

Argentina lashes out at UK over planned military exercises in Malvinas Islands

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An aerial view of Mount Pleasant, which houses personnel from all branches of the British military on the Malvinas Islands. (Photo: teleSUR)

Buenos Aires, April 15 (RHC)-- Argentina has lashed out at Britain over its plan to hold military exercises and missile tests in the occupied Malvinas Islands, which the British call Falkland Islands, saying they are part of a "pattern" of "hostile acts" and an "unjustified show of force."

"Argentina rejects in the strongest terms the carrying out of military maneuvers, and the launching of missiles in particular, in Argentine territory illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom," Argentina's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

This came after the United Kingdom's Foreign Office last week informed Argentina that it intended to carry out military drills, including Rapier missile tests, in the occupied archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean, to which Buenos Aires and London both lay claims.

The Argentinean statement slammed the proposed maneuvers as an "unjustified show of force and a deliberate departure from the appeals" for Argentina and the UK to resume negotiations on the dispute.

Argentina said the planned tests would be in contravention of a United Nations (UN) resolution that urges both parties to refrain from adopting "unilateral decisions that involve the introduction of modifications in the situation while the islands are going through the negotiation process."

It said the UK's military presence in the region contradicted another UN resolution, which urges the two sides "to honor the South Atlantic region as a zone of peace and cooperation."

According to the Buenos Aires Times, the government of President Alberto Fernandez sent London a stern note of protest over the plan to hold military exercises on the islands after receiving the news, threatening to file a complaint with the UN and the International Maritime Organization.

Separately, the Argentinean Hydrographic Service, which is a branch of the Ministry of Defense, issued a warning.

The Malvinas Islands are situated just over 480 km from the Argentine coast in the South Atlantic Ocean. The UK has occupied the archipelago since 1833. Argentina and the UK fought a 10-week war over the archipelago in April-June 1982, with the UK eventually prevailing with the help of its allies, notably Chile, which at the time was ruled by right-wing military dictator Augusto Pinochet. The United States also gave logistical support to the British occupation forces and strongly supported London's efforts to maintain the colonial status of the islands.

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