I think much the same thing.

Kirkpatrick: I thought that was something you were saying, basically.

Streator: I’d really appreciate your view on what the other European attitudes were. I have a sense that “old Europe,” quote unquote, was not—

Kirkpatrick: They didn’t care, I don’t think.

Streator: I don’t think they gave a damn.
Kirkpatrick: In the UN they didn’t care at all. I think Tony Parsons was the only old European representative there who cared about what was happening. But I don’t think the EU, the EEC [European Economic Community] it was then, they didn’t count much. The French didn’t care.

Gompert: To them of course the East-West struggle was happening in Central Europe.

Kirkpatrick: That’s right, that’s right. The East-West struggle was where it was at.

Knott: Okay, thank you all for today. Again, there will be a reception at 5 o’clock downstairs in the ballroom and dinner at 6.

Kirkpatrick: Thank you and I’m very sorry I will not be present.

Knott: Yes, thank you.

Kirkpatrick: I think this has been a really interesting discussion.

Knott: I’m glad. It has been.

Kirkpatrick: I’ve been interested in all the comments, everybody.

Knott: We’ll get to the war tomorrow.
May 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2003

\textbf{Knott:} Thank you all for coming back. I want to make one announcement for today. We are going to involve our audience participants much more today than we did yesterday. We have so much expertise in this room on the Falklands war, on British politics, on the special relationship between the United States and the UK, that I really do want to get Michael and Harriet, and Michael Parsons and Chris Collins and Melissa, involved extensively today. I think we’ll start off with Kathy Burk asking a question.

\textbf{Burk:} I’d like to pay a bit more attention today to more or less the given reason for the seminar, which is, of course, American perceptions of Britain. I’d like to pay a bit more attention at this point to British domestic policy, to start with. I mean, not policy so much as context. In particular, Thatcher’s position in it. Now, one or two things we have to keep in mind—and I’m taking my lead here from comments yesterday about the context, the debt crisis and so forth in Latin America, that one has to remember what’s going on there before one takes on the Falklands’ strand.

Now in Britain at that time, March 1982, which is really when we start looking at what’s going on in particular, Thatcher is in a very difficult position. She’s been leader of the party since ’75, but she’s only been Prime Minister since May 1979. She by no means has a solid position in control of her party. Certainly it’s not just the left wing, the Labour party, which is opposition, which one might compare it right now. The Conservative party in Britain is not as viable an opposition as those who like countervailing powers would wish, because the Labour Party is gone and is continuing to go through at that point, ructions of its own. But she does have opposition on the left wing of her own party.

Recall the “wet Tories,” which are roughly, as we used to think—those of us who are older—liberal Republicans, which of course is now a dead breed in the United States. Those who might be called “one nation Tories,” who didn’t like what she was doing in terms of sectionalizing, as it appeared: \textit{There’s us, and then there’s everyone else}. So these people—Ian Gilmour for example, Mr. Streator will doubtless remember him—are not precisely in a leadership challenge, but her whole position as Prime Minister is very dicey. This is exacerbated not only by the fact of being the first woman Prime Minister, and a party that was not wholly in support, but by the economic situation. Recall that over a period of 18 months, because of the increase in the rise in VAT, the value added tax, from about 18 percent, I think, 17 percent in one year, we were seeing inflation by March 1982 of roughly 22 percent a year, which hadn’t really been seen since 1975, when Britain had been referred to as possibly a banana republic.

So you’ve got not only the incredible weakness of the economy, you also have a period when she’s really beginning the deindustrialization. And the other thing to keep in mind is the previous year had been race riots, Brixton riots. So you’ve got a country that’s in some sense of turmoil, with a Prime Minister who is not really in control herself. We look back and say, “You’re the best man in the Cabinet, it was because of Thatcher, it was because of her driving and so forth and so on,” but that wasn’t apparent yet in March 1982.
So I think we have to go back a bit, before the end of the Falklands. And in this case I’d be particularly interested in what Mr. Streator has to say, what he recalls then, what he sees as her position and the position basically of the Cabinet and so forth, but particularly Margaret Thatcher’s position.

Streator: Thank you. Let me begin by saying a phrase sticks in my memory very clearly. In her first electoral campaign, she said over and over again, “There is no more unless we make it.” Certainly, in the case of Britain, that phrase not only was true, but it also reflected her determination to turn the country around.

There was reluctance in many quarters to go in the directions she wanted to go. But at the same time she had on her team two extraordinary men. One was Keith Joseph and the other Geoffrey Howe. Although Lady Thatcher has a good knowledge of economics, it certainly doesn’t compare with that of those two gentlemen, who were the architects of her policy. Unfortunately, in the first year after she came to power, they made a mistake, a serious one, by increasing taxes, which in effect added to the difficulties within the economy. Happily, shortly thereafter they reduced them again. They began in earnest on what became, I think, the two things that were the hallmark of her administration. One, taming the trade unions, and the second was privatization.

Unfortunately however—and I think if you look at Britain today, you can see evidence of this—the failure by consecutive Labour and Conservative governments to invest in the basics has resulted in a society which is still sorely in need of overhaul. There is simply not enough money available now to deal with the transportation infrastructure, which is terrible, railroads and roads. Education, first of all they can’t decide really what they need to do about it, but beyond that too, there aren’t the funds available to carry forward programs badly needed to overhaul that structure. There’s going to be a lot of struggling on that over the next years.

The third area is health care. The NHS [National Health Service] is a monstrosity, a kind of Soviet-style bureaucracy, which is in desperate need of decentralization, which is what Tony Blair is trying to do today against the strong opposition of Gordon Brown. Moreover, the British tax regime has not done what so many have, and that is to favor investment in smaller activities, smaller industries, and through tax breaks to aide entrepreneurs. This malaise that grips Britain today dates back to the post-war period and its roots can be found, many of them, in the dispositions made by the socialists who took over after the war.

What Thatcher brought to the atmosphere was in effect a new broom. I would disagree, actually, with you about the degree of antagonism toward her. Certainly there were views within the Conservative party which did not coincide with hers, but she quickly moved against those people who disagreed with her. Ian Gilmour, for example, she simply fired after a very short time. He hasn’t mattered since in the scheme of things. On the other hand, those she favored tended to be those whose views were identical with hers. But at that point, someone looking at the situation objectively has to agree that what she was trying to do and what they were trying to do essentially was healthy.
First of all, she did succeed in getting the trade unions back into the cage and they haven’t really come out since, although Blair is having considerable difficulty with them right now. And he’s likely to have a lot more as he tries to get on with the business of really liberalizing the economy. She also, through the privatization efforts and through tax policies, did encourage further development of British industry. Of course, foreign investment, because of her dispositions, foreign investment was attracted to Britain.

A story from my own experience, I was sitting next to her at lunch at Geoffrey Howe’s house one Sunday out in the country. I had left the government and was president of the American Chamber of Commerce in London. We were quite worried about tax policies, because they were going to impose a tax on world-wide income. One of the reasons why investment had flowed into the UK was that they don’t have a tax on world-wide income. Anything you make there you have to pay taxes on, otherwise you’re exempt. My constituency was very worried, mostly bankers, whose view was if she tries that, all of us bankers will leave, because we don’t have any intention of paying taxes on our world-wide income to live in Britain.

So I got through my usual dialogue with her, which began with animadversions about Germany and irritation with the French and concerns about the European Community, which she felt very strongly about. Finally there was a space where I could get a word in edgewise. It was always difficult with her to get a word in edgewise, still is. Part of her charm, actually.

**Burk:** Oh yes, right. [laughing]

**Streator:** But I said to her, “Prime Minister, there is a problem.” I explained to her that if they moved in the direction which the Treasury was proposing, that there’d be an exodus of American bankers, Greek ship owners and Arab investors. She looked at me and said, “What is Nigel doing?” Nigel [Lawson] being her Chancellor of the Exchequer. The next day my sources told me that she had returned to her office and knocked it off, right then and there. It was that attitude of openness to investment, willingness to be flexible in economic policy to attract investment, which I think sustained a significant growth in Britain during her tenure.

**Burk:** Just if I can come in here, many of the things you’ve applauded her doing, like taming the trade unions and so forth, happened after the Falklands War, when she was strong enough to do it. Did you have this favorable view of her before March 1982?

**Streator:** I think the difference is that she suddenly became the “Iron Lady” after the Falklands War. Americans are enchanted by her. I mean, I’ll never forget the evening when she spoke at the Waldorf to the veterans of the intelligence agencies, some five or six hundred who gathered to listen to her speak. This spotlight coming down in this black room at the Waldorf, the ballroom, and she had borrowed some diamonds from somebody and there she was in this electric-blue dress and the room just roared when she finished speaking. I mean, this dramatic figure, a conviction politician who was selling her ideas. Boy, were they eating it up. It’s that same image of conviction which was so convincing even in Britain for quite a long time. I mean, look where Labour was during her tenure until quite late in her administration.

**Gompert:** When was the showdown with the coal miners?

Gompert: Well after this.

Burk: That’s my point, that this strength was basically after. I mean, the Falklands War is usually seen as—

Gompert: That was her second big, big political victory.

Burk: Well, she’s re-elected in ’83, after this. So therefore, that’s when she actually is solid, which is why I was interested that Mr. Streator seems to see her as that strong and successful even before the Falklands.

Streator: I mean, her opponents within the party, like [Michael] Heseltine and others who were dealt with one way or the other, never had the strength within the Cabinet. She did run a Cabinet government, although she was the dominant figure. Thatcher certainly ran roughshod over her people very often, through the strength of her personality and her will. I don’t know if any of you in this room have ever argued with her, but it’s very difficult, only because she knows her ground and she is obviously a convincing parliamentarian who is a tough cookie in combat. You better know what you’re talking about if you’re going to argue with her. She exercised this extraordinary gift for mastering the scene and dealing with members of her Cabinet who disagreed with her.

Finally it caught up with her. Obviously, one of the principal figures in her downfall was Geoffrey Howe. His resignation. But that was later.

Gompert: And Heseltine, right?

Streator: Not really. I think he’s a second, third tier figure on the scene. I myself think very highly of him and I would have been happy had he succeeded. Let me say that in the process of being the dominant figure on the scene within the polity at that time, and by eliminating people who disagreed with her, which she did to a great extent, she wiped out the succession. The Conservative party is paying a heavy price for that today, because this fellow, the current leader of the Conservative party—

Burk: Iain Duncan-Smith.

Streator: IDS, Iain Duncan-Smith, is a very small figure indeed in my view. I don’t think he’s going to last much longer. But that void in leadership, the one that ensued, is a seriously difficult problem for them now.

I want to say just a word about Britain and Europe, because Margaret Thatcher is a sturdy opponent of Britain’s closer association with Europe, a position which I don’t happen to share.
For lots of reasons I think Britain ought to be a full member of the Union. I think it’s important frankly for the United States that Britain be a full member of the EU, so my views are somewhat parochial on that score. But it was no secret to continental Europeans that she did not hold them in high esteem for a variety of reasons. I think in her case some of it stemmed from animosity towards the Germans dating from the Second World War. But she continues actually to be a significant figure in the anti-European movement within Britain. This I think explains to some extent why she didn’t have support from the Europeans at the time of the Falklands crisis.

Gompert: Not to put us on a detour, but I have some comments to make on the Reagan-Thatcher relationship and the Anglo-American relationship at the time.

Knott: Please.

Gompert: Let me start with the very specific, right in the context of the negotiations. One reason why Secretary Haig was so sensitive and vigilant about channels, keeping negotiations in his channel, was a concern that someone might try to get the President to call the Prime Minister to suggest perhaps greater flexibility in the negotiations, or at one point we had real concern about an appeal to slow down the fleet. Having witnessed as we did—those on the negotiations did—the strength, not only strength of character which has been substantiated, but also her strength of feeling about this particular issue, Falklands, we felt, Secretary Haig above all felt, that it would be really bad if that were to happen. It would not only upset and confuse the negotiations but also that the British, the Prime Minister would react very, very badly.

Ed might recall better than I whether the specific exchanges—in any case, whatever exchanges took place did not have a harmful effect, did not cause her to go through the ceiling. Did not upset the negotiations, which were in any case by that time proving fruitless, and certainly didn’t slow down the British fleet. Because we were telling the British, “For God’s sake, don’t slow down the fleet.”

But the context, and I guess the reason for the belief that the President might have some direct influence with the Prime Minister, was that was the nature of the relationship by that point already. Whatever her domestic situation, by that time the Anglo-American relationship—Ed might disagree—but I think it was as special as it was at any point really in the cold war period, for a number of reasons. One, there were big, big difficulties in Europe, starting with the neutron bomb and the deployment decision and then the demonstrations throughout Europe against the nuclear issue. The one pillar that we felt we had, those of us back in Washington, felt we could hang onto, was the UK. Not only because of the special relationship, but because of the special Prime Minister in that special relationship. So the British played an extremely important role, not unlike the pivotal role they play today. So that made it special.

Secondly, the President and the Prime Minister were obviously ideological soul mates. And lastly, these are purely my interpretations, but it may well be that there were some people who felt that maybe the Prime Minister owed him one, in the following sense. She made an appeal to
President Reagan sometime in 1981, a very direct and strong appeal to President Reagan, not to discontinue the arms control process. The Reagan administration from the get-go was very, very divided over how to deal with the Soviet Union. Those divisions were sharpest over arms control and in particular what were then called the SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty] negotiations and then became the START [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty] negotiations.

With these huge demonstrations, this anti-nuclear movement, and loading up the missiles ready to go to Europe, we thought we had a catastrophe ready to happen. This was ’81. We in the State Department said, “Unless we can assure the Europeans that we will resume a process of nuclear arms control negotiations with the Soviets, it could break the alliance. We might fail to get the weapons in.” But we were losing, we were definitely losing that argument. And Thatcher made, I think it was just a simple, single phone call to Reagan and she made the strongest case for arms control you can imagine. And talk about credibility, for Margaret Thatcher to say, “You must, you have no choice. You must. Whether you like your predecessor’s policies on arms control or not is irrelevant. You will cause great damage if you do not resume the nuclear arms control process.” And from that point forward we did. That was an absolutely critical intervention on that part.

So, you know, I always sort of connected these. Not that they were so explicitly connected, but for the President to make a direct appeal to her, there was a certain symmetry about it. It was on something that seemed to matter a lot to us, that is, to avoid a war, because of all the considerations with Latin America. But it never really amounted to that same kind of a direct and forceful appeal, which in any case I think would have backfired completely. That gives you a little bit of the context of the personal relationship and the bilateral relationship at the time.

Streator: Can I make a footnote to that? I don’t want to talk too much.

Knott: Please.

Streator: Just quickly, it’s interesting, this arms control aspect, because I certainly never heard it from that angle. But she came to office opposed to arms control. This was a problem for us, obviously. And the question was, how do you turn the Titanic around? Kingman Brewster, who, although a Democrat, was still the ambassador when she first came to office—no love lost—and I hatched a scheme, which resulted in her turning around, and I’ll tell you how in a second, so that she only opposed the end of underground testing. Otherwise, she favored everything else.

The way we did it, I don’t know whether this should be off the record or not, was that we decided to stage seminars. Not for her, but for the people around her, Francis Pym and some of her nuclear policy advisors. We needed credible witnesses for the seminar. We ran a series of lunch and dinner parties at Winfield House in London and invited McGeorge Bundy to come along and talk about arms control, Jerry [Gerard] Smith came and talked about arms control, John Newhouse came and talked about arms control, and so forth. And over a period of weeks, we explained the U.S. approach to these issues to these guys. And Francis Pym who then was the chief—

Gompert: This was at the very beginning of the Reagan administration?
Streator: Yes.

Gompert: What you were really explaining was the view of half of the U.S. government, because the U.S. government—

Streator: But we picked the right guys. The interest though, clearly, at least as expressed by the Department, which knew what we were doing, was to go on with it. I don’t know what the politics was back here. In any case, we did it and they got to her. She turned around completely on arms control as a result of an honest intellectual debate with the people closest to her about these issues. I think it was a major, major event when she made up her mind to go in that direction.

Gompert: Another important development at that time was the cooperation on the Trident missile program, because while the decision was taken in the [Jimmy] Carter administration, the decision was really being implemented. There are people here who may know more about it than I do. That was a really big deal for the British. I mean, they absolutely needed to take the next step with regard to their submarine-based strategic missile program and the cooperation with us enabled them to do so. Despite the economic problems they faced, they were able to do that.

Knott: Sorry, we really need to have everybody move closer to the table.

Burk: It’s too interesting to lose.

Gompert: It just added to the closeness, I mean, there’s nothing more intimate than sharing strategic nuclear know-how, which we were doing at the time. I think that reinforced the closeness of the relationship at the time. There may have been problems in the Anglo-American relationship, but I think they were third order if there were any at the time.

Streator: One of the most important problems persists, it’s the access by British Airways and others to domestic services in the United States. I would say that’s the second—

Gompert: Yes, and extraterritoriality.

Streator: That became a big issue, yes.

Knott: Kathy, did you want to follow up on this?

Burk: I’m finding this incredibly interesting. It’s modifying views that we have over there. Mr. Streator, within this context then, and Mr. Gompert, of the Anglo-American relationship, starting in, say, the 19th of March, when the Argentineans landed on South Georgia, that really starts, judging from the time line here and also the Franks report, to which we referred yesterday, starts the real questions of how one is going to respond to this. Now, with your close relationship with Mrs. Thatcher and with your contacts in the government, what was your perception of what was going on? And what were you actually reporting back, as far as you can say, to government, between the 19th when they landed and the 31st when the Cabinet committee decided we’re going
to go for it? What do you remember about the situation then and your reactions and the government’s reactions?

**Streator:** Very frankly, we didn’t have much of a reaction at first. As I said yesterday, Peter Carrington alerted us to their concerns about our position on these things. Obviously we were following very closely the developments on the ground in the area. But I don’t have any specific recollections of anything more than the usual concerns you have when there’s a crisis on the horizon.

**Burk:** But it’s clear that the Cabinet was to a certain extent divided about this, about what to do. How aware were you of the differences within the government?

**Streator:** Not terribly. We really weren’t, at least I wasn’t.

**Burk:** Because it wasn’t important enough to probe or because you just—

**Streator:** No, no. Britain is quite a special place in the sense that, I suppose like many countries, it’s very small. Britain at the end of the day is run by 500 people, one way or the other. One of the nice things about being at the American embassy in London is that you have access to all 500, so that after you’ve been there for a while you can just pick up a phone and say, “What do you think about this?” and they’ll tell you. There’s no reason not to. In fact, I was saying to Harry a moment ago, I knew more about what was happening in Washington from reading reports from the British embassy in Washington, than I was getting from my own people in the State Department.

Access is total. People are very open. I did not at that time sense that there was more than mounting concern, but I did not sense that there was strong opposition within the Cabinet. Perhaps I was just badly informed.

**Burk:** Well, one thing that comes out of there, and it also picks up with what Professor Kirkpatrick was saying yesterday—that she and Sir Anthony were handing memoranda back and forth—that you were reading the British ambassador’s, Nicholas Henderson’s, reports back. This betokens not only a special but an amazingly intimately special relationship. Was this usual or was it because of the people in the two embassies’ relationships?

**Streator:** I can’t speak for today’s circumstances, but certainly it was true in my time and probably it’s true today as well. Nico and I are still very close friends. Nico during this period would fly back to London himself. I remember several occasions he called me up, said, “Can I come and have lunch with you?” I think he wanted to share some of his woes, because he was having his own problems here. But he was a pretty good witness on television and I think his principal reason for talking to me was to try to get a feel from an objective distance as to which way the wind was actually blowing in terms of U.S. policy.

Let me add another footnote during that very intense period. Every morning at 7 o’clock I’d be awakened by a telephone call. Or if I was up, I’d answer the phone. It was Charlie Douglas Hume, editor of the *Times*. Or, every day, it was Andrew Knight, who was editing *The*
They wanted to know what was going on. What was quite interesting was that after a few days, as I told Harry, I felt as though I was writing the leaders in the Times and also the weekly editorials in The Economist. A very strange sensation for a foreign service officer, I can tell you. But it was that kind of a relationship with the people.

Gompert: If Nico Henderson was having woes in Washington, it wasn’t because of a lack of access, it was because of division and confusion. The British embassy has always had extraordinarily good access, effectiveness, and even influence within the inner-agency process. Not just with the U.S. government in some monolithic sense. But the British embassy here, first of all, there’s been a string of extraordinarily good ambassadors, DCMs, and political counselors and so on. Very, very effective service and an effective embassy here, with the kind of inner-agency involvement that other embassies just have never been able to match. Which means that there was no such thing as being limited to talking to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. I mean, they were all over Washington. Not only learning views but affecting views, everywhere. Certainly in the Defense Department during this period, they were as active in the Defense Department as they were in the State Department. They were as active in the National Security Council.

But this is typical. It’s true today, as far as I know. Well I’ll give you a little anecdote, not so much from the Falklands but from several other occasions. It’s been said that there are on most major U.S. national security decisions a number of important inter-agency viewpoints. There’s what does the State Department think, what does the Defense Department think. What do the Joint Chiefs think, insofar as it can be differentiated from OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]. What does the intelligence community think about the facts, the analysis. What does the NSC think, insofar as it has a voice. And what does the British embassy think, or the British government, vicariously through the British embassy? I think that during this period, as effective as Ed and friends were in London, the British embassy was as effective as ever in Washington.

I think the trouble they might have been having and the reason for crying on Ed’s shoulders was not that they were ineffective, but that the U.S. government was casting about trying to figure out which way to go.

Burk: If I could just—we’re jumping ahead of ourselves, but just to pick up that so we don’t forget about it later—then how come Henderson was so worried about the “Latinos,” as it were? One gets the impression that that was a point of power which he did not have access to. So you’re saying this was rather unusual.

Gompert: If his point was that he thought there was some group of Latin American specialists or Latin American bureau of the State Department who had some degree of influence that he didn’t understand and had no access to, that wouldn’t surprise me. I mean, as effective as the British embassy is, I can’t say that they had treated building relationships with people who ran Latin American affairs as a very high priority. So they might not have known. I don’t know whether Nico Henderson even knew Tom, although he must have because Tom Enders really had not been exclusively in Latin American affairs. He’d done a variety of things. But it may well be that they felt that this was a part of the U.S. government that they really didn’t understand; it was opaque and they didn’t have the kind of relationships they did. But they had extraordinary
relationships at the top and they had extraordinary relationships where it mattered in terms of U.S.-European relations and East-West relations. But that might have been a blind spot for them. That’s my speculation on what he might have meant.

Knott: I was wondering if I could ask Christopher Collins, do you have any questions or comments to make on this “special relationship” that existed between Reagan and Thatcher, and hopefully some questions related specifically to the Falklands? Please, step up to the microphone.

Hayward: He could come up here.

Knott: Actually, that’s a good idea. Why don’t you take a seat here. You can be Lawrence Eagleburger for the day.

Collins: I was very interested by Mr. Gompert’s comments on the cause, if I may. Perhaps we could put them a little bit into the context of the role of the Latinos, too. Because we described yesterday the mediation and diplomacy of April, when Haig was shuffling back and forth and you were there with him doing that. But of course he suspends that at the end of April. He blames the Argentineans and there’s a National Security Planning Group that decides on the 30th of April to tilt toward the British, which the British see and Mrs. Thatcher certainly sees as the end of the American meddling, a little better thing. I mean, she had been irritated by the Haig mediation, but conceded it was going to happen and she had to live with it.

However, immediately it revives in fact, and it revives by proxy. One thing we haven’t talked about yet is the Peruvian peace proposal, which is, as I understand it, really Mr. Haig wearing a Peruvian hat. It revives again in mid-May in the form of a Brazilian proposal, and the president of Brazil actually comes to Washington. It’s at that point that the first of the calls comes from President Reagan to Mrs. Thatcher advocating the Brazilian plan.

What seems to happen at this time is that the Latin American contingent, if you can call it that, the Latinos within the administration become more and more prominent. That’s certainly what Mrs. Thatcher thought was happening. And with that process, also, the President’s getting involved. She finds it actually more uncomfortable than the Haig mediation, there’s no question. Although the President’s phone calls seem to have been fairly ineffective in influence, there was one event before the two phone calls that was much more devastating to her, which I will be very interested to have your comments on and anyone else at the table who would know about it.

Basically, the President wrote to her on the 5th of May, asking her, firmly, to accept the Peruvian proposal. You, I think, during the Haig mediation had never put to the British a clear proposal and said, “Will you accept this, absolutely, this document.” This, on the 5th of May, she was asked to do. She hated the proposal; it dumped self-determination, for example. There was nothing about the wishes of the islanders in it. It was the interests of the islanders as defined by somebody other than them, apparently. There was no British administration on the islands after the withdrawal of the Argentineans. And there was a deadline for negotiating final settlement, in which the Germans and the Peruvians and any number of contact nations were going to be
involved. It was April 1983. It was all going to be out of the way by then. This was a horrible proposal but the President prevailed on her to accept it.

Gompert: Yes.

Collins: So in fact, the diplomacy of May is a bit grim. The President is involved and it was very painful for her.

Gompert: Once the Haig mediation broke down, the Falklands crisis ceased to become the top priority in the State Department on the seventh floor, or certainly at the European bureau, because there were a lot of other things going on at the time, very big things as we referred to yesterday. For the Latin American bureau it probably still was. I mean, after all, it was a war now in Latin America. So this still really preoccupied the Latin American bureau. Tom Enders continued to be very, very active. But, I mean, that’s only reasonable. After all, the United States has global interests and responsibilities and relationships and there’s a war going on. So for the United States to have become passive with a war going on in Latin America would have been just unthinkable.

So there was a heightened level of activity—not heightened level of activity, a continuing level of activity that was really much more centered in the Latin American bureau, because frankly the European bureau moved on to other things. We tried, we failed, there’s going to be a war, the British are going to win, that’s that. The war wasn’t in Europe after all, it was in Latin America.

Also, I think, it wouldn’t be unfair to say that Secretary Haig, after devoting 24 hours a day for a month or whatever to this, had to get on with other things. Contrary to the impression that he was somehow orchestrating Brazilian and Peruvian and UN, that was clearly not my impression, not at all. Maybe Tom Enders was. Tom Enders was a very forceful and effective person. But I had the opposite impression and that was that there was a lot of energy and a lot of activity and it was coming mainly from the Latin Americans and it was being managed—at least in a reactive sense, if not in a proactive sense—by the people who were responsible for managing it, namely the Latin American bureau. The Secretary was sort of drawn in, but believe me, he was not consumed by this in the sense that you might have thought after the collapse of his mediation effort.

Moreover, I would say that the British diplomats tend to be guilty of one thing, which actually most diplomats in Washington are guilty of. That is, thinking that there is more coherence and more scheming and more purposefulness in American policy, based on a pattern of actions, than there really is. It may have appeared somehow that the Secretary of State was the puppeteer and these different proposals were coming out, but they were really being drawn up by the Secretary’s inner circle, but we just did not have that kind of attention or that kind of effectiveness from everything I saw. I did continue to watch this brief during that period so it’s not as if I just turned my back on it completely, but I moved on to other things. That’s my impression of that period, which is partly but not entirely—

Streator: What was the situation on the ground at that point in the Falklands?
Collins: Well, the fighting had begun really on the first or second of May.

Multiple: Yes.

Collins: The fleet arrived, the Belgrano was sunk, the Sheffield went on the fourth.

Knott: Go ahead, Mr. Shlaudeman.

Shlaudeman: I was just going to say, on this exchange. First of all, it was true that Secretary Haig talked to Belaunde on the phone. However, it was certainly my impression that this was pretty much Belaunde’s initiative and not the Secretary’s. I don’t think that Tom Enders had anything to do with it.

Gompert: Yes.

Shlaudeman: That’s just my impression.

Knott: Did you have more, Chris?

Collins: Perhaps I could ask a bit more about Ambassador Kirkpatrick’s—unfortunately she’s not here—but were you aware that she was involved in the calls that were made? I mean, you did find out about the calls the President was making. You described them.

Gompert: Right.

Collins: And in London certainly they were seen as a result of influence from the ambassador.

Gompert: This was in May?

Collins: This was the 13th and the 30th of May.

Gompert: This was after the mediation effort had broken down and the war began.

Collins: Yes.

Gompert: Well, the action had largely moved to New York.

Collins: Yes. She has access to the White House at a very high level.

Gompert: Yes.

Collins: I mean, she seems to intercede very successfully at that point.

Gompert: But it would have been odd for her not to be a central figure when most of the diplomacy had in fact moved to New York. The concern that those of us in the negotiations had was that during this mediation effort attempting to head off a war, that there might be some other
channel opening up, or that there might be some attempt to get the President to go over the head of the Secretary of State at that critical time. How concerned the Secretary was about Ambassador Kirkpatrick in May, I have no idea.

**Streator:** The British certainly were.

**Gompert:** Yes, true.

**Burk:** Could I just ask Mr. Streator, as a follow up to Chris’s question, to what extent were you aware of Mrs. Thatcher’s profound dislike and dismay after receiving President Reagan’s letter? Did it percolate?

**Streator:** Yes, I think she thought at the time that she didn’t have to fight that battle again, as it were. That it would be smooth sailing. I think she was disappointed.

**Burk:** That’s probably a mild—

**Streator:** Still at the game, however.

**Gompert:** It is significant, though, that during the period of U.S. mediation to try to prevent the war from happening, the President never really made a strong and forceful appeal to the Prime Minister to take steps to reach a negotiation that would have prevented the war. That didn’t happen.

**Collins:** Yes.

**Gompert:** Okay. And that was during a period in which Secretary Haig was in command. We thought that that would be not only counterproductive, we thought it would be wrong. We were really not urging the British to be all that flexible because we were not comfortable. I mean, if the British government had said, “Hey, we’ll give away the islands,” we would have been extremely uncomfortable with that for the reasons we started with yesterday, which is this would be a reward for the use of force. So we really felt that the British were going about as far as they should go in making some concessions. That was the clear belief of the negotiating team of the Secretary of State. And by negotiating team, I include Tom Enders. So there was really no pressure on the British.

**Collins:** But that did change on the 5th of May, because the letter—

**Gompert:** That’s exactly my point.

**Collins:** Yes.

**Gompert:** It may have changed, but it changed after the end of the period in which Secretary Haig had devoted himself to a mediation effort and was treating this as not only his top priority, but for the better part of a month, his only priority. Now, whether things got out of hand in terms of the coherence and the stoutness of American policy after the breakdown of the Haig
mediation, it appears that they did, and which they probably shouldn’t have. But I did want to be clear about the strength of conviction we had, at least during the mediation effort, when no such pressure was brought.

Collins: That’s very interesting, thank you.

Knott: Thank you, Chris. Harry Shlaudeman, I’d like to follow up on something you said yesterday and I think you repeated at dinner last night as well, that you were stunned when the attack occurred. I’m hoping to lead into some questions about the whole role of the intelligence community in this event. Where were the American intelligence services on this?

Shlaudeman: I think it was an enormous intelligence failure. All the military people we had, my God. We had a full military group there plus the attachés, and never had the slightest indication that any such thing was in the works. About all I can say.

Hayward: As I pointed out yesterday, being right there at the time the landing was literally taking place while we were toasting each other—there was no signal coming from the U.S. side that this was going on. Those ships had to have been at sea for some number of days and nobody was on top of it.

Shlaudeman: It was just a total breakdown.

Train: I was told that they offloaded my exchange officer, who was on the Belgrano, put him on the pier. He went home and never reported it.

Knott: Harriet, did you want to follow up on this with some questions related to the role of intelligence in the Falklands crisis? Do you want to step up to the table please, or over there?

Jones: Can I be Mrs. Kirkpatrick for the day?

Knott: Sure, although she is coming. We just received a note that she is on her way.

Jones: Well, I’ll graciously stand aside. I suppose that we are interested in the extent, not just about the intelligence breakdown, which is very clear, but also I’d like to know more about who was talking to whom, which services here were talking to whom in the UK. Also, about after all of this happens and the conflict begins, the role of the intelligence services after the conflict. Overtures that may have been made on different levels to Argentina, for example. And another aspect of all of this that I’d like to know more about is—well, my understanding from discussing this issue in the UK is that there was a feeling that the French were particularly helpful. So I simply wondered if there were any comments on this.

Shlaudeman: I don’t know. I think this question about exchanges between the two military institutions, we have people here who know a lot more about that than I do.
Train: I had personally no contact with the Argentine naval leadership from the time I made my visit six months before the Argentine invasion.

Knot: Admiral Train, can we get you to move a little closer to the mike.

Train: Sure. From the time I left, after that visit, I had no contact at all with Jorge Anaya. I just said, I had that exchange officer down there, but he wasn’t saying anything to anybody. He didn’t know anything.

Shlaudeman: I think General Gorman really is the one that—

Gorman: Again, the guy who was in the best position from that perspective was probably the Chief of Staff of the Army. Galtieri had been up here twice the previous fall as his personal guest. I talked with him just the other day and he indicated that he wanted to help with this effort, so what you need to do is follow up with Shy directly. But he was close to the embassy here, the Argentine embassy, and he had these two long stints with Galtieri just the previous fall. So he would be perhaps in the best position of anybody around here to shed light on what the head of the junta was saying or what he represented.

Now Tom mentioned yesterday this notion that the recovery of the Malvinas was an oft professed or firmly held objective for Argentineans. But you talk to a Guatemalan officer, Belize is Guatemala irredenta. If you talk to—

Shlaudeman: Venezuelans.

Gorman: —a Peruvian, you know, every country. Bolivia still trying to get the Antofagasta. You know, it was common to hear these kinds of statements from Latinos. It was just sort of part of their make-up. They had these deeply felt notions about territory. On the question of the size of your apparatuses down there, there had been three related attempts to decrease that presence. Stansfield Turner, when he was the Director of Central Intelligence, virtually dismantled the Latin American apparatus in the CIA. Ripped the stations—

Shlaudeman: Especially in Central America.

Gorman: In Central America in particular. The Carter-Torrijos Treaty had changed the whole complex of the military relations down there. The State Department was determined to eliminate the CINC-South [Commander in Chief – South] as a regional entity, de-emphasize it. It’s interesting, if you read the materials you provided us, is there any mention of CINC-South in there?

Shlaudeman: Not a one.

Gorman: Not a one. The mil groups reported to him. So if you weren’t getting anything out of that apparatus, it was intentional. The staff had been reduced substantially in Panama. The CINC was emasculated. There was no deliberate attempt to—
Train: And he was a three star.

Gorman: Yes, he was a three star. Moreover, the focus of the intelligence apparatus was on
recovering from what Stansfield Turner had done to the intelligence apparatus in Central
America. Remember that what is going on down there—and this goes to what Tom might have
brought to the proceedings in Washington. Read the speech that he made on June 21, 1982. See
where his mind is. He’s got a raft of tough problems on his plate that go well beyond.

He’s concerned about the Malvinas issue, there’s no doubt about that. But he had a lot else on his
plate. The Soviets were building a major airfield north and east of Managua, very deep runways.
Obviously runways designed to accommodate very heavy aircraft. There were revetments being
constructed there that matched very nicely the wing span of the latest MiG fighters. There was a
serious concern in Washington with the build up of the Cuban presence in Managua and the
Russian activity that was manifest in Central America, and the shipments of material, heavy
artillery, tanks, etc., going into Central America.

We had been through the Beagle controversy. We’d survived that. That managed to be mediated.
So here we were in another one of these controversies with the Argentines and the hope was that
the mediation would succeed. But the fact that the junta was able to keep a lid on word about
their expedition is surprising to me, frankly.

Shlaudeman: Amazing.

Gompert: Amazing to me.

Shlaudeman: Absolutely amazing.

Gompert: These folks in most of these countries are easy to pick up stuff from. They talk a lot
and the fact that you didn’t get a clue, Harry, is surprising to me. But we certainly didn’t have
anything in Washington to go on.

Shlaudeman: [inaudible]

Gorman: Right.

Shlaudeman: So, in fairness that’s true. But I still can’t believe that they—

Gorman: On Tom Enders, in my lowly position in the DoD, it was my duty to attend
interagency meetings. I met frequently with Tom throughout this period. I also met frequently
with representatives of the British embassy, for obvious reasons. But I don’t recall ever having
seen Tom run a meeting, an interagency meeting, about the Malvinas thing. He was concerned
with Nicaragua, he was concerned with a lot that was going on in the central and northern part of South America, but the Malvinas issue was being handled in other channels. The Secretary of State handling the negotiations, etc.

To get back to the intelligence issue, I think the Malvinas was as much a surprise to Washington as it was to you, sir.

Shlaudeman: I must say that the chief of the mil group was the one military guy who really understood that war. He briefed me every morning and told me exactly what was happening and he was right the whole time. He told me I was going to come out, too. [laughter]

Jones: May I ask a supplemental about, how concerned were you, or was anyone in the room, about the Soviet Union becoming involved in this conflict? Was that ever a serious concern?

Train: Not at all to me. That’s one of the certainties. Not at all.

Gompert: That came up in the negotiations. Actually, it came up not so much in the open negotiations, but in private channels through the ambassador, through Dick Walters, or maybe directly between Galtieri and Haig. There was this assertion on their part that I don’t think we ever were able to confirm, that the Soviets had offered help. But my initial reaction was that they were jerking our chain.

Train: This was my AOR [area of responsibility], both of them. I would say one of the questions we started asking right away, would the Soviets take advantage of this in one way or another? Got zero return on that question.

Gorman: No, I think the Soviets’ main interest was of seeing the Malvinas as a way of mobilizing Latin opinion for them and against us. As far as I could see—

Gompert: I’d distinguish between a concern that they might somehow intervene to support Argentina, which is what Galtieri told us they had offered to do. He also said, “I’m resisting it, of course, so you’ve got to get the British to come around.” I’d distinguish between that and a larger, vaguer concern that if things went really badly, really badly, that this could have repercussions throughout Latin America, of the sort that would give the Soviets at least marginally greater opportunities than they had before the crisis. At a time when there was indeed, as Paul has suggested, plenty of concern about Soviet and Cuban activities in many parts of Latin America. So there was a background of concern.

Jones: So it was extremely important not to give the Soviets any opportunity to play the colonial, imperial card. Is there evidence that they did do that? Did the Soviets benefit from this conflict in Latin America?

Knott: Jeane Kirkpatrick, you wanted to say something a minute ago.

Kirkpatrick: Well, I just wanted to say that I was very close to Bill Casey. I was a sufficiently close friend to Bill Casey that when he died his widow asked me to deliver his eulogy, let me say...
that. That says more than anything I can tell us about how close we were and how clearly his wife understood that. She was the one who said once that the two of us could be introduced into a room with 2,000 people, from opposite sides of the room, and within seven minutes we would be in a corner talking intensely, probably about Central America.

That was probably true. I never heard him say a word about concern about Soviet utilization of the Malvinas. I had an awful lot of conversations with him about this. I just don’t think he had that concern. There was a lot of concern about Soviets in the area at that time. I had a conversation with Herrera Campíns at one stage and he was really concerned about the Soviet presence in the Caribbean, very concerned. Then the Venezuelan defense minister brought a map of the Caribbean and showed it to me, to show me how by this time the construction of the air bases and the runways in Grenada had gotten underway. He took a compass and put it on this map and showed me how far a plane could go—various kinds of planes, including MiG-16s by the way, which were on his mind too—could go from that runway in Grenada. And he said that Venezuela felt concern about the Soviets. Very quietly, but they felt quite a lot of concern I think about the Soviets and the potential growing Soviet presence where they were.

Venezuela was of course very involved in Central America, as I think everybody understands. But I don’t think Venezuela was concerned about the Soviets in the Malvinas. Nothing I ever heard even implied that concern.

**Train:** One little gee-whiz thing about the Soviets is that when the British declared the maritime exclusion zone, the 200-mile circle, and declared their intent to attack any non-British ship in the maritime exclusion zone, there was a Soviet AGI [Auxiliary General Intelligence] in the zone the entire time.

**Knott:** AGI?

**Train:** AGI. Intelligence collector. They were never troubled.

**Gorman:** They probably knew more of what was going on than some of us.

**Hayward:** How long had they been down there?

**Shlaudeman:** How long had it been down? They’d moved in after we’d started.

**Gorman:** They moved their stuff too, we watched that. Harry, tell us a little bit, just for edification, about the Sovietization of the Peruvian military in this period.

**Shlaudeman:** Yes.

**Gorman:** The purchase of Soviet military equipment, sending officers to Soviet schools, that sort of thing.

**Shlaudeman:** That went back, of course, some years.
Gorman: Right.

Shlaudeman: I first had to cope with that in 1973, I guess it was. It was a conscious decision on the part of the Army. The Army was the one that drove this thing. It was very intense and it extended to all three services. As you know, the Air Force in particular was heavily Sovietized.

Gorman: Right.

Shlaudeman: They still have those helicopters, you know, those big helicopters they got from the Soviets. But this was, as I said, a deliberate scheme on the part of the high command of the Army in particular. In effect, they got this stuff free.

Gorman: Yep.

Shlaudeman: That’s what it amounted to. In terms of Sovietizing the military, it was interesting, of course, as you know, the government was very left-wing. In fact, in some ways it was even more a true socialistic experiment than [Salvador] Allende’s in some ways, but without the close political ties. However, it didn’t work. By the time I was chief of mission there, beginning in 1979, the Army was thoroughly fed up with the Soviets and wanted to resume their relationship with us. We didn’t have much to offer them.

Gorman: Exactly. There were strata in the Peruvian military, the older officers all had been to American schools, spoke English. Then there was a group of senior field-grade officers who spoke French because they’d been through the French business. Then all of the junior folks were Soviet-trained. The senior guys were very worried about this, particularly by ’79 when they were trying to reconstruct their relationship with the United States.

In any event, I divert you in all of this simply to point out that Tom Enders’s concern certainly had to extend into these areas, which were of prime importance in Washington at the time.

Gompert: One reason why we concluded in our post mortem that we had not in fact done severe damage in our Latin American relationships and not opened up new opportunities beyond those already existing for Soviet influence and Soviet presence, was in fact the way the crisis had been handled in Washington. I mean, there had been a mediation effort. There had been immense diplomatic activity with Latin Americans. During the Haig mediation and then subsequently, the goals from the outset were, “Let’s make sure to uphold the principles of non-use of force to settle disputes. Let’s make sure the relations with the British are treated carefully and specially, and that at the end of the day they are not let down. But let’s try to do those things in a way that doesn’t ruin what we’re trying to do in Latin America.” Not only in our relationships but also in the strategic context that we’ve just discussed.

And you know, on balance, messy as it may have been, I think those three goals were achieved. Whether they would have been achieved if the United States had stayed on the sidelines, had not made a mediation effort and had not continued to talk to Latin Americans about their own mediation efforts, I’m not so sure we would have come out of it as well as we did. So it may have annoyed the Prime Minister, but it didn’t change the facts at the end of the day for the UK.
It didn’t undermine the principle of non-use of force to settle disputes, and it did leave U.S.-Latin American relations, at a critical time in East-West confrontation, at least in as good a shape as they had been before it began.

**Shlaudeman:** Well, maybe.

**Gompert:** That was the conclusion that we reached at the time.

**Shlaudeman:** Well, I’ll just leave it at that. That was your conclusion, huh?

**Gompert:** They were unhappy, but did it in fact damage us? Did it result in any—that’s all I meant to say.

**Shlaudeman:** No, I think for the reason I said yesterday, the whole thing was absolutely consumed by the debt crisis. Just everything went away. And I’m not sure that even if that hadn’t happened, it would have made all that much difference.

**Knott:** Edward Streator, could you characterize the intelligence relationship between the United States intelligence community and their UK counterparts? Can you add anything to that?

**Streator:** They’re traditionally intermingled. We have a closer intelligence relationship with Britain than we have with the anyone. I don’t think it’s changed since I left the government. We share almost everything that’s relevant with them and they with us. They’re pretty good at what they do and we’re very good at what we do. There was a failure in intelligence, however; we discussed that yesterday. I think the British were chagrined.

**Gorman:** The problem with any intelligence agency is that there is the assumption that you’re dealing with rational men. It goes back to Harry’s observation that this was an irrational act on the part of the junta. Who would have thought that they would take that island?

**Streator:** Mrs. Thatcher regarded the lapse as very serious. As a matter of fact, a number of heads rolled. She literally never forgave some of the very senior people for the failure of intelligence.

**Knott:** Any of you in the room have any recollections of the impact of the sinking of the Belgrano in terms of the way the administration and Department of Defense thought about what was occurring? Did that alter anyone’s perspective?

**Shlaudeman:** It really ended the war just about. It was the sinking of the Belgrano that in the first place put the Navy back into the ports, never to emerge again. Once the Navy was out of it, how were they going to supply these people? It was impossible. I think it shocked the Argentine military to such a degree that they understood from then on they were going to lose.

**Train:** It reinforced Anaya’s view, as he expressed it to me afterwards, that once those British nuclear submarines arrived, there was no place to have them on the seas.
Shlaudeman: No place.

Train: Couldn’t operate.

Shlaudeman: Yes.

Burk: So the most important thing the British did actually was to shoot the carrier, which was of course the single most difficult thing to explain back in London.

Train: To shoot the—?

Burk: Well, to actually sink the Belgrano.

Train: But you have to look at the Belgrano sinking as a paired occurrence with the sinking of the Sheffield. Those two things ought to be taken together, one on the 2nd, one on the 4th. That really, one of the impacts of the Belgrano and Sheffield sinking was that there was no more mediation, no more attempts to bring the war to an end or to a draw. But those two things have to be looked at together, the Sheffield and the Belgrano.

Hayward: Harry, I don’t know what intelligence you were getting, hopefully better than we got from the Navy staff in the Pentagon, but we would never have predicted that the Argentine navy would stay in port. That professionals take those things and get on with the job. Yes, serious problem if there are nuclear submarines out there, but the fact that we didn’t see any action thereafter was not expected. It was only in retrospect that we look back at that, say, “Golly, why didn’t they do something?”

Train: That’s right, I agree.

Hayward: At the time we weren’t getting any intelligence. I got a report from some source that I haven’t—once this came up, I couldn’t confirm it—but I know I had a report at one time that the Argentines had shot at least one torpedo at a British ship, probably the carrier, one of the carriers. And that it malfunctioned, significantly malfunctioned. They went back into port and never could technically straighten out the problem. And that was the reason they didn’t—I don’t know if it’s accurate or not, but that’s the report I got. That that was the excuse for not—

Train: They actually fired four torpedoes. All malfunctioned.

Hayward: Yes. Had they not had that malfunction, along with some bombs that didn’t go off, and if they’d had another handful of missiles, it would have been a different story, big time. The Navy’s contribution was really sorry. It was almost treasonable it was so bad.

Train: Except for their air, the naval air.

Hayward: Yes.

Train: The Argentine naval air.
Hayward: Their guys kept fighting hard, with incredible losses. They kept going at it. They made mistakes, but it wasn’t for lack of courage.

Knott: Did the American military draw any long-term lessons from this conflict?

Hayward: I don’t think so, particularly. Did we?

Gorman: First rule of law—

Hayward: What it told us is don’t build small carriers.

Train: We knew that already,

Hayward: We knew that already. It just gave us another argument in Washington on the budget fight.

Gorman: Reaffirmed that principle of war that says, “Don’t screw up.”

Knott: Okay.

Burk: I obviously misunderstood someone last night because my memory was that one of you gentlemen, and I literally can’t remember which one, said that there were lessons drawn. Particularly, what you do when you have lines of supply and communication 8,000 miles away. I think the term “Persian Gulf” was then mentioned, although I can’t remember exactly. I got the impression that there were the odd lessons one could draw from that. So I’m slightly surprised that you’re all saying it was an irrelevant war to American strategy.

Hayward: I don’t think that it affected our belief in what we needed to reinforce globally. In other words, it certainly said, “Distance has to be solved,” but we were already thinking that way. We already had extensive plans for pre-positioning overseas, as rapid reinforcement at sea as we could. Those “lessons” did not come out of the Falklands war.

Train: It reinforced our view of the importance of deterrence. Because it certainly was that the Falkland Islands conflict was a breakdown of deterrence in a big way. It reinforced our view that deterrence continued to be important, to show your potential adversaries as well as your allies that you not only had the capability to defend your interests but also the national will to do so. That’s the nature of deterrence, capability times will.

Burk: Resources and sustainability.

Gorman: I tried to think of instances where specific lessons were drawn from the war. I could recall only one Joint Staff study that really went after that issue. It had to do with the use of container ships, which you’ll recall the British used very imaginatively in their fleet. Using them, for example, to launch Harriers with the flight deck up front. There were a couple of designs that came out of that for support of U.S. operations in the Middle East from container ships. My
memory was that one of them was a helicopter maintenance facility, built around container ships with all of the parts of the helicopter maintenance unit put into containers so that they could be loaded rapidly and then moved on any available container ship to offshore position for support of operations overseas. But it was that level of kinds of lessons learned that I think we pulled out of the whole business.

**Knott:** Part of President Reagan’s effort to rebuild America’s defenses was to create a 600-ship Navy. I’m just wondering if this helped in that desire of his, in terms of reinforcing the importance of naval power.

**Hayward:** There was already a pretty strong momentum going in that direction. By then, President Reagan had been in for a year and a half or two. So there was a lot of movement towards increasing all of the services’ capabilities. There was still a long way to go.

**Train:** I don’t think—I mean, you were the Title X authority, but I don’t think it had any impact on what you were doing, did it?

**Hayward:** No, The 600-ship Navy was a coined phrase that John Lehman created. He really believed we’d get there somehow. I don’t know where he thought the money would come from, but he truly believed we’d get there. He got to about 540 or 550 or something like that before it peaked out. But I don’t think that the Falklands war was particularly relevant in that sense. We already had the support we needed. When you had the President and the Secretary of Defense and the budget people putting lots and lots of money into the services, things were already moving.

**Knott:** Right.

**Hayward:** Had a long way to go. Much of that money went into training and spare parts and things of that sort to get readiness back. We were a sorry, sorry looking military in ’78.

**Train:** Right.

**Hayward:** Incredibly bad. Two more years at the pace we were going and we’d have looked like the British fleet.

**Knott:** On that note, let’s take a brief break. Five minutes, please.

[BREAK]

**Knott:** I just wanted to step back and ask one more question about the *Belgrano* and I’d like to direct this at Jeane Kirkpatrick. If you could perhaps tell us about the impact of the sinking of the *Belgrano* at the UN.

**Kirkpatrick:** At the UN, the sinking of the *Belgrano* had a greater impact than all the other events in the war combined. It was a very large shock. I don’t know what people at the UN thought a war would be like, but they obviously didn’t think it would be that, because it created
great surprise, great shock, great disapproval and sort of incomprehension. That’s why I say I
don’t know what they thought it would be like.

It reminded me more dramatically than anything ever had about how limited the experience of
the Latin Americans had been with war in our times, because I don’t think they thought the war
was going to involve sinking a ship and killing young men. It created great shock, I’m sure,
Harry, you remember, in the Latin press, for example.

Shlaudeman: Oh, tremendous.

Kirkpatrick: It continued for quite a long time. That’s all.

Knott: Thank you for that. I’d like to turn again to Christopher Collins, who has some questions,
I think, for Ambassador Kirkpatrick.

Collins: Before you arrived this morning, we had a brief discussion of the diplomacy of May.
Yesterday we discussed mostly what happened in April when Haig was shuttling back and forth,
and of course what happens then is he ends his shuttle and there’s the U.S. tilt on the 30
April. You make the decision that you’re going to lean towards Britain.

However, there was quite a lot of diplomacy still happening in May, more of it in the UN in fact
than previously. Two phone calls especially, from President Reagan to Mrs. Thatcher. One of the
things Mr. Gompert said before he left was that Al Haig had very much wanted not to have
phone calls from the President to the Prime Minister, fearing perhaps it would cut across his
efforts so it would go badly. I wanted to know in fact whether you have any recollections of
those calls that took place on the 13
—

Kirkpatrick: What did you say, that Al Haig preferred not to have telephone calls from the
President to Mrs. Thatcher?

Collins: Yes. Mr. Gompert thought that essentially Al Haig felt that his mediation would suffer
if there were such calls. That they might create a negative British reaction and they would just
cut across what he was trying to do. Once his mediation was over, there were two calls. I wonder
whether you have any recollection of those and whether you were involved in initiating either of
them. They were on the 13 of May, just to give some context, when the Brazilian President was
in Washington, in fact. He visited at one point. And then there was one on the 31, by which
time Britain had actually landed and fighting is actually going on on land.

Kirkpatrick: What occurs to me to say, simply, is that I don’t think the President felt that he had
degated full authority or control to Al Haig over relations with Mrs. Thatcher about the
Malvinas-Falklands. And I think this, by the way, was probably—I would prefer not to be quoted
on this—I think that the sense on the part of the President that Secretary Haig desired really to
control the negotiations even down to the conversations, was strong and not welcome, simply
said.
I have no question in my own mind that it was a reason that they—they being Bill Clark and the President—instructed me to accept any approaches that high-level Argentines made to discuss the solution of the problem. It was a reflection of an imperfect confidence, frankly, I think, to put it mildly, of the President in Secretary Haig as his sole interlocutor. You’ve heard Secretary Weinberger say as he left, what he said about Bill Clark’s commitment to making certain that the President was informed of everything that happened and what was said and where the conversation seemed to be going. This was the way the President wanted it.

It was not the way he felt he got fully kept abreast of developments from Secretary Haig. I don’t remember any specific conversations. I can only, in my own mind, be certain that the President would not accept strictures on his communications with Mrs. Thatcher, to whom he felt very close and to whom he felt very committed. I feel certain that he would have felt offended by any suggestion from anyone in the Secretary’s entourage that he not have any conversations with Mrs. Thatcher. To put it mildly, he would not have felt bound by any such suggestions. That said, he also would not have welcomed them. He thought he was President.

Knott: Did you want to follow up with this, Chris?

Collins: Perhaps we could ask a bit about the hopes that you had to limit the damage that the fighting was actually going to be doing.

Kirkpatrick: Pardon me?

Collins: I wanted to ask a little bit about the hopes that you had in Washington to limit the damage diplomatically in Latin America from the fighting itself. The fighting begins on the 1st or 2nd of May, the sinking of the Belgrano is the first big event, the Sheffield follows on the 4th. On the 21st British troops actually land, and the land war begins and proceeds for the next three weeks or so. At that stage, proposals are coming from a number of corners for ceasefires to take place. Was that something that you felt would be a helpful development, that the British should be prevailed upon to cease fire before the fall of—?

Kirkpatrick: Frankly, I never developed an independent opinion about this, because I always assumed that there were a lot of conversations going on in Washington and in London about which I was not fully informed. What I did basically was, when I heard of such initiatives, if they seemed to me to be sufficiently significant—well, even if they didn’t seem very significant—I reported them. Typically I reported both in writing and orally to Washington. Then I followed instructions that I got from Washington. My instructions typically came from the White House during this period, not from the State Department. That was true quite a lot, most of my period in government, actually. Although I always made an effort to communicate to the State Department any conversations I ever had with anyone that I thought were significant, in fact, but I also communicated with the White House.

The only one that I can recall that I may have put any significant emphasis on, which I mentioned yesterday, the Javier Perez de Cuellar conversations. Because he and I had come to know each other reasonably well and he was very disturbed and unhappy about this war. He felt that Secretary Haig was very negative about any efforts on his part to try to find a solution.
Javier Perez de Cuellar felt that he might be better situated, he might be able to find something that Secretary Haig hadn’t been able to find, so he wanted to pursue it. I think Javier Perez de Cuellar is a very considerate and reasonable man and he was seeking to be helpful. He was not seeking any kind of aggrandizement, which I think was taken to be the case sometimes in Washington. Harry would know that better than I.

**Shlaudeman:** Well, I think he’s a great Peruvian, that’s my review of Javier. In fact, he should have been President.

**Kirkpatrick:** He’s also a very seasoned diplomat, with very close contacts with the French and many other countries.

**Knott:** Yesterday you told us the story about the vote at the UN and the confusion that surrounded the vote.

**Kirkpatrick:** You can call it that.

**Knott:** At least from the outside at the time, there was the appearance of a kind of lack of coordination within the Reagan administration. As someone who has served in government and is also a student of government, were things worse in the Reagan administration perhaps than in other administrations? Was there this lack of coordination and if so, do you think it was perhaps worse in the Reagan years than elsewhere?

**Kirkpatrick:** Maybe the most direct way to answer those is simply to suggest that the impression of lack of coordination was to some sense—it was altered and improved, I think, when George Shultz became Secretary of State. I don’t know whether you would agree with that, Harry.

**Shlaudeman:** Yes. I would, yes.

**Kirkpatrick:** That’s my strong impression.

**Knott:** So the problem was this gap between Alexander Haig and the White House, was that the source?

**Kirkpatrick:** That wasn’t the way it was seen in the White House, that wasn’t the problem.

I believe that Secretary Haig was difficult for a good many people in the Reagan administration to work with very effectively. I don’t know why, frankly, I don’t. But I think that’s what happened. One of the reasons I think that’s what happened is that it was so quickly ameliorated by a change in personnel at the top in the State Department.

I do believe as a student of American government and only an occasional practitioner, I believe that there is much greater potential for conflict inside our departments and among our departments than in some other governments, obviously.
Knott: Sure.

Kirkpatrick: It’s part of our whole division, system of checks and balances and divisions of power, and I think it affects, it manifests itself again and again in various administrations. We have seen a different version of the manifestation of a similar phenomenon in this administration, for example. All these various comments about conflicts between the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State. There were certain issues in the Reagan administration that were subject to interdepartmental, or interpersonal, or both, friction, from the beginning to the end of the Reagan administration. One of these was Central America. It was quite tense and it developed almost in the beginning and it persisted almost to the end. It was certainly present, it defined almost, it structured the relations among a good many people in the administration at the top levels.

But I didn’t see it in the Falklands-Malvinas. And I don’t think that any of the tensions among people that manifested themselves in other aspects of the Latin American problems, especially Central America, were affected by the Malvinas-Falklands.

Knott: A general question, somewhat related to the Falklands but not entirely, is this perception of Ronald Reagan as a very detached chief executive who excessively delegated authority. Would you care to comment on that? Your take on that?

Kirkpatrick: I think that Ronald Reagan was very interested in policy. You cannot understand his relationship and the closeness of his relationship to Mrs. Thatcher without understanding that they were both very interested in policy. They were interested in domestic policy and foreign policy. They were interested in economic issues and strategic issues. They were both conviction politicians. And, I think—state your question again?

Knott: Just this image of Ronald Reagan as a detached—

Kirkpatrick: Okay. Makes me a little tense, that question. I think that Ronald Reagan was very interested in policy. The first conversations I ever had with Ronald Reagan concerned Latin America. They concerned not just Central America, though they certainly concerned Central America, but they also concerned Latin America generally. As a Governor of California he was of course involved with Latin America continually as the most important foreign countries, if you will, in the California foreign policy. I don’t think he ever lost that perception of Latin America as maybe specially important. Not the most important to the United States, but very important to the United States. He never lost that sense of the geopolitical importance of Latin America to the United States. I don’t know, but I think Ronald Reagan had a sense of the Americas and of the United States as part of the Americas. I don’t think he ever lost that sense of the geopolitical importance of Latin America.

I think that figured also in his interest and priorities in the Caribbean. I think some of the people who described him as uninterested in policy were people whom he was uninterested in discussing policy with, frankly. There are a lot of people here who knew him and so I’m not the only one who could comment on this, but I have a strong sense about that. He always wanted to discuss Central America. He always wanted to discuss the Soviet Union. If you read, there’s a
book, his autobiography, *An American Life*, which has not been very highly regarded by a lot of the biographers. I think it’s an excellent autobiography in fact, which very accurately reflects Ronald Reagan’s views about much of the world at the time he became President and in his first years as President. The geopolitical map from which he operated and the value system from which he operated.

I said to you yesterday, or somebody, in a private conversation—the two of you, I guess—that to me it is inconceivable that anyone should ever have had any question about whether Ronald Reagan’s government would ever have not responded positively to the needs of the United Kingdom. Not only because of his relationship with Mrs. Thatcher and their many common values and goals, but also because of his strategic view of the world and his strong personal commitment to the Anglo-American relationship. I think that was very clear, right from the beginning. He brought it to the White House and he left with it.

Just in the same sense, he brought to the White House this knowledge—it wasn’t just a conception, it was knowledge—about the Soviet military buildup. It was his great concern. He brought to the White House also some knowledge of the deterioration of our intelligence capacities over the previous years. He was deeply concerned about it and he heard a lot of confirmation of this from Bill Casey, too, and a lot of serious conversations. He was deeply concerned about the rebuilding of American military strength in the world.

I think his conception of the world was much like Americans who went through World War II, except that the Soviet Union—which was the big exception—the Soviet Union was never just the only center of his conception of the world, but it was the only major threat. I think that was realistic at that time, too. Okay?

**Knott:** Okay. Would anyone else like to comment on that? Can I get Michael Parsons to take the hot seat here? Michael has a few questions to ask related to the press in the Falklands.

**Parsons:** Yes, I’d like to ask a question about the way responses to the Falklands crisis in the various agencies and departments in Washington were represented in the press. I was struck, particularly yesterday, but again just a moment ago listening to accounts of the time, with the sense that there was a broad agreement that the United States should side with the United Kingdom. And yet many observers have seemed to suggest that there were very differing views as to exactly where America’s priorities really lay. This has often been portrayed in terms of a Latino lobby on the one hand and a European lobby on the other hand. One tending to lean toward Argentina, the other leaning rather more towards Britain and being instinctively perhaps favorable to Britain. Now is this oversimplification? Is it misrepresentation? Is it disinformation? Or did I not understand fully what I heard yesterday and again this morning about this broad agreement as to the need for the United States to side with Britain?

**Kirkpatrick:** I don’t think there was ever a question. You know, I think there’s a lot of fantasy in our press. I don’t know any word other than fantasy, frankly. Coming in this morning, I heard on NPR [National Public Radio] a discussion about the way the events in Iraq are being treated by our press today. There was a question, someone, about whether they were being exaggerated. I don’t think they’re so much exaggerated as they are imagined in fact.
I signed a contract for a very large amount of money to write a memoir when I left the government. The big reason I gave them back their advance, and never wrote the memoir, was mainly because I decided if I were going to write an account of my experiences in the government I would want to tell the truth as I saw it, and I didn’t want to tell the truth as I saw it. I felt at the time, and I have felt much of the time since then, that there were a good many people in our government, operating at responsible levels, who were simply saying untrue things again and again. Untrue and misleading things.

I’m sure I’m not the only person who has had such an experience, but there may have been one sort of, not unique, but unusual thing about my situation, and it was that I had never been in government. I went into government very near the top and I had never served in any other role. So there was a great deal about what’s normal in government that I didn’t know about. I didn’t know how people normally behaved. I don’t think I still know how people normally behave in government.

**Hayward:** It does seem to me that if you rely on the U.S. media to tell you reasonably accurately what’s going on, it’s a big mistake. The national news channels are committed to compete with each other for stories. If you deal with just the Pentagon alone, you’ll find any story you want over there, and you’ll read those. So you have to be incredibly careful as to what you derive from that if you’re a student of the problem. It’s so misleading.

**Knott:** Did it make your job difficult, anyone’s job here difficult at any time? I mean really difficult, not just annoying?

**Hayward:** The media?

**Knott:** Yes.

**Train:** I think it makes the service chiefs just stay away from it all they possibly can.

**Hayward:** You have to be careful, really careful, but not to the point where you wouldn’t talk to them or didn’t talk to them at all.

**Parsons:** They’d invent something.

**Train:** But you’ve got to be careful. But by and large they were okay. You had to also look at what was each of their individual audiences. They played to individual audiences, just like CNN International plays to an audience and CNN within this country plays to an audience, and you see different stories on the two pieces of CNN, because they’re playing to an audience.

**Kirkpatrick:** I want to say that it was well known in the State Department and the CIA that I was a kind of special target of the Soviets for the period that I was in the government.

**Knott:** A disinformation target?
Kirkpatrick: Disinformation target. There were several specific instances that were identified by our intelligence agencies and revealed and discussed in public, on the Hill for example, and so forth. But I felt that there was as much disinformation aimed at me from inside our government frankly, as from the Soviet Union. [laughter] That’s a shocking thing to say, but it is no exaggeration actually.

Hayward: Sure, sure.

Streator: I’d like to say a word in defense of the free press. [laughter]

Train: I wasn’t attacking it—

Kirkpatrick: I’m not attacking the press.

Streator: No, I simply would say that for a working foreign service officer like me, in the posts I served in—I was Deputy U.S. Rep at NATO, I was ambassador to the OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development], I was DCM in London and so forth—I always regarded them frankly as an extension of the foreign service in many ways. They were important sources for me of information about what was going on in the societies and in the intellectual world of strategic issues or economic issues in which I happened to be working. And I would say that of all the relationships I have had throughout my career, I’ve cherished most my relationships with journalists. So I come at it from a slightly different angle. Nobody’s ever attacked me, I must say, in the press, so I perhaps have been spared that misfortune. Nonetheless, they play a very important role in the day-to-day work of a diplomat in an open society, very important.

Gorman: Michael, I’ve been searching my mind trying to think of what keyed your belief that there was a cabal called the Latinos.

Kirkpatrick: Yes, I never heard that either.

Train: I didn’t either.

Shlaudeman: I was happy to hear there was such a thing. I always thought we didn’t have any influence at all.

Gorman: Right.

Kirkpatrick: I never heard—

Gorman: We just imagined that we were so organized.

Parsons: There’s one particular quotation which has often been referred to, I believe, on Face the Nation. Something you said, which may often have been—

Kirkpatrick: Me?
Parsons: Yes, misrepresented or misinterpreted, from memory. Something to the effect that if the Argentines owned the islands, then moving armed forces into them was not really armed aggression. I’ve heard that mentioned on a number of occasions and I wonder if that really reflects what you actually meant at the time or has it been quoted selectively.

Kirkpatrick: Right. I think it probably meant—if that’s what I said, but I think I didn’t—it was badly stated, because what I said didn’t reflect what I meant, I think. What I meant was that from the Argentine perspective it was not aggression, and I think that’s absolutely—I’m sure Harry would agree with that.

Shlaudeman: Yes.

Kirkpatrick: I mean, because they thought those were their islands, very much like the Moroccans think Saguia is theirs or whatever. I didn’t mean that I thought they were theirs. Obviously, this is an important part of this extraordinary conflict, which came as such a shock to everybody. One of the reasons I think that the Argentines probably didn’t worry about being misunderstood was that they didn’t think that they were going to be committing aggression. I don’t think they ever thought about it in those terms, that’s what I was trying to say. So I don’t think they probably ever thought about the UK as an enemy, with whom they might go to war. Do you think so, Harry?

Shlaudeman: I haven’t had a chance to say this. When I finally got to see Galtieri that fateful day, as I was leaving, he said, in effect, “Well, you had your little dust up with the British, now we’re going to have ours.” That’s what he said. [laughter]

Knott: Little?

Gorman: In any event, it must have been clear to you from what Cap Weinberger told you, that from the very start of this business, the word “tilt” that’s been used here doesn’t apply to what the Department of Defense was doing.

Parsons: Absolutely clear, yes.

Gorman: Secondly, with respect to what the Department of State was concerned with, we had a long discussion this morning, but I don’t think there was any identifiable grouping of folks there that was actively arguing the Argentine side of the issue. The problem was always presented as how can we work our way through this delicate set of problems confronting us south of our border, which included now a war. Again, this presentation on the 21st of June by Tom Enders is a good way of seeing that perspective. If there was anybody who would be arguing the view of the quote Latino lobby unquote from a position of authority, it would be Ton Enders, and he didn’t do that.

Parsons: Thank you very much.

Knott: Jeane Kirkpatrick, did you want to say something?
Kirkpatrick: No, that would also have been true down to that last telephone conversation about the resolution and how we were going to vote. I mean, Tom was certainly arguing right down to the end—Tom and I were both arguing the abstention case. Now, if you want to call that the Latino case, I don’t call that the Latino case. I call that the U.S. case, because obviously what the U.S. government wanted to do from the beginning was provide the maximum effective military assistance to the UK, as effectively as we could and as promptly as we could, with as least damage to the U.S. position in the hemisphere and the UN and elsewhere as was necessary.

Train: Would you characterize that as not becoming a party to the war without becoming a party to the war? I mean, that was our restraint.

Kirkpatrick: No, I don’t think so. I don’t think I ever heard anybody argue that, in fact.

Streator: In Britain our attempt at equity was seen as hostility. There’s no doubt about that.

Kirkpatrick: I’m sorry, I didn’t understand you.

Streator: What I said was that our attempt at equity was seen, in effect, as hostile.

Kirkpatrick: Right.

Streator: In the sense that during the period when we were in negotiations, ordinary Brits would say to me, “How can you do this after ...” and I kept explaining to them that a certain neutrality had to be maintained if Secretary Haig were to make any progress whatsoever in his dealings with the Argentines. They weren’t impressed by that argument. The British press was distinctly hostile and they were quite direct in criticizing you personally.

Kirkpatrick: Well, they were also very unfair in much of their criticism of me.

Streator: And also Tom Enders.

Kirkpatrick: That’s right.

Streator: In effect, you were the culprits as far as they were concerned. Again, I think it was quite clear, because there were no corroborating versions, subsequently, once it became evident that we were seriously trying to resolve the crisis, all of that stuff faded away. There’s no residual animosity.

Parsons: Would you say in effect that perhaps by the end of May, the British press was actually feeling very favorable to the United States because of the support it was getting, or had been given?

Streator: Absolutely. Everybody knew that they couldn’t do it without us.
Kirkpatrick: But I would like to say that I believe, personally, that most of the criticism of me, and the misstatements of my position, which were gross and bizarre, came from inside our government, not outside. I’m including, by the way, some of the comments of British officials about me, which I believe came initially from inside the U.S. government. I learned quite a bit about this through time. I don’t have any interest in dwelling on it, frankly. Quite the contrary.

Knott: Okay. Kathy, go ahead. Follow up?

Burk: No, just a slight question about the American media. Sir Anthony Parsons, in his piece that was in the briefing book that some of you may have found time to read, mentions that during especially the debates in the Security Council, he couldn’t go outside without having masses of microphones and so forth. That at that point the Security Council was really the center of attention for much of the media. But yesterday someone said it didn’t make any difference at all, it was a back page story. Maybe I read that in one of the others, I can’t remember. But it was the contradiction in that that quite struck me. I mean, from your memory would you say that A) that there was the media attention, and B) what the general thrust of it was?

Kirkpatrick: Well, there was a lot of media attention, there’s no question about that, in the Security Council during the debates and votes. But they weren’t going to resolve anything, frankly. We don’t want to confuse those debates and those votes with the important decisions. The media I don’t think understood this, probably. I don’t know what the media understands sometimes.

I don’t really want to be quoted as saying this, but almost no really important issues are ever solved in the Security Council, resolved in the Security Council. What happens in the Security Council is that decisions that are taken elsewhere inside governments are reported and added up in the Security Council and so the decisions get announced. The decisions are announced as Security Council decisions, but they’re not Security Council decisions usually. They’re decisions of governments that were taken earlier, which are then registered through the representatives of countries in the decision of the Security Council.

Burk: What I’m interested in is what role the American media played in the development of the crisis. I know that you will say that it made no difference to the votes and I understand that, but one gets the impression from Ambassador Henderson’s Mandarin, which I’m sure most of you have taken a look at, that he spent a good deal of his time trying to affect public opinion, partly for its own sake and of course partly for its effect on Congress, as we all know how that works. So what I am interested in is your perceptions of what role the British attempt to manipulate the media had, and the media’s effect on the way the crisis developed.

Kirkpatrick: My perception? Everybody’s?

Burk: I’m easy.

Train: I don’t know what to say.
Streator: I can only speak from the standpoint of the British press and I’ve already said something on that. I don’t know what the American press was saying sufficiently well to know whether it had an impact on thinking here in important circles or not.

Shlaudeman: You haven’t said anything about the Argentine press.

Knott: Please.

Shlaudeman: The Argentine press played a big role, an enormous role in whipping up the public—as I have mentioned before, Iglesias Rouco, this columnist in La Prensa, sort of laid the whole basis for the war. We didn’t recognize it, but that’s what he was doing. I must say I was happy to hear Ed say that nobody’s ever attacked him. I’ve been attacked a lot. In fact, Clarín, this year, got a hold of—as you know undoubtedly, Mrs. [Madeleine] Albright had a whole Argentine file declassified and so Clarín went in there and got all these telegrams that we sent. A lot of pretty stupid telegrams, I must say, on reading them. Then they had the absolute gall to attack me.

This is Clarín, the toady to the military government, whose wife of the owner of Clarín reportedly adopted one of these children from the disappeared, and then they had the gall to attack me. As you can see I’m quite resentful about it because I had hoped that all of this was in the past. Seriously, even today, I think you would find in the Argentine media, 100 percent, “The Falklands belong to us, the Malvinas belong to us.” It’s never going to go away.

Kirkpatrick: Whereas at the UN we always said the Falklands-Malvinas.

Knott: Michael Kandiah from the Institute of Contemporary British History has a few questions he’d like to ask.

Kandiah: Hello. Actually, there are a number of observations and then a question. One of the things that struck me yesterday, Mr. Weinberger said the U.S. government did not want to abandon an ally and that it had obligations to Britain and that the UK was one of our closest and oldest friends. These are my notes so there may be slight errors. Also, David Gompert pointed out at another point that there was never any real doubt about the outcome, i.e., that the British would recapture the Falkland Islands. However, one of the things that truly occurs to me, and this has to do with a broad question of Anglo-American relations, it would seem to me that Anglo-American relations are based on the fact that from the American point of view—I’d like to know your comment on what I’m about to say—is that Britain is a reliable and a useful ally. That is one of the reasons why this close relationship exists, if it does.

It also leads me to think that if the Falklands went horribly wrong, this useful and reliable ally would be compromised. A compromised UK would be a problem for NATO, surely. I mean, after all, 70 percent—these are the figures which I have gathered, from what I can see—70 percent of patrols of Atlantic seaways, the UK controls. If the UK had become discredited as a result of the failure in the Falklands, and if it continued to pull back—you remember, yesterday it was mentioned the 1981 defense review, the Nott review, which was cutting down the UK military by 25 percent, which is, of course, a very significant reduction—this would definitely
have an implication for the U.S., in the U.S.’s own direct security. So that is something that I would like to know your impression about.

Also, there is another aspect of spending and defense within the NATO commitment. Traditionally the UK has spent as much as it can comfortably do on defense, and much more than arguably many other NATO countries, and this is, from what I can see, a source of some contention between the U.S. and its NATO allies. Now, again, if a compromised UK, following, say, a failure in the Falklands, might be inclined to spend less, this would suggest to be a problem for the U.S.

Lastly there’s also the problem of the UN. Again, my impression about the Anglo-American relationship is a certain coordination, particularly historically. I don’t specifically mean at the time of the Falklands war, but certainly from the late ’40s, ’50s, and ’60s. I keep calling this a coordination between the U.S. and the UK over UN matters. Again, if the UK is severely compromised as a result of a failure of the Falklands war, this would potentially have an effect on the way the U.S. conducts its foreign policy. Now this is all speculation, so I’d like to see whether you have any thoughts about that.

Train: Let me make a point as forcefully as I can make it. One of the discussions that you seldom, if ever, have in the councils of government, whether it be just military or political-military, as events are progressing in a conflict, you seldom if ever ask the question, what happens if we lose? What happens if the Brits lose?

Kirkpatrick: That’s right.

Train: That, to my knowledge, that was never addressed. I’d be astounded if it were addressed. So it’s such a hypothetical question it is almost impossible to answer. I don’t know if the rest of you’ll agree with me. Tom, can you ever remember this?

Hayward: I don’t remember reflecting on a British loss. We certainly probably should have, as you look back at it.

Train: Yes.

Hayward: Would we have stepped in and done something? Was something going on down there in the Joint Staff that I wasn’t aware of? But I don’t think we anticipated the British losing. It was only after we knew how it came out that we knew how close a call it was.

Gorman: We spent some anxious moments—

Train: Anxious moments, right.

Gorman: —but I don’t think there was any doubt at the outcome. I think that we all sort of implicitly believed in Madam Thatcher’s statement. This woman stands, sort of thing.
Kirkpatrick: I would just add to that because I was present in the NSPG meetings where this was discussed a lot. It was simply not seriously considered. I mean, I think we have not gotten through yet—at least I have not, and with Cap Weinberger yesterday—that no one intended to let that happen. By no one, I mean the President and the Secretary of Defense and the people making the decisions at the top level of our government. The people in a position to decide would not simply have permitted that to happen. I think they made that clear in ways that I can’t quite recapture the words of, but they made it clear right from the beginning. That never was a question, period.

Streator: I was interested yesterday by Secretary Weinberger’s invocation of the NATO treaty commitment, because it’s okay to say that—

Train: But it’s not true.

Gorman: But it’s not true.

Streator: —it’s not true. To the extent, we all know, I think.

Train: Article VI says that when an attack on a party in Article V, where an attack on one is an attack on all, shall not apply south of the Tropic of Cancer.

Streator: Exactly.

Gorman: I was struck by the same thing.

Kirkpatrick: I was too yesterday, but I was also struck by it a long time ago in discussions, on precisely of this war, in the NSPG meetings.

Streator: I always assumed it was a good rhetorical point, no meaning in reality.

Kirkpatrick: Weinberger has always spoken that way.

Knott: Jeane Kirkpatrick, could you just repeat what you just said? We had two conversations there.

Kirkpatrick: I just said I was struck by it too when he said it the other day, but I was not surprised because I have heard him say that several times in discussions precisely about this conflict. That’s the way he has spoken about it, period. I think it’s also the way President Reagan spoke about it, too. That’s part of what I mean when I say there never was any question. To think there was a question, you had to not be listening, that’s all I can say.

Knott: Thank you.

Gorman: I would put the meaning on it to the effect that to your point, there’s no question about the value of the American-British alliance vis-a-vis NATO or vis-a-vis our present undertakings in the Middle East. I don’t think anyone could question the solidity and the firmness of those
reciprocal commitments. Whether Cap meant it or not, I think he was simply trying to express the point that we saw the NATO alliance as pivotally involving the U.S.-British relationship.

**Streator:** I think in my experience over the years, what I would call the broad strategic implications, which is what you’re talking about, consideration of those issues certainly does apply in other circumstances, ranging from the Congo—which the American government I think quite wrongly felt was a Communist problem—it wasn’t, it was a tribal problem, still is—to the problems in Central America. Those involving [Fidel] Castro, etc. Those are strategically important issues. But nobody ever discussed the Falklands in mega-strategic terms with me, anyway.

**Kandiah:** Yes, that sort of brings another question to my mind and that has to do with the history of the U.S.-UK relations, in that it’s not always a straight line thing. You know, there are ups and downs as there are bound to be in any relationship. It is my impression as an historian, that following the East of Suez decision in the late ’60s, to perhaps, certainly 1979, 1980, there is a problem with Anglo-U.S. relations. What you seem to be suggesting now is that really, from your point of view, the value of the UK is absolutely obvious. Is this because the Republicans are in power and you’ve also got a Conservative government in the UK in power, which see many issues eye-to-eye, and broadly agree on the deepening cold war that is happening after the invasion of Afghanistan? Or is it something which perhaps is much longer, which perhaps some historians have misunderstood?

**Streator:** Well, you don’t have a Conservative government in Britain today.

**Kandiah:** No, I mean in that time, at the time of the Falklands war.

**Streator:** I don’t think so. Look, my view about the special relationship is that there is no special relationship. I mean, they’re grownups and we’re grownups and we have huge coincidences of similar interests. That’s been the governing factor in our relationship over the years. It’s easier to talk to the Brits because we’re on the same wavelength on some of these subjects, we’re both liberal democracies and so forth, essentially capitalistic, capitalistically-oriented in our approach to economic issues. It creates a sense of rapport. But there are a great many very intelligent Brits who really resent the notion of a special relationship, [Lord] David Owen among them, who will talk to you at great length about why he thinks it doesn’t exist.

But I guess the short answer to your question is “no.” I think where it suits our national interests we will continue to cooperate closely with them, and vice versa.

**Knott:** Anyone else wish to add to this?

**Streator:** I want to add a word to that. I constantly talk to my British friends about Europe and their role in Europe. One of the things I say to them is, you’ve got to think of yourself in the future. You have a United States today which has a mind set that in general is favorable to your interests. But to British Conservatives who oppose a closer association with Europe, I say,
you’ve got to assume that at some point you have got to defend yourself should we in the United States choose to do something different. For that reason alone, you ought to think very carefully about your relationships with your closest neighbors. I think the Conservatives in Britain particularly shelter in the assumption that the United States will always be their friend on every issue. I think if I were British, I’d hedge my bets.

**Kirkpatrick:** Surely they haven’t forgotten Suez.

**Streator:** No, but nonetheless.

**Knott:** Anything else, Michael? Melissa Higginbotham has a question.

**Higginbotham:** I have actually two questions, the first one to Admiral Train. Then to, of course, the rest of the military audience. The first question is, knowing that the Argentines would have to end up defending Port Stanley, why did they split their forces?

**Train:** Why did the Argentines split their forces? Because they didn’t understand the tactical situation. They were also under the—let me try to expand the premise of your question. The Argentines who were defending Port Stanley found it impossible to conceive that the British would land anyplace other than Port Stanley. They therefore kept the shore batteries pointed seawards from Port Stanley rather than back into the direction from which it turned out the British were approaching.

Even after the British landed at San Carlos, they didn’t turn those batteries around. But, as to why they split their forces, I believe that if in fact there was a split—you mean to the other islands?

**Higginbotham:** Um-hum.

**Train:** That just reflected some uncertainty in their mind as to where the British might land. The Argentines had about six candidate landing sites, but they were heavily hedging their bets on it being right at Port Stanley, because they said the British always attack the center of strength, they don’t attack someplace else. But they did want to hedge their bets and not have the British land someplace else, like another island, and use the landing strip at that other island to threaten their presence at Port Stanley. That’s not a very coherent explanation, but they don’t have a coherent explanation. There was a lot of fragmentation within the Army. General Maher really didn’t have full control of what was happening on the islands. He was given a lot of help from people ranging from Galtieri to other people in government.

**Knott:** Harry Shlaudeman, did you want to add something?

**Shlaudeman:** Not to this. I’ll ask it later, I have a question.

**Higginbotham:** Then when the Argentines said they weren’t able to lengthen the runway, it was physically impossible, was that due to incompetence or was that due to the fact they didn’t have
earth moving equipment there? Then, as an extension of that question, what was the overall logistics concept of any of the Argentines and the British?

**Train:** In the process of sending supplies to the island after the landing, they did send the earth moving equipment. They did load the landing mats on another ship. That ship was directed back into port to shift its load, to send something else. They unloaded the landing mats and put something else on that ship, artillery, I believe. That ship then got underway, ran aground, hit a reef and got nothing to the island. So they had the earth moving equipment; they did not have the landing mats. The landing mats had not been sunk, they were in this—I forget what port.

I had a whole afternoon’s intense argument with General Lami Dozo when I posed the question to him of why didn’t you lengthen the landing strip. His consistent answer was, “I could not.” To which I replied, “Well, the British did it in ten days and had F-4’s flying out of the air strip at Port Stanley within ten days of taking Port Stanley. Why couldn’t you have done it with the extra amount of time you had and knowing that you didn’t have to lengthen the landing strip as much to operate A-4’s as the British did to operate F-4’s?” And he said, “I couldn’t, I couldn’t do it.” In fact, we got into a rather intense discussion on this point to the degree where our defense attachés had to break us up. It was getting too emotional. I couldn’t understand his position and he obviously didn’t want to understand mine.

**Higginbotham:** Was there any perception that they did have an overall logistics concept?

**Train:** No, I don’t think they had an overall logistics concept. They certainly didn’t have a transportation operating authority concept so they could pull everything together to support three separately operating services that really weren’t joined at all.

**Higginbotham:** How about your perception of the British and their logistic goal capabilities beyond the fact that they were getting rid of some of their ships?

**Train:** They did not combat load the ships that came; they just sort of threw the equipment in. So when they got to port, to San Carlos, they had to unload everything before they could really get moving. They didn’t have stuff loaded in those ships that, as General Gorman will certainly understand and support, they didn’t have them combat loaded. They were just loaded like civilian ships and they unloaded everything on the ground there at San Carlos.

**Higginbotham:** Did that add to any constraints in the beginning of the action?

**Train:** Time constraints. They were not moving. The people in London were nervous that they were not moving, and that’s why they were prodded into attacking Goose Green, which was not a tactical objective at all. In fact, it was off their line of march, defended by 1,400 Argentines. They were forced by London to do something to show that once they were on the ground they were a viable force. So they attacked Goose Green, almost lost that little battle. The commander of the Second Para was killed and just as the British were about to retreat, the Argentines came out and threw down their weapons and surrendered.

**Knott:** Harry Shlaudeman, did you want to add something to this?
Shlaudeman: No, no, not to this.

**Knott:** No further comments?

**Higginbotham:** How about from the Joint perspective? Was General Gorman, did—

**Gorman:** I would just point out that all war is two-sided. Brits had problems. But in the end they had far less problems than their adversaries.

**Knott:** I think we’ll have just one final question from—

**Burk:** Okay. The question of significance of the Falklands. What has been coming through here is that it was less than important. At least from the American point of view, it was sort of an epi-

phenomenon. It happened for various reasons that no one really understands particularly—does in general terms, but why that, why then, is not a military question so much as a nationalistic question, one might say.

Now from the British point of view, it is more significant than that. We haven’t really mentioned Suez, but this of course dominated many of the minds of the policy makers. Were the Americans going to dump them in it, as had happened at Suez? What it did was at least two things. First of all, it reassured the British that the Americans might be dependable allies again. There was always this question of whether this was the case. And secondly, it made it clear to the British that they were now again capable of carrying out a military expedition of unusual complexity and difficulty.

Thirdly, then, it seems to me—and I would like your comments on this—that it made Britain again a valuable ally, a militarily valuable ally. Not just GCHQ [Government Communications Headquarters], for example, not just a sort of representative on targeting committee, but actually an ally whom it was important to have on side. Not just for diplomacy and Arabic speakers and so forth, but for the ability, as Mr. Gompert was saying, not only at the low level in terms of having all the on-the-job training in Northern Ireland so they were comfortable between that and the imperial traditions, comfortable with dealing with hand-to-hand combat, one might say, but also, and Mr. Gompert emphasized, at the highest level of fighting as well. So to what extent would you see the Falklands conflict as important, not only for the British but for the Americans?

**Streator:** I’ll start.

**Knott:** Please.

**Streator:** I think the most important consideration is that the British traditionally have spent about 5 percent of their GDP [gross domestic product] on defense. It’s been a little less lately and certainly since the thin red line speech of Dennis Healy in ’66 or so, the trend has been downward. The British military is deeply worried about that. Probably the best thing from a British point of view to have come out of the Iraqi scene thus far is the likelihood that there’ll be
more spent on defense if Gordon Brown can find a way to squeeze it out. Or if they can squeeze it out of Gordon Brown, which is still an open question.

But beyond that as well, there are only two powers in Europe apart from the Russians who are capable of projecting power beyond their own borders in a real sense. That is, Britain and France. The British are terribly important, not least because as Ronald Reagan found, overflight rights are terribly important. As we have known for years now, Britain is a superb anchored aircraft carrier, which has been enormously important to us strategically.

Burk: Libya comes to mind.

Streator: Exactly. So, I guess your question really is, do we consider that the Falklands enhanced our awareness of Britain’s capability? Did the Falklands make Britain more able to live up to commitments in NATO? Yes, probably both. I see no reason to anticipate that they’re going to do less in the future than they’ve been doing now, unless, frankly, they’re unable to afford the heavy expenditures they’re going to have to make to improve their education, healthcare, transport and other arrangements, which would diminish the amount available for a defense contribution. Also, much of Europe’s viability as a defense partner depends on the evolution of the Union in the period ahead. I see no indication that the continental Europeans are going to spend any more on defense than they have been spending.

As a matter of fact, I can see it going down. Maybe the old Europe has had it. I don’t think any of us can answer that question yet. I don’t know.

Knott: Anybody else wish to add to this? Concluding remarks?

Hayward: If the Falklands hadn’t—take that hypothetical—had not come about, from the military planning point of view, I think that the situation that we’d become more and more concerned about, the viability of the British support for military plans, not in the context of are they a good ally or not, but just what can they accomplish with what they’re investing. And we do the same thing in our own country. We were on a bad down slope throughout the ’70s. We came back up again in the ’80s, we started back down again in the ’90s. Now we’re kind of flat.

In the context of the global situation, the U.S. looks pretty strong, relatively. But we still are pretty darn thin. When we look at the British contribution to that, we’re going to want them spending as much as possible. So in one sense, the Falklands caused the British to stop the rate at which they were declining, the Naval forces in particular. I don’t know how CINCLANT [Commander in Chief, Atlantic] looks at the situation, but I’m sure he looks at it to say the British are a good ally, a reliable ally, but how viable they are in fulfilling a tough scenario? You can make a better judgment on that than me.

Train: There is no CINCLANT, so there’s nobody to look at it.

Gorman: I would argue that the Malvinas-Falklands affair was an overall plus for the British-American relationship. I think it increased the stature of the British military at a time when a lot of us were losing confidence in their ability to do it. It was a military feat of some significance, a
triumph of ingenuity in adversity. They made it work and they deserve certainly all of the credit and respect that I have heard accorded to them for that. I don’t think you can see it other than a strong plus for the relationship that you’re concerned with.

I mean, it’s difficult for me to imagine our proceeding much further with the current U.S. national military strategy without a British ally, period.

Knott: Anyone else?

Shlaudeman: Since we’re talking about significance in terms of our long-term relations with Latin America, I don’t think the war had any effect whatsoever. That’s my view.

Knott: Any final words? I promised Admiral Hayward we’d get him out by 12:30; he has a plane to catch. I want to thank you all very much. This has been a fascinating couple of days and I’m very grateful for your recollections and the time you’ve taken. Thank you.