

NATO Chiefs Meeting

BRUSSELS, Belgium (UPI) — NATO defense ministers, opening a three-day evaluation session today, said the alliance's position is under more of a threat because of Britain's Falklands operation and a relentless Soviet buildup.

"It is obvious that the Falklands situation... has had as a consequence that at this moment there are less naval forces available for the Alliance," NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns told a news conference Tuesday.

Britain has sent an armada of some 25 warships and about 35 auxiliary vessels and deployed thousands of its finest combat personnel to the region around the disputed Falkland Islands where it is fighting an air and sea battle with Argentina.

"Fortunately there is no acute crisis in sight (in Europe) and we are confident that once their task is accomplished these forces will in due time reintegrate the NATO command," Luns said of the British forces.

Luns made his remarks in reference to Tuesday's release of a 69-page booklet, "NATO and the Warsaw Pact Force Comparisons," offering a chilling comparison of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces.

The booklet — the first of its kind — showed a relentless growth of Soviet military strength, both nuclear and conventional.

"The imbalance in the so-called tactical (nuclear) weapons is the most important issue at this moment," said Luns, adding that NATO also was lagging behind in conventional weapons.

Defense ministers of the European Allies — with the exception of France, which does not belong to the integrated command structure, will use the three-day meeting to examine NATO's ability to conduct battle.

On Thursday and Friday the European officials will be joined by their U.S. and Canadian counterparts for a sweeping appraisal of East-West force relations and progress toward disarmament.

European NATO members were eager to hear Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger's evaluation of the Falklands issue and its effects on the Alliance's defense, diplomatic sources said.

NATO military planners advocate a 4 percent real increase in defense spending to offset the Soviet advance in conventional forces, they said.

"It is terribly important that the NATO nations maintain the momentum in modernizing and hopefully improving the size of their conventional armed forces," said Admiral Robert H. Fallis, chairman of the Military Committee that groups chiefs of staff of member nations.

"The trends are worsening rather than getting better."

★ Isles

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largest, was torpedoed by a British submarine Sunday.

The U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, citing "the tragic conflict in the South Atlantic and the unsettled condition it has created," said it would evacuate some embassy personnel and dependents from the country temporarily.

A grim-faced Mrs. Thatcher, dressed in black and reportedly "devastated" by the war news, attended a Cabinet meeting after Defense Secretary John Nott told a stunned Parliament of as many as 30 deaths aboard the torpedoed ship.

Despite the attack, Nott told a packed House of Commons that the British task force would continue its mission "as planned" to retake the Falklands, seized April 2 by Argentina after 149 years of British rule.

A Foreign Office spokesman stressed, however, that Foreign Secretary Francis Pym was con-

sidering new peace initiatives by both U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig.

An Argentine news agency, Diarios y Noticias, said Foreign Minister Nicolas Costa Mendes planned to travel, possibly today, to New York to seek U.N. help. He met Tuesday with the military junta to discuss the U.N. peace plan.

Diplomatic sources said the plan calls for an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of Argentine troops from the islands and international administration until negotiations achieve agreement on sovereignty.

Nott was to meet with Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger in Brussels today or Thursday during a Common Market meeting at which Britain faces Ireland's call to lift Common Market economic sanctions on Argentina.

Ireland said Tuesday that it was "appalled" by Britain's sinking of the General Belgrano. West

Germany called for a cease-fire but France, which manufactured the weapons that sank Britain's ship, did not comment.

Argentina also shot down a British Sea Harrier Tuesday. The British Defense Ministry said Lt. Nicholas Taylor, the first British death in the Falklands, died in the raid.

The Argentine command claimed anti-aircraft batteries on the Falklands downed two Sea Harriers attacking Port Darwin, east of Stanley, saying "there were no victims or damages on our side."

At the start of Tuesday's deadly fighting, a long-range British Vulcan bomber flying 3,000 miles from Ascension Island to the Falklands pounded the airport outside Port Stanley with 1,000-pound bombs, Britain said.

The second attack on the airstrip in four days was to ensure the 9,000 Argentine troops on the islands could not repair "the runway. British jets also repeated

the bombing of an airstrip at Goose Green, 60 miles from Stanley.

"The United States regrets any loss of life from the sinking of the British destroyer as well as the Argentine cruiser," the State Department said in Washington.

"These additional casualties underscore the urgent need for an early peaceful settlement of this tragic conflict in the South Atlantic."

The attack on the Sheffield, which was armed with Sea Dart surface-to-air missiles, one 4.5-inch gun and a Lynx helicopter, occurred within the 200-mile exclusion zone.

British ships picked up the captain and survivors of the 270-man crew and brought the more seriously wounded to the Hermes for medical treatment.

Britain's confidence was shaken by a two-minute announcement in the middle of the prime-time evening news that the Sheffield had been sunk.

Stunned members of the House of Commons demanded and got a statement from Defense Secretary Nott, then bowed to the suggestion of an opposition member that Parliament adjourn out of respect for the dead.

"There are certain occasions when the fewest words are the most eloquent," said the Conservative leader of the house, John Biffen.

Portsmouth, the Sheffield's home port on the south coast, was "in a state of mourning," reported a woman at the Koppell's Head Hotel. "Many people in here have friends on the Sheffield, and we are waiting to find out the worst."

"We never expected this, although I suppose we should have," said a Verbees, head of a Portsmouth club for wives and sweethearts of men with the fleet.

One Conservative member of Parliament, Alan Clark, said he thought the best course was to bomb the Argentine mainland.

Ward System Seen As Inconsequential

By ROBERT BRICKHOUSE
of The Progress Staff

Nearly 11,000 of Charlottesville's 16,765 registered voters didn't cast ballots Tuesday to decide whether the city should have a partial ward system.

"I didn't think it (the ward proposal) made a whole lot of difference," said Tim Tigner, a downtown resident and State Division of Forestry scientist. "I voted primarily because it was on the ballot. We can have good government either way."

"It was not a life or death issue," said Virginia Germino, a member of the city Democratic committee who voted against the change. "But the previous system has worked well to bring minority representation. This is too small a place to be fragmented any further."

The advisory referendum asked whether Charlottesville's city council should be changed from five members elected throughout the entire city to a council of seven members, with four members elected from separate wards and three elected at-large. The referendum was defeated 3,382 to 2,453.

Voters approved the same question in an advisory referendum last November 2,642 to 2,418. But with only 48 percent of those voting for governor then also voting on the ward question, the city council called for a second advisory referendum.

Democratic Mayor Frank Buck, who opposed the change, had said that at least 3,001 voters needed to approve or disapprove of the referendum for him to consider it a valid vote. Other councilors expressed similar views.

Some 775 more persons voted

on the issue this time, and the results went the other way.

Tom Buttchell, a University of Virginia graduate student in government, was one who helped make the outcome turn around. He changed his mind and voted against the ward system Tuesday, he said, after voting in favor of it last fall.

Black leaders were split on the issue, with the NAACP endorsing the change. The referendum was defeated in the city's two predominantly black precincts and in all but two of the city's seven other precincts.

"I thought the issue was important for Charlottesville," said James Noell, a Safeway Stores employee who voted for the ward system. It would not only have meant better representation for black neighborhoods but better representation overall, he said.

Mrs. Agnes Scott, a Cherry Avenue resident who voted for it, echoed that view. "I think you ought to have a person representing each area," she said.

In the Belmont neighborhood — an area where the referendum passed — W.R. Rhodes of Hinton Avenue said he thought it was "an all-important issue" and that people he had talked to favored the change. But he voted against it, he said, adding: "I vote in all elections whether it does any good or not."

A Belmont neighbor, who asked that his name not be used, said he thought the issue was "just blowing smoke over our real problems. I don't see where it would change anything for the better. I think we have good representation now."

★ Wards

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tive one way or the other," council member John C. Conover said. Fellow Democratic councilor the Rev. E. G. Hall added, "The people are saying 'no' to it. I was a little surprised. I didn't look for it to fail by that majority."

Mayor Frank Buck, whose opposition to the NAACP-sponsored referendum became an issue in his campaign for reelection, said he felt vindicated by the results.

"I do (feel vindicated) because that was the most personal issue that has come up over several years."

One of Buck's most frequent critics, Sherman White, chairman of the NAACP's political action committee, said the referendum's defeat "just says the Democratic machine is alive and well in Charlottesville."

The mixed ward and at-large system would have enlarged city council from five members elected from the entire city to one of seven members, with four elected from wards and three from throughout the city.

Its proponents said it would result in council representation from less affluent areas of the city; its opponents said that drawing ward lines might fragment the city, pitting ward against ward.

Most observers said that the system would loosen the Democratic Party's traditional dominance of city government by undermining its citywide organization.

Tuesday's vote was surprising in the turnaround that occurred in the two mostly heavily black precincts — Rose Hill and Firehouse — which under the ward plan would have been combined into a nearly 60 percent black majority ward.

In Rose Hill Precinct, the referendum lost by a 313-241 margin.

a swing of nearly 200 votes from November when it passed 271-vote margin.

Brown attributed part of the result to a switch by white voters.

"There were a lot of white people who voted for it (in November) because they felt this was what the black community wanted," Brown said. After a group of prominent blacks spoke out against the change, he said, some white voters realized that — despite the NAACP's support for the measure — the black community was split on the issue.

This caused some white voters to reexamine the proposal on its own merits, he said.

A number of observers felt that recent attempts by ward proponents to discredit Democrats who opposed the referendum may have backfired.

"I think what they were doing was campaigning by negatives," Conover said. "That to my knowledge has never worked in Charlottesville — you don't bad-mouth the opposition."

Hall, who tried to remain neutral on the ward question, said that the attacks "really tilted it... some people got into it and made it a race issue — it brought people's attention to it."

Virginia Carrington, another 127.

In Firehouse Precinct, it lost 222-155, a swing of nearly 150 votes from November's referendum victory of 144-57.

Asked about the turnaround, Drewary Brown, a prominent black Democrat who opposed the referendum, said, "Before, I don't think anyone was really aware of its contents." This time around, Brown said, "They found it was something that wasn't going to ward proponents, disagreed with this interpretation of Tuesday's turnaround."

"The referendum was well-discussed and people had made up their minds," Mrs. Carrington said. "They just didn't want to go to a ward system at this time."

Ward proponents said that the issue might be revived by the upcoming referendum in Albemarle

County on revenue-sharing with Charlottesville. White said that if the May 18 referendum loses, Charlottesville would likely annex some of the county.

Then, he said, "The U.S. Justice Department will come in anyway (and establish a ward system in Charlottesville) so that minority voting isn't diluted."

"We won the first battle, they won the second battle, but the war is still not settled," White said.

But White, who has led a three-year crusade for passage, said a third referendum would be "ridiculous."

Even though it lost, voting patterns in the referendum may indicate dissatisfaction in some parts of the city with the current system of representation. For the second time, for instance, the referendum passed in two of the city's southern precincts that rarely have residents on council.

In the Clark Precinct, which contains the Belmont neighborhood, it passed 188-150; in Jefferson Park Precinct, it won by a 515-492 margin.

"It's very significant that Clark went for it," ward proponent Randolph L. White said, adding that the Belmont area had been "ignored" by council.

Thomas E. Albrow, the outgoing Republican member of city council, said, "It won in two precincts on the southside. I think it demonstrates the people in these two areas feel under-represented."

Besides Rose Hill and Firehouse, a significant reversal occurred in the Venable Precinct near the University of Virginia, where 194 additional no votes were cast and 154 fewer yes votes — a 348-vote swing from last fall.

The affluent Walker Precinct remained the most anti-ward area of the city, defeating it by more than a 2-1 margin, 769-375. Recreation Precinct, which joined Walker in November as one of only two precincts opposed to the change — again voted against it, 617-465.

Death Notices

JAMES S. HOLLADAY

a brother, Haywood Watson of

Philadelphia, Pa. formerly of Nelson

26, 1982.