

# Falklands' oil sparks new UK-Argentine dispute

By **STEPHEN JONES**  
Epoch Times Staff

LONDON—An oil rig that had been towed 8,000 miles from Scotland to the South Atlantic was at the centre of a diplomatic crisis this week after it began drilling in a disputed territory that three decades ago had provided a reason for war.

The rusted U.K. Ocean Guardian rig broke the surface at a vast offshore oil reserve 60 miles north of the Falkland Islands on Monday afternoon—in the first step of an operation experts say could be worth up to a quarter of a trillion dollars.

The oil find, however, has reopened a diplomatic rift between Britain and Argentina, who fought a war in 1982 over competing ownership claims of the islands.

"The Malvinas will never be surrendered," said Argentine President Cristina Kirchner, using the Spanish name for the islands.

Britain has held the Falklands since 1833 and fought off an attempt by Argentine forces to recapture the archipelago in 1982. The U.K. holds a garrison of 1,000 troops on the islands, as well as a military air base. Royal navy ships in the area have been put on standby.

This week, U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that he had "made all the preparations that are necessary to make sure the Falkland islanders are properly protected."

On Tuesday, Kirchner secured the backing of neighbouring South American countries in her declaration that Britain is "violating international law" over its drilling operation.

"The British are desperate for oil since their own fields in the North Sea are now being depleted," said Venezuela President Hugo Chavez in a public speech.

"When will England stop breaking international law? Get out of there, give the Malvinas back to the Argentine people. Enough already with the empire," said Chavez.



**BLOCKED:** The Thor Leader is seen docked with its cargo deck open at Campana harbor, some 44 miles north-east of Buenos Aires, on Feb. 11. Tensions between Argentina and Britain rose Thursday after Buenos Aires blocked a shipment of pipes it said was bound for the Falklands archipelago. Britain plans to begin drilling for oil in the disputed territory that the two countries went to war over in 1982. MARTIN SEGUIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Argentina claims that the islands were originally part of its territory following independence from Spain in 1816, but were stolen by British colonialists. It is an argument which has not lost any of its force, despite the country's defeat in the 1982 war which lasted just two months yet claimed the lives of 649 Argentines and 255 British service personnel.

However, the country has already ruled out war as a solution to the crisis. Experts say that the country is more poorly equipped than ever since the ruling military junta was toppled from power.

Instead, Argentina would use "all legal means" to restrict British access to the Falklands, Victoria

Taccetti, the deputy foreign minister said in a radio interview. "But I don't think we can go much further."

The measures include an attempt to restrict all shipping from South American countries to the Falklands. In addition, shareholders of the U.K. exploration firm behind the drilling operation, Desire Petroleum, could be frozen out of business deals in Argentina and perhaps elsewhere within the region.

According to reports, multinational banks, HSBC and Barclays, are among those likely to be targeted.

"We are trying to convince the British that it is in their interest to negotiate with Argentina," said

Taccetti. "This is not an escalation, this is just something that we have to do in order to protect our rights—because we consider that this exploration and eventual exploitation of our natural resources is illegal."

However, defense experts say that the first part of the plan—to restrict shipping—could potentially cause a standoff and possible confrontation.

"Argentina does not have a substantial naval capability," former Navy Commander Michael Codner told the Scotsman newspaper. "They may, however, feel able to carry out some kind of constabulary operation, say warships preventing oil vessels from operating. You could then have an incident at sea."

## Former Taiwan VP condemns Beijing's arrest of Shen Yun artist's husband

By **ZHANG LEYAO**  
Epoch Times Staff

HOUSTON—The former Vice President of Taiwan has condemned the Chinese regime's arrest of Jiang Feng, the husband of erhu soloist Mei Xuan. Mei performs with New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts.

Annette Lu, former Vice President of Taiwan, condemned the arrest at a dinner in Houston on Feb. 21, stating that the international community should not tolerate such a blatant criminal act.

"We condemn this violation of human rights and demand that Beijing release [Jiang Feng]," Ms. Lu said.

Jiang was arrested on Feb. 18 at Shanghai's Pudong International Airport while boarding a flight to the United States to visit his wife.

He was on the boarding list for Continental Airlines flight Co86. However, he never arrived in Newark, N.J., and airport inquiries indicate that he never boarded the plane. He apparently disappeared during the very short time between passing through the security checkpoint and final boarding.

Mei told The Epoch Times that she believes it to be a kidnapping orchestrated by the "610 Office" intending to intimidate and interfere with her and with Shen Yun Performing Arts.

The 610 Office is an extra-constitutional body in China with unquestioned authority, created in 1999 for the sole purpose of identifying, isolating, illegally detaining, and torturing practitioners of Falun Gong.

Both Mei Xuan and Jiang Feng are Falun Gong practitioners who have experienced severe persecution over the past ten years. Beijing outlawed the spiritual



Shen Yun Performing Arts erhu virtuoso Mei Xuan. SHEN YUN OFFICIAL WEB SITE

discipline in 1999.

Lu called on the international community to cooperate in pressuring Beijing to release Jiang.

Having seen the Shen Yun show in Taiwan, Lu said that she "greatly admired Shen Yun's exquisite performance." She was glad to know of Shen Yun's successful global tour, and said she hoped the performing arts company could perform in China to promote traditional Chinese culture.

"Shen Yun's dances and music are magnificent," she said. "[The show] promotes China's orthodox art, national spirit, and ethnicities and showcases the essence of the culture of the flourishing Tang Dynasty. It passes down high moral standards and has earned excellent reviews."

## Hot temper has British PM in trouble

### Bullying helpline admits getting complaints from Gordon Brown's office

**BROWN CONTINUED FROM P1**  
Rawnsley said that Brown's habit of venting his temper by hitting the seat on car journeys meant "sitting in front of him was regarded as the worst duty among the protection squad."

#### GIVEN A STERN 'PEP TALK'

One particular incident, claims Rawnsley, was serious enough to lead to an investigation by the head of the civil service, the Cabinet secretary.

"When one of the secretaries was not typing fast enough for an angrily impatient prime minister, he turfed the stunned garden girl out of her chair and took over the keyboard himself. Word of these incidents reached the alarmed ears of the Cabinet secretary, Sir Gus O'Donnell, who was becoming increasingly anxious about Brown's behaviour," Rawnsley explained.

"The Cabinet secretary tried to calm down frightened duty clerks, badly treated phone operators, and other bruised staff by telling them 'Don't take it personally.' O'Donnell eventually felt compelled to directly confront the prime minister and gave him a stern 'pep talk' about his conduct toward the staff. 'This is no way to get things done,' he told Brown and warned him that he had to moderate his behaviour."

#### SEEING RED

Ministers in the government sought on Sunday to persuade the public that Brown's outbursts were not a manifestation of anger, but of a determined man

who cared deeply about the issues faced by the government and who was frustrated when things didn't go right.

But hearing the barrage of denials, the founder of National Bullying Helpline, Christine Pratt said she "saw red," and contacted the BBC to tell them that her charity had been contacted several times by staff at the prime minister's office.

On Monday, Pratt told the BBC that she had received an e-mail alleging issues with the prime minister personally.

"I have e-mails on my computer that are coming in. This case is opening a can of worms," she said.

Pratt has been criticized by some in her field for breaching confidentiality, and so far it is thought that four patrons of her charity have resigned in protest at her actions.

#### '24-CARAT' SOURCES

Cabinet Secretary Sir Gus on Monday denied that he had spoken to Brown about "bullying or intimidating" behaviour toward Downing Street staff.

But Rawnsley stood by his story, for which he says he has "24-carat" sources.

"This is the third different statement Downing Street has put out in the last 48 hours," he told the BBC. "And I note with interest that they still don't deny that a conversation took place between the prime minister and the Cabinet secretary about the prime minister's behaviour."

He also said, "You will note that their careful choice of words in their latest statement still doesn't preclude the Cabinet secretary going to the prime minister and warning him about his behaviour."

Other commentators have also noted the careful language of the denials and the slow and staggered response to the accusations.

Conservative leader David Cameron suggested there should be an inquiry into the accusations of bullying.

"What I see is just another unseemly mess at the fag-end of a government that is tired, that is discredited, that is worn out," he told TV reporters.

## GLOBAL Q&A

'Have you heard or experienced any environment anomalies where you live recently?'

Changes in weather, possible extinction of fish species, demolition of a family home are representative of the anomalies mentioned when Epoch Times reporters from Islamabad to the Canary Islands asked locals around the world, "Have you heard or experienced any environment anomalies where you live recently?"

**MERSIN, TURKEY**  
FILIZ BAL, 28, TRANSLATOR



I have heard, watched, and seen that the environmental pollution in the Mediterranean Sea and the Straits in Istanbul and the Dardanelles, especially due to oil tanker accidents, have caused some of the fish species in these seas to disappear or have biological defects. Also, since the country is not a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, the carbon emissions are not under control.

**ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN**  
SYED RASHID BUKHARI, 40, NGO SECTOR



No, there are no strange environmental conditions, but there is a lot of pollution from development. In my neighborhood, there is construction right next door to me, and it makes our living conditions very polluted. This is the case throughout Pakistan, especially Islamabad, because there are a lot of new roads and buildings being constructed.

**CANARY ISLANDS, SPAIN**  
REGINA LAMBERT, 62, BUSINESS WOMAN



Not really. I can only remember that the last two or three winters may have been cooler or warmer than usual, but they compensate, so I think it's just part of a natural cycle added to the fact that Earth regulates itself to repair the damage that we humans, because of development, provoke. Aside from this, I cannot remember any more significant issues.

**GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA**  
LETICIA DUTRA, 39, PHOTOGRAPHER



Unexpected news yesterday: Gold Coast City Council are demolishing my parent's home as they're building a light rail from Broadbeach to Helensvale. I'm actually the owner of the property, but my parents have lived in it for 14 years. It is going to happen this year. They've spent a lot of money renovating. They're worried now about where they're going to live; what neighbors they are going to get.

**BANGALORE, INDIA**  
PANI RAMACHANDRA, 20, MEDICAL STUDENT



I think it's definitely getting warmer these days. I remember when I was younger, I used to find it very difficult to get up early in the morning, as it used to be cold and chilly. My hometown, called Tumkur, is nearby. I have relatives in and around this town who are farmers. We have found that the rains have been irregular and not according to the season; therefore, it becomes that much more difficult to plan activities. The people of this area are spending a lot of money on making bore wells and directing the water to their fields as the rains are not there when needed.

**BRASILIA, BRAZIL**  
FABIANO CARDOSO, 33, EDITOR



Yes. Brasilia has already been drier than it is today. And in the last few years, it has been raining for longer. I remember a year in which three or four blocks were flooded, which had not happened before. That leads me to believe that in the upcoming years, or very soon, there may be a stronger drought, since the current drought has not been as intense as previous ones.

**DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA**  
MWANAHAWA A. CHUNGU, 31, SECRETARY



No, we haven't had any unusual natural phenomena here recently. I can't think of anything. Everything's been pretty normal.

Look for the Global Q&A column every week, when Epoch Times correspondents interview people around the world to learn about their lives and perspective on local and global realities.

Next week's global question: Do you think parents are doing a good job disciplining their children in your country?

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