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## Britain summons Argentine ambassador over Falklands' comments

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LONDON (Reuters) - Britain said on Thursday it had summoned the Argentine ambassador to explain the latest war of words over the disputed Falkland Islands which included a threat to prosecute British energy firms operating in the area.

Last week, Premier Oil Plc and Falkland Oil and Gas Ltd said they had made an oil and gas discovery at a well off the south Atlantic islands, the first in a nine-month drilling campaign.

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez called the announcement "almost provocative", and Argentine officials warned they were planning legal action against oil firms operating near the Falklands, which lie 300 miles off the Argentine coast and 8,000 miles from Britain.

"The UK has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and surrounding maritime areas, nor about the Falkland Islanders' right to decide their own future," a British Foreign Office spokesman said on Thursday.

"We object strongly to recent statements by the Argentine President and the Argentine ambassador to London and so summoned the ambassador to account for these."

The discovery of oil has raised tensions over control of the Atlantic archipelago more than 30 years after Argentine forces seized the islands and Britain sent a task force to retake them in a brief war which saw more than 600 Argentine and 255 British servicemen killed.

Britain said last month it would reinforce its military presence on the Falklands to counter the "very live threat" posed by Argentina.

However, Fernandez, in a speech honoring soldiers who died in the failed 1982 invasion of islands, which Argentina calls Las Malvinas, dismissed the idea of Argentina being a threat, telling Britain to focus instead on fighting poverty within its own borders.

(Reporting by Michael Holden; editing by Stephen Addison)

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