



Falklands: UK Defence move as 2 PARA trains to retake control

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PORT STANLEY — In response to the growing rhetoric and sovereignty claims advanced by Argentine President Javier Milei, British paratroopers from the 2° Battaglione del Reggimento Paracadutisti (2 PARA) conducted a high-profile exercise in the Falkland Islands, training for an amphibious landing and the recapture of key territory across the archipelago.

The six-day operation, designated **Exercise Cape Upholder**, involved around 150 selected soldiers from B Company of **2 PARA**, who joined approximately 100 reservists from the Forza di Difesa delle Isole Falkland (FIDF). The military maneuver replicated the historic landings of *Operazione Sutton* in May 1982, which marked the opening phase of the campaign to repel the Argentine invasion 44 years ago.



Tactical Execution and Training

The exercise began aboard **HMS Medway**, a Royal Navy River-class offshore patrol vessel. The paratroopers launched amphibious assaults on the settlement of San Carlos in East Falkland, using inflatable assault boats.

Once ashore, British forces joined local reserve units for a grueling march of approximately 32 kilometers (20 miles) toward **Goose Green**, the site of one of the fiercest land battles of the 1982 conflict. The key components of the operation included:

- **Dawn rockets and air support:** The troops carried out a tactical assault against an enemy communications node, with close air support provided by **RAF Typhoon** fighters based at RAF Mount Pleasant.
- **Urban and complex-terrain operations:** Helicopter lifts (S-29) transported soldiers to **Wireless Ridge**, near Port Stanley, for close-quarters battle (CQB) drills and tactical advances.
- **Warfare in modern domains:** The exercises integrated cyber and space operations alongside electronic warfare, simulating hostile drone attacks to adapt tactics to modern asymmetric threats.

*"This exercise gave us the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of our forebears and gain a small insight into what they had to endure to achieve victory in 1982," said **Major Aaron Nunkoosing**, commander of B Company, 2 PARA.*



Escalating Political Rhetoric

The military exercise follows stern warnings issued by Argentine President **Javier Milei**, who reiterated Argentina's longstanding claims to the South Atlantic archipelago, known in Buenos Aires as the *Malvinas*.

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, President Milei said Argentina could act "*quickly*" to reclaim the islands, arguing that they remain under an "*illegal foreign occupation*". Milei rejected the islanders' right to self-determination, arguing that the population was "*settled by the occupying power in a territory whose sovereignty is disputed*".

In response, British Prime Minister **Andy Burnham** told the House of Commons that the UK government would do "*whatever is necessary*" to protect the islanders' rights and their clear wish for self-determination. In a referendum held in 2013, 99.8% of Falkland Islands residents voted to retain their status as a British Overseas Territory.

Economic and Regional Friction

Diplomatic tensions have also intensified because of economic developments in the South Atlantic waters:

1. **Approval of the Sea Lion oil field:** Foreign Secretary **Ed Miliband** authorized development of the Sea Lion oil field, located near the Falkland Islands. Estimated to contain up to **1.7 billion barrels of oil**, the field far exceeds the reserves of major North Sea fields such as Rosebank.

2. **Legal action before ITLOS:** Argentina immediately filed legal action with the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)** in Hamburg, seeking to halt unilateral drilling activities authorized by the United Kingdom on the continental shelf.

Defense Posture and Public Support

While the Ministry of Defence (MoD) described Exercise Cape Upholder as a normal routine rotational activity, political figures from across the spectrum have called for a strengthening of the defense posture. Shadow Defence Secretary **James Cartlidge** has pledged that future defense initiatives, such as the *Britannia Shield* missile defense program, will explicitly strengthen sovereign bases and overseas territories.

Currently, the permanent garrison in the Falklands includes four RAF Typhoon fighter jets, a Sky Sabre missile defense system, an offshore patrol vessel, and a rotating Army infantry unit. A recent opinion poll conducted by *More in Common* found that **56% of the British public** support deploying armed forces to defend the Falklands in the event of an invasion, with support exceeding 60–70% among voters from the main political parties.