

CONFLICT OVER THE
FALKLAND ISLANDS:
A Never-Ending Story?

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THE FALKLAND ISLANDS AS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM. By Peter Beck. (London: Routledge, 1988. Pp. 211. \$35.00.)

MALVINAS HOY: HERENCIA DE UN CONFLICTO. Edited by Atilio A. Borón and Julio Faúndez. (Buenos Aires: Puntosur, 1989. Pp. 481.)

SIGNALS OF WAR: THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT OF 1982. By Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991. Pp. 476. \$45.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)

NATIONAL INTEREST, NATIONAL HONOR: THE DIPLOMACY OF THE FALKLANDS CRISIS. By Douglas Kinney. (New York: Praeger, 1989. Pp. 372. \$49.95.)

MATES AND MUCHACHOS: UNIT COHESION IN THE FALKLANDS/MALVINAS WAR. By Nora Kinzer Stewart. (Washington D.C.: Brassey's U.S., 1991. Pp. 192. \$20.00.)

TOWARD RESOLUTION? THE FALKLAND/MALVINAS DISPUTE. Edited by Wayne S. Smith. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1991. Pp. 159. \$25.00.)

No place in Latin America has occasioned more printed pages per square mile than the Falkland Islands. This record holds for the years preceding the 1982 war as well as for those since the conflict.¹ Scholars, politicians, and private individuals—regardless of their degree of expertise—continue to debate the legitimacy of the British presence on the islands, argue about the manner in which Great Britain appropriated them, discuss Argentina's right to repossess them, and elaborate on the immediate and long-range alternatives proposed for resolving the controversy. Sadly enough, the ease with which participants jump into the debate and the emotional tone of much of the material published on the subject convey the sense that the islands have become just another topic of café conversation or a trendy subject to feature in international meetings.

1. For an overview of the literature on the Falklands that appeared up to the mid-1980s, see Joseph A. Tulchin, "The Malvinas War of 1982: An Inevitable Conflict That Never Should Have Occurred," *LARR* 22, no. 3 (1987):123–41.

Given the wide range of issues involved and the array of existing literature, it is helpful to determine the main currents of research represented in individual discussions. One is formed by the large number of works dwelling on the historical and legal foundations for Argentine and British claims to the islands.² This aspect seems inexhaustible, illustrating the intensity of both countries in trying to vindicate their rights in case the dispute should ever be settled in an international court. Beyond this traditional current is the tendency to place the controversy within a more universal framework, such as the struggle against obsolete colonialism or the inherent right of national minorities to self-determination. From a third perspective, the confrontation highlights the role played by unrealistic geopolitical imperatives in generating conflict.

The central issues addressed in the vast literature can be categorized into four major concerns.³ What were the developments that led from a state of sustained friction between Argentina and the United Kingdom to an armed confrontation? Why did negotiations and diplomatic endeavors fail? Which avenues toward a final solution have been attempted by the two contending nations since the end of the war? What will be the implications of such new stances in future negotiations over

2. Classical treatises on the historical and legal arguments forwarded by the United Kingdom and Argentina to justify their rights to the islands are B. F. Boyson, *The Falkland Islands* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924); M. B. Cawkell, D. H. Malling, and E. M. Cawkell, *The Falkland Islands* (London: St. Martin's, 1960); Paul Groussac, *Las Islas Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Congreso, 1936); and Ricardo Caillet-Bois, *Una tierra argentina: Las Islas Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Jacobo Peuser, 1948). The most critical analysis of the British claims to the islands is found in Julius Goebel, *Struggle for the Falkland Islands* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1922; reprinted 1982).

3. The depth and quality of the writings published by Argentine, British, and U.S. presses have improved noticeably since those that came out right after the conflict. Among the earlier works were Peter Calvert, *The Falkland Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs* (London: Frances Pinter, 1982); M. Cawkell, *The Falkland Story, 1592–1982* (Oswestry, Engl.: Nelson, 1983); Jeffrey Ethel and Alfred Price, *Air War: South Atlantic* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1983); *The Falklands War: Lessons for Strategy, Diplomacy, and International Law*, edited by A. R. Coll and A. C. Arend (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985); Max Hasting, *The Battle for the Falklands* (New York: Norton, 1983); *A Message from the Falklands*, edited by David H. Tinker (London: Junction, 1982); Max Hasting and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (London: Michael Joseph, 1983); and Tam Dalyell, *The Sinking of the "Belgrano"* (London: Cecil Woolf, 1983). Argentine bestsellers were Oscar R. Cardoso, *Malvinas, la trama secreta* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana/Planeta, 1983); Bonifacio del Carril, *El futuro de las Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1982); Daniel Kon, *Los chicos de la guerra* (Buenos Aires: Galerina, 1982); and Carlos H. Turolo, *Malvinas: testimonio de su gobernador* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1983). For publications since 1988, see Edward Fursdon, *The Falklands Aftermath: Picking up the Pieces* (London: Leo Cooper, 1988); Lawrence Freedman, *Britain and the Falklands War* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Michael Charlton, *The Little Platoon: Diplomacy and the Falklands Dispute* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); George M. Dillon, *The Falklands, Politics, and War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1989); Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Lessons of Modern War* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1990); and Martin Middlebrook, *The Fight for the Malvinas: Argentine Forces in the Falkland Islands* (New York: Viking, 1989). For a reasonable bibliographic compilation on the subject, see Eugene L. Rasor, *The Falklands/Malvinas Campaign: A Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood, 1992).

the fate of the Falkland Islands and their inhabitants? Closely related to these basic questions is the compelling power exerted by the use of force over balanced reasoning as a strategy for solving conflictive situations, an issue that fascinates policymakers and scholars alike.

The depth of analysis, amount of information, and goals of the books analyzed in this review reflect the heterogeneity of contemporary discourse on the islands. Among the welter of pondered judgments and uneducated opinions, it becomes extremely difficult to discern the real motivations that triggered the armed confrontation or the reasoning underlying the behavior of Argentine and British politicians and diplomats, geopolitical zealots and warmongers, the media and the Falkland Islanders themselves.

The six books reviewed here survey the gamut of protagonists and their actions from varying perspectives. Lawrence Freedman's and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse's *Signals of War: The Falklands Conflict of 1982* recalls previous chronological presentations of the events,⁴ the major difference being that Gamba-Stonehouse adds some intriguing insider information from her experience as a staff member under Argentine Foreign Minister Nicanor Costa-Mendes during the dramatic first half of 1982. The book's melodramatic overtone is established at the outset when the authors present a list of the "cast of characters" in broad brush strokes.

Nora Kinzer Stewart's *Mates and Muchachos: Unit Cohesion in the Falklands/Malvinas War* focuses on another group of actors in delineating the human traits of the faceless soldiers who fought on the islands, presented in the context of the warring traditions of Argentine and British troops. In this regard, Stewart's analysis is one of the most original recent works on the subject.⁵ Yet the book is not free of prejudice and misperceptions: the British soldiers are presented as brazen individuals, hardened in numerous battles, who outmatched the youthful and inexperienced Argentine soldiers. Protestant views of life and death are pitted against Catholic values and the notion of honor held by the Argentine military, with too little attention being given to the rudimentary strategy and ill-managed campaign conducted by the Argentine leaders.

4. By the same authors separately, see Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse, *The Falklands/Malvinas War: A Model for North-South Crisis Prevention* (Winchester, Mass.: Allen and Unwin, 1987); and Lawrence Freedman, *Britain and the Falklands War* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

5. Other works that have focused on the soldiers' behavior during the conflict include Middlebrook, *Fight for the Malvinas*; Nick Vaux, *Take That Hill! Royal Marines in the Falkland War* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey, 1986); David Brown *The Royal Navy and the Falklands War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1987); Hugh McManners, *Falklands Commando* (London: William Kimber, 1984); William Thompson, *No Picnic: 3rd Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic, 1982* (London: Leo Cooper, 1985); Oscar L. Jofré, *Malvinas: la defensa de Puerto Argentino* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1987); and Lilian Morelli, *Malvinas: los héroes olvidados* (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones Guardia Nacional, 1990).

Less elaborately crafted than Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse's account is Peter Beck's outline, *The Falkland Islands as an International Problem*. Instead of discussing Argentine and British rights, as promised in the introduction, Beck offers a summary of political events, pertinent diplomatic documents, and interpretative works on the dispute over the Falkland Islands, known in the Spanish-speaking world as Las Malvinas. Possibly overwhelmed by the wealth of information or confused by the complex historical background, he misidentifies Amerigo Vespucci as a Spanish pilot on a Portuguese expedition to the New World. Carried away by his dislike of the British Conservative Party and Margaret Thatcher's decision to dispatch a task force in April 1982, Beck blames the British rulers, the U.S. government, and the Falklanders alike for the human and material losses suffered in the conflict. The political bias of Beck's account undermines its value as an interpretative contribution, reducing it to a sketchy accumulation of facts and possible solutions to the impasse.

Three books in this Falklands/Malvinas medley cover diplomatic interactions prior to the Anglo-American rupture, the international circumstances surrounding the armed conflict, and the state of affairs following the 1982 war. Of the three, Douglas Kinney's *National Interest, National Honor: The Diplomacy of the Falklands Crisis* comes perhaps closest to defining a generalized concept of what diplomatic dealings are supposed to achieve. This work offers a cohesive treatment of Argentina's struggle to stake its claim for the return of the islands on the legal precepts of international law and United Nations practices when dealing with colonial territories aspiring to independence. Kinney relates diplomatic procedures dispassionately, making only passing references to what might have crossed the minds of the protagonists during the hectic days of the war. Particularly fascinating is his appreciation of the varying significance of the islands within the "national interests" of each country and the contradictory definitions of honor that determined the Argentine leaders' actions and British reactions before and after the war. Better versed in diplomatic affairs than Beck, Kinney is less opinionated and more selective in using documentation. *National Interest, National Honor* is a must for those seeking to understand international frictions and solutions that transcend partisan subjectivity and obfuscation.

These sentiments surface repeatedly in *Malvinas hoy: herencia de un conflicto*. This collection was compiled by political scientists Atilio Borón and Julio Faúndez from the proceedings of a 1988 symposium held in Buenos Aires, where Argentine and British scholars discussed the impact of the war on the relations between the two countries. The contributions reflect the heterogeneous background of the participants. Some Argentine presentations persist in the dated arguments and commonplaces in vogue during the halcyon days of military rule, leaving the reader to

wonder whether the bitter setback suffered by militaristic adventurism in 1982 will prevent future confrontations. These contributions are counter-balanced by some fine examples of intellectual sobriety and realism. Two impressive essays are the one by Faúndez, which exposes the ambiguities of contemporary international law on the concepts of territoriality and sovereignty, and that by Carlos Escudé, which blames an ideologically oriented teaching of geography in Argentina for fostering spatial misconceptions and whetting unwarranted territorial appetites. Outstanding among the British essays is James Cameron's discussion of the applicability of the concept of "decolonization" to distant colonial enclaves in general and the Falklands in particular. Of interest in this context is his investigation of the bearing of contemporary interpretations of *self-determination* on the granting of independence to perceived national minorities. Less convincing is the contribution of Walter Little, who takes a partisan approach like Beck's in blaming the armed confrontation on Thatcher's failure to seek a peaceful solution and her desire to benefit politically from a victory, an interpretation that slights Argentine responsibility.

Like the volume compiled by Borón and Faúndez, the small book edited by Wayne Smith, *Toward Resolution? The Falklands/Malvinas Dispute*, contains essays of varying quality. David Thomas offers a sober view of the historical and legal arguments of the United Kingdom regarding its right to retain the islands. More than the other analysts, he highlights the scant consideration given by both sides to the Falklanders' opinions in the negotiations before the war. Although it may be difficult to justify the act of wanton force by which the British annexed the islands in 1833, the British settlers did succeed in creating a unique habitat of their own in this harsh environment. The lack of consideration previously granted the Falklanders in negotiations conducted by a British Labor government helped ignite strong nationalistic feelings among conservative activists in England while conveying the impression to the Argentines that liberals in the United Kingdom would not greatly mind losing the islands. Carlos Floria, a noted political scientist at the University of Buenos Aires, expresses a balanced and pragmatic view similar to those of Faúndez and Escudé. Floria insists that in future negotiations on an eventual return of the Malvinas, the Argentines will have to empathize more with the aspirations of the islanders than they have in the past. He also recognizes that it would be inadvisable for Argentina to use the United Nations to exert pressure on the United Kingdom, given the bad reputation that forum has made for itself for redundant partisanship. Argentina's interests would probably be better served by dealing bilaterally with the United Kingdom, a policy adopted by President Carlos Menem in a display of patience and diplomatic skill greater than those shown by the military leaders of the 1960s and 1970s.

From Protracted Conflict to Armed Confrontation

It is still hard to comprehend how Argentine hard-liners—military and civilians alike—could imagine that a forced takeover of the islands would resolve this long-standing conflict without eliciting an equally forceful response from the British. It now appears that the decision was precipitated by two developments: the irresolute manner in which successive British governments had responded to repeated Argentine diplomatic demands and acts of provocation; and the belligerent tone that militarism and geopolitical imperatives had given to Argentina's relations with its neighbors and perceived regional competitors.

Both Beck and Kinney trace in their books how Argentine military regimes pressed the British for an accord that would satisfy the nationalistic feelings roused by these regimes among their citizenry. During 1966–1968, a turning point had been reached in the negotiations between the Labor government of Harold Wilson and the aggressive regime of General Juan Onganía. The British government failed to acknowledge the seriousness of such incidents as a rightist youth group landing in Port Stanley in a hijacked passenger airplane (they were dubbed the “Condor Commandos”) and the clandestine disembarkation on the islands by several sailors from an Argentine submarine, a secret maneuver conducted with Onganía's consent. Instead, the British team agreed to begin negotiations about a possible transfer of the islands in the foreseeable future. But after raising Argentine hopes and expectations, the British government procrastinated under pressure from nationalist elements and the so-called Falkland lobby, thus renewing Argentines' sense of frustration and outrage.

Although negotiations and plans to cooperate continued from 1968 to 1971, the military ascension to power after ousting Isabel Perón in 1976 marked the beginning of new hostilities toward the British in the South Atlantic. In February of that year, an Argentine destroyer fired on a British ship conducting scientific research in the coastal waters of the Falkland Islands. Soon after, Argentine military personnel disembarked in Southern Thule on the South Sandwich Islands to establish what they described as a meteorological research station. Whitehall's protests, vocal but unaccompanied by action, were interpreted by the Argentines as indications of weakness and pusillanimity that encouraged more harassment. Even so, the British agreed to continue negotiating a possible transfer of the Falkland Islands and their dependencies after a leaseback period of some seventy years. In 1981 a party of Argentines supposedly scrapping an old whaling station on South Georgia was found engaged in occupation actions, which again the British condemned only with words. Hindsight shows that the British lack of response to these and other provocations intended to test their resolve led to the conviction among

the Argentine military that a forceful invasion of the islands would probably also be met by no more than English rhetoric.

Viewed in historical perspective, these events represented escalating steps in a dangerous adventurism begun by General Onganía in 1965 and culminating in the occupation staged by General Leopoldo Galtieri in 1982. The year 1965 marked the inception of Onganía's "Argentine nationalist revolution," which was undertaken to restore the honor and grandeur of the past—by force of arms if necessary. To attain this goal, a new national doctrine of "*geopolítica argentina*" was forged to provide the theoretical underpinnings for the country's growing militarism.⁶ After this point, forceful "persuasion" and repression of dissidents in the name of nationalism and state security became acceptable means in Argentina.

In the following years, a respectable war machine was assembled to achieve these geopolitical goals and national vindication. The military thus imposed its motivations and dreams on the entire nation. Real as well as perceived competitors for the geopolitical spaces that Argentine ideologists considered their own were singled out as diplomatic and strategic targets.⁷ As the controller of several islands in the South Atlantic (such as the South Orkney and South Georgia islands) that were perceived as part of Argentina's geopolitical space, the United Kingdom became the prime target of Argentine strategic provocations. Chile was chosen as a secondary target because it was regarded by some ultranationalists and geopoliticians as an expansionist nation. Unresolved boundary disputes and the Argentine desire to ban Chilean vessels from the Beagle Channel and the Cape Horn vicinity became reasons enough to assail this neighboring country.

Sustained Argentine harassment of British installations on the South Orkney and Sandwich islands and on the Antarctic Peninsula were intended as a continual testing of the United Kingdom's endurance. Meanwhile, Chile—isolated by the world community during its authoritarian years—was coerced into territorial negotiations that would have been unacceptable under normal international circumstances. In the past, Argentina and Chile had agreed to submit their territorial grievances to British arbitration, but with the arbiter now viewed as foe in Argentine eyes, the rhetoric changed from aggressive to abusive. Influential militarist writers did not hesitate to express their feelings in strong terms in works

6. The concurrent development of Argentine militarism and geopolitical thought has been outlined well by Roberto Russell in "Argentina: Ten Years of Foreign Policy toward the Southern Cone," in *Geopolitics of the Southern Cone and the Antarctic*, edited by Philip Kelly and Jack Child (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1988).

7. Particularly illustrative in this respect is the position of retired Admiral Jorge Fraga, *La Argentina y el Atlántico Sur* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1983). Similar views about the geopolitical projections of their country still surface in the works of some postwar Argentine writers, including Oscar Arévalo, *Malvinas, Beagle, Atlántico Sur: Madryn, jaque a la OTANOCAS* (Buenos Aires: Anteo, 1985).

like Fernando García's *El juez me robó dos islas*, Adolfo Holmberg's *¿Cree usted que los ingleses nos devolverán las Malvinas? Yo no*, and Isaac Rojas's *La Argentina en el Beagle y Atlántico Sur*.⁸ Each of these books was enthusiastically endorsed by Argentines associated with the Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos in Buenos Aires, which published the review *Estrategia*. In 1978, after Argentina rejected the ruling made by a neutral British boundary committee, Chile was forcibly intimidated into accepting the Pope as the new arbiter in the dispute over the Beagle Channel Islands.⁹

This success strengthened the belief of the Argentine military that force was the means that would bring them nearer their international goals. Nor did they hesitate to implement this strategy internally to stifle dissension. Given these antecedents, it becomes more understandable that the military rulers opted to use coercion in dealing with an antagonist visibly reluctant to discuss seriously the question of Falklands/Malvinas sovereignty.

As it turned out, the Argentine generals and geopoliticians misinterpreted British reluctance to engage in talks as a lack of resolve and the weakness of a decaying power. The interpretative materials presented by Kinney and by Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse are revealing. The irredentism felt toward the Malvinas helped instill a strong sentiment of dispossession among Argentines, which temporarily reunited a nation torn by internecine struggles. For the moment, social and ideological cleavages were smoothed over by the national longing to recover the islands, which were popularly believed to have been snatched away during a period of similar internal disunity: the one following the independence of the Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata.

In Borón and Faúndez's *Malvinas hoy: herencia de un conflicto*, Carlos Escudé, a longtime critic of military excesses, examines the genesis of the geographic-geopolitical premises nurtured by military belief in Argentina's national grandeur and manifest destiny in South America. He contends that this national self-perception is rooted in Argentina's geographical education, which has overstressed the notion that the for-

8. See Fernando García D.C., *El juez me robó dos islas* (Buenos Aires: Almafuerte, 1970); Adolfo M. Holmberg, *¿Cree usted que los ingleses nos devolverán las Malvinas? Yo no* (Buenos Aires: Leonardo Impresora, 1977); and Isaac F. Rojas, *La Argentina en el Beagle y Atlántico Sur* (Buenos Aires: Nemont, 1980).

9. How close this incident came to triggering a war is revealed by Jaime C. Lipovetzky in *Disparen sobre el Beagle: en defensa de la mediación papal* (Buenos Aires: Distal, 1984). The intimidating language used by Argentine militaries can be detected in the chapter "Cuestión del Beagle: negociación directa o diálogo de armas," in *El conflicto del Beagle*, edited by Juan E. Guglielmelli (Buenos Aires: El Cid, 1978). This language also surfaces repeatedly in the writings of General Osiris G. Villegas, Argentina's chief negotiator during the Beagle crisis, when Argentina rejected the outcome of papal arbitration on the possession of three islands at the exit of the channel. See Villegas, *La propuesta pontificia y el espacio nacional comprometido* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1982); and Villegas, *Conflicto con Chile en la región austral* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1978).

mer viceroyalty of Río de la Plata was once a great administrative entity whose territory has been mutilated ever since. The perpetrators were perceived as Great Britain and Chile, a view that more than justified efforts to restore Argentina to its former grandeur in the eyes of the military rulers. After neutralizing Chile in 1978, the Argentine military directed its next “restorative” efforts against the distant colonial power still holding territories considered to be rightfully Argentina’s.

But when the methods of intimidation and repression used against its own nationals and Chile were applied in the landing on the Malvinas on 2 April 1982, Argentina became what Escudé terms an “international pariah.”¹⁰ Despite the historical reasons underlying Argentina’s frustration over the Falkland Islands, the geopolitical emphasis on recovering the islands, fueled by belligerent individuals, made it difficult for the rest of the world to sympathize with Argentina’s choosing an armed option.¹¹ Faced with a *fait accompli*, the only way that the United Nations could prevent hostilities in April 1982 was to request Argentine withdrawal and British restraint.

The Painful Road to Negotiations

Two other circumstances must be understood within the context of the geopolitical sense of urgency attached to reclaiming the Malvinas: the Argentine landing that forced the British to respond at last to the Argentine provocations and the ensuing failure of all attempts to prevent an armed confrontation. Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse argue in *Signals of War* that the Argentines originally intended to force Great Britain into discussing the sovereignty issue and did not plan to stay on the islands for any length of time. This contention is corroborated by the fact that the specialized occupation units landing 2 April were promptly replaced by regular conscripted forces (pp. 142–47).

To the Argentines’ surprise, the UN Security Council approved UN Resolution 502 demanding the withdrawal of the Argentine forces from the islands as a precondition for any discussion. Caught in the squeeze of their own diplomatic miscalculation, the Argentine rulers had no choice if they wanted to save face but to persist in their demands for recognition of sovereignty over the islands as the condition for any withdrawal. Given this inflexibility, the diplomatic shuttle efforts of U.S.

10. Carlos Escudé, *La Argentina: ¿paria internacional?* (Buenos Aires: Belgrano, 1984).

11. The fact that the Malvinas Islands ranked high among Argentina’s geopolitical goals during the 1970s should not be overlooked in assessing the reasons why the armed forces decided to move on the islands. This point is made in such works as Pablo Hernández and Horacio Chitarroni, *Malvinas, clave geopolítica* (Buenos Aires: Castañeda, 1977); Haroldo Foulkes, *Las Malvinas, una causa nacional* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1978); Félix E. Cichero, *Las Malvinas, grieta en el mapa argentino* (Buenos Aires: Stilcograf, 1968); and Juan C. Moreno, *La recuperación de las Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1973).

statesman Alexander Haig during the rest of April 1982 were doomed,¹² as were the initiatives of Peruvian President Fernando Belaúnde Terry (30 April to 20 May) and UN Secretary General Andrés Pérez de Cuellar (30 April to 26 May).

Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse assert that the Argentine military leaders' stubborn clinging to their original conditions arose from the lack of alternatives offered and their own reluctance to compromise. On 25 April, the South Georgia Islands were recovered by the British and the Argentines lost the submarine *Santa Fé*; a week later the cruiser *Belgrano* was sunk. Even then the Argentines adamantly rejected any proposal that entailed their leaving the islands first, blaming North American and European nations for the dead-end alley they had backed themselves into.¹³ By 11 May, being pounded heavily by a superior British war machine and having exhausted all diplomatic channels, the Argentine military could find no other "honorable solution" to this self-inflicted crisis than to await final defeat.

Analysts like Peter Beck and Walter Little blame Great Britain and the United States for maneuvering the aggressor country into such a tight corner and thus not trying to avert the bloodshed. Such interpretations fail to recognize that before any of these choices arose, it was the Argentine rulers who made no allowances for diplomatic compromise and paved the road for their own dishonorable defeat. At the same time, these leaders placed Argentina in a situation in which it was very difficult to demand sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.

As to the effects on the Falkland Islanders, the war alienated them even further from Argentina. Prior to the accords of 1968 and 1971, their wishes and aspirations had been little heeded, although a nationalistic Falkland lobby in the British parliament effectively opposed any form of return to Argentine sovereignty. Since the war in 1982, no British government or political party has been willing to jeopardize its electoral chances by even hinting at renewing negotiations with a defeated adversary. Hence analysts like James Cameron view transfer of the islands to Argen-

12. In the context of Argentine-U.S. relations, Haig's efforts never had much chance of succeeding. The Jimmy Carter administration had distanced itself from the military regimes in Argentina in the late 1970s, and the incoming Ronald Reagan administration had little leverage over Argentine military leaders. It should also be remembered that Argentine national feeling was greatly inflamed by the role the United States played in the loss of the Malvinas in 1833. Two works have blamed the Monroe Doctrine enunciated by U.S. President James Monroe in the early nineteenth century for the British onslaught on the island. See Ernesto J. Fitte, *La agresión norteamericana a las Islas Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1966); and Mario Tessler, *Malvinas: cómo EE.UU. provocó la usurpación inglesa* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1979). After the Falklands/Malvinas War, Argentine feeling against the United States remained hostile. See Elizabeth Reinmann, *Las Malvinas: traición "Made in USA"* (Mexico City: El Caballito, 1983).

13. Carlos Rivas, *El complot internacional contra la patria en la guerra de las Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Rioplatense, 1982).

tina as highly improbable, particularly now that a flourishing fishing industry in the contiguous waters has been generating more economic gain for the islanders than they have ever enjoyed before (Borón and Faúndez, p. 361).

All these considerations lead to the questions of whether and how it will be possible to return to a bargaining situation like that existing between 1968 and 1971. Is it likely that Argentina, now that it is ruled by civilians, will relinquish its aspiration to recover the Malvinas? Or, if given some time to refurbish its arsenals, will a new war over the Malvinas arise in the future? This alarming prospect has been stimulated by militaristic factions seeking to exploit the popular sense of dispossession. Such a perspective has surfaced in some postwar Argentine publications and is also expounded in Borón and Faúndez's *Malvinas hoy* by Juan Puig and Raúl Vinuesa (pp. 18–20, 47–49).

Which of these avenues will be taken in the future depends largely on two points. First, the islanders are overseas citizens of the United Kingdom whose livelihood and habitat are difficult to negotiate. Second, according to physical contiguity and post-independence historical boundaries, the islands belong to Argentina, the rightful successor to the Spanish empire in southeastern South America.

The first point was strongly attacked by Argentina and its Third World supporters in the 1960s by invoking the principle of decolonization.¹⁴ According to this viewpoint, when the British forcibly took over the Malvinas in 1833, the islands were an integral part of Argentina. The British counter that in the eighteenth century, ownership to the islands was disputed among Spain, France, and Great Britain due to uncertain claims of discovery, irregular occupation, and overlapping rights between the royal house of Bourbon in France and Spain.¹⁵ The British assert that in 1833, no permanent Argentine settlements existed on the islands, except for a few transient workers employed by a Montevideo cattle company. Hence because the first permanent settlements were established by British families (now in their fifth generation of residence), the principle of decolonization does not apply to this case. Kinney posits in *National Interest, National Honor* that advocacy of decolonization in the United Nations in the 1960s actually reflected the strong political aversion to Western liberal democracies fostered by the Soviet Union and its temporary allies (pp. 6–14).

14. Camilo H. Rodríguez, *Malvinas, última frontera del colonialismo: hechos, legitimidad, opinión, documentos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1976).

15. An excellent, although often overlooked, monograph on the diplomatic dealings between the English and Spanish governments from 1766 to 1774, prior to abandonment of Port Egmont by the British is Manuel Hidalgo-Nieto, *La cuestión de las Malvinas: contribución al estudio de las relaciones hispano-inglesas en el siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1947).

Supporters of decolonization also claim that British presence in an indisputably Hispanic historical-cultural realm is unthinkable and that ownership of forcibly acquired territories is incompatible with the contemporary understanding of the genesis of sovereignty and contrary to respect for the right of a people to self-determination (see Rubén Perina's contribution to Smith's *Toward Resolution*, pp. 52–56; also that of David Thomas, pp. 19–21). Yet these premises, however well-reasoned, cannot justify Argentina's applying force contrary to the wishes of the islanders and contravening the legal dictates established by the international community of countries represented in the United Nations.

Because both positions are reasonable, the future fate of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands is one of the most difficult issues to resolve by juridical means. Although at present the United Kingdom sees no need to resume negotiations with Argentina, supporting a handful of staunchly British islanders may prove to be an expensive liability that makes little national, economic, or strategic sense in the future.

Options and Their Feasibility

Following the conflict, the United Kingdom was obviously reluctant to enter into discussions with defeated Argentina, even under the democratically elected government of Raúl Alfonsín. Only after the rich supply of fish and squid in the waters surrounding the Falklands began to be harvested intensively by Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese trawlers did it become clear to Argentina and to the United Kingdom that the region's fishing resources could be preserved only through a common effort (see the contributions of Peter Willets and Alfredo Pott to Borón and Faúndez's *Malvinas hoy*, pp. 102–20, 121–24). To this end, meetings were held in Madrid in February 1989 on protecting island resources. On this occasion, the British warned the Argentines that they would immediately suspend the dialogue if the issue of sovereignty were raised again by the delegates. These meetings led to issuing the "umbrella formula" on sovereignty, which allows the two countries to deal jointly with questions associated with future sources of livelihood for the islands but excludes discussion of their future ownership (see Charles Maechling's essay in Smith's *Toward Resolution*, p. 111).

Further, an unwritten agreement exists between the two countries that regardless of the formula for solution to be considered, negotiations henceforth will have to include the interests and wishes of the Falkland Islanders. Their presence is still strongly contested by the Argentines, who believe that this role falls to Argentina rather than to the British government. Yet such an approach is unacceptable to the islanders, who dislike their South American neighbors but also harbor the suspicion that a future British government little attuned to Falklanders' aspirations

would be inclined to bargain with their destinies as cavalierly as did the British Labor governments of the 1960s and 1970s (see Smith, p. 66).

As for Argentine promises that they are prepared to grant the Falklanders a special status reflecting their foreign origin, these offers too are greeted with distrust. Islanders recall that similar "concessions" were offered by the military regimes of the 1960s and 1970s, which later demonstrated ample lack of respect for ethnic diversity and political opinion. As noted, no British party in power would welcome being harassed by military adventurers in the South Atlantic, and the Conservative government that won the war of 1982 at the cost of British lives is not prepared to make concessions to a defeated adversary. Under these circumstances, the present British government of Prime Minister John Major feels no obligation to negotiate about a territory and population displaying such keen adhesion to the British nation as that of the Falklanders.

In Argentina the ill-fated attempt to reclaim the Malvinas, prompted by aggressive and irresponsible militaristic elements, has widely discredited warmongers and geopoliticians who advocated the use of force to resolve international conflicts.¹⁶ But although the postwar political leadership has been democratic and balanced, no Argentine head of state has refrained from expressing the opinion that the Malvinas are an unresolved issue awaiting more propitious conditions in the United Kingdom to be reactivated. Argentines still believe firmly that they will eventually regain the Malvinas, provided they change their methods of achieving that goal. Consistent with this line of thought, the administration of President Carlos Menem has cautiously maintained communications with the United Kingdom and publicly deplored the excesses committed by military predecessors (see Floria's analysis in Smith's *Toward Resolution*).

Several alternatives for the future of the Falklands/Malvinas are presented in Kinney's *National Interest*, *National Honor* and Beck's *The Falkland Islands as an International Problem*. The most feasible outcomes are five possible scenarios.

Maintenance of the status quo / This choice would imply British strengthening of "Fortress Falklands" by committing costly financial and military resources to protect the Falkland Islands and South Atlantic British dependencies.¹⁷ This approach is the one currently preferred by most of the

16. Numerous Argentine works have criticized the way that the armed forces dealt with the Malvinas issue. The best among them are Alejandro Dabat, *Argentina: The Malvinas and the End of Military Rule* (London: Verso, 1984); and Juan C. Moneta, *Fuerzas armadas y gobierno constitucional después de las Malvinas* (Mexico City: Centro Latino-Americano de Estudios Estratégicos, 1986).

17. A short outline of the implications of creating a fortified enclave in the Falkland Islands to avert future attempts at seizure can be found in Rubén de Hoyos, "Malvinas/Falklands, 1982–1988: The New Gibraltar in the South Atlantic?" in Kelly and Child, *Geopolitics of the Southern Cone*, 237–49.

islanders and nationalistic sectors of British public opinion.¹⁸ Kinney observes that such an option would satisfy British honor but would alienate Argentina profoundly and possibly rekindle dangerous revanchist desires for repossession among its militaristic sectors.

One variation of this alternative would be formation of a “free association” of the islands with the United Kingdom, similar to a commonwealth state, under which the islanders would have to wean themselves financially and could no longer look to London as “home.” This solution runs counter to the Falklanders’ strong sense of connection with the British homeland. It has also been rejected outright by Buenos Aires, which fears that Argentines would have to abandon any hope of ever reclaiming the islands. Equally unacceptable for both islanders and Argentines is total independence, a situation that would leave the Falkland Islands susceptible to Argentine annexation and would imply a form of international acknowledgment of the Falklanders’ right to self-determination, a right the Argentines do not recognize.

Internationalization of the islands / This set of alternatives builds on the principle of decolonization pursued avidly within the United Nations in the 1960s. From the outset, its application to the Falkland Islands was rejected by the United Kingdom and strongly opposed by the islanders. But contemporary Argentines consider this option as one that might bring the islands back to their dominion some time in the future. One possibility would be to create a “trusteeship” under the auspices of the United Nations with a view to preparing the islanders for either self-rule or gradual assimilation into territorial Argentina, an option obviously unacceptable to the Falklanders. It must be stressed that considering the international partisan overtones taken on by decolonization policies in the United Nations, the Falklanders and the current British government are not enthusiastic about submitting the future of the islands to the decision of such a biased assembly.

Condominium / In being in tune with the pragmatic reality of the Falklanders’ having to learn to live and interact with their South American neighbors, this rather theoretical alternative would probably be more to the liking of Argentina and the United Kingdom. Under this formula, which was proposed by Peruvian and UN mediators in 1982, both Argentina and the United Kingdom would be present on the islands. They would administer jointly the natural resources that ensure the livelihood and welfare of the islanders and check on each other, without compromising the concept of exclusive sovereignty. The Falklanders, however, reject any proposal along these lines because it would mean accepting the

18. Compare the polls analyzed by Walter Little in his essay in Smith’s *Toward Resolution* (pp. 55, 63–64).

concept that Argentina should have a say in island affairs. Similarly unacceptable to the islanders is the proposal of “joint sovereignty,” which implies administration by both Argentina and the United Kingdom of a commonly held territory. As far as the Falklanders are concerned, when the Argentines lost a war that they themselves precipitated in 1982, they also forfeited any right to claim shared sovereignty over a British overseas territory.

Submission of the issue to the International Court of Justice / At first glance a plausible solution, this avenue is suitable for solving international legal disputes but not for dealing with claims to sovereignty. Official positions from Argentina and the United Kingdom explicitly state that the rights to sovereignty over the Falkland/Malvinas islands are beyond international arbitration.

Ultimate return of the islands to Argentina / This set of solutions includes all the alternatives that imply returning the islands but imposes on the Argentines obligations and guarantees to respect the Falklanders’ obvious cultural and historical differences.¹⁹ The most likely means would be a “lease-back” of the islands under certain temporal terms to be mutually agreed upon. Although this approach would provide time to mellow the strong dislike that the Falklanders feel for the Argentines as well as the possibility of coexistence, it is still regarded by the Falklanders as a covert “giveaway of the islands” to a country known for erratic political behavior and antidemocratic relapses. Many British, especially Falklanders, argue that considering Argentina’s record in not abiding by international agreements and obligations, who could guarantee that British consent to a phased return of the islands would not encourage Argentine disregard of promises made to obtain concessions from the United Kingdom?

Conclusions

One important fact must not be overlooked: the Falklands/Malvinas confrontation involved two nations with a robust tradition of discussing issues of national interest openly and passionately. The abundant literature on the subject proves this point. In both countries, the conflict united

19. The historical and legal bases for claiming sovereignty over the islands have been repeatedly stated in various Argentine sources. Concise primers are Ezequiel F. Pereyra, *Las Islas Malvinas: soberanía argentina, antecedentes, gestiones diplomáticas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1969); and Alfredo B. Bologna, *Los derechos de la República Argentina sobre las Islas Malvinas, Georgias del Sur y Sandwich del Sur* (Buenos Aires: Ediar, 1988). Recent contributions in English include Fritz L. Hoffmann and Olga Mingo-Hoffmann, *Sovereignty in Dispute: The Falklands/Malvinas, 1493–1982* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1984); and Lowell S. Gustaffson, *The Sovereignty Dispute over the Falkland/Malvinas Islands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

(if only momentarily) nations that were internally divided. In Argentina even those who had suffered under military repression rallied in favor of recovering the Malvinas; and in the United Kingdom, the Argentine affront to British honor convinced even the most recalcitrant anti-Thatcherites of the need to defend the Falkland Islands.

Since the war, things for the British seem to have returned to almost the same status where they were before the conflict: the impoverished United Kingdom remains stuck with a distant colony inhabited by a few thousand faithful subjects whose maintenance costs far outweigh any economic or strategic benefits. But for Argentina, the war's aftermath has proved to have more impact: the military rulers departed in shame, and the nation could finally dismiss those who had inflicted so much pain and suffering. Neither country has come up with a solution to the issue that would entail renouncing their rights to the islands, and yet the discussion about the islands has modulated from its original strident tone to one of tolerant waiting on both sides. Moreover, the dialogue between Argentine and British policymakers has become more candid and realistic, as exemplified by the symposium contributions published in Borón and Faúndez's *Malvinas hoy*. These kinds of conversations augur better outcomes for future meetings.

The backdrop for these changing attitudes is the global situation. The world in the 1990s is not the one of the early 1980s. First of all, the geopolitical premises of the contemporary world have changed radically, as has the militaristic outlook that pervaded international relations only ten years ago. The civilian course followed by Argentina during the administrations of Presidents Alfonsín and Menem has almost completely liberated Argentina from the pressures of militaristic elements, leaving current domestic debate focused on national economic reconstruction and pluralism. Should this course continue, it appears improbable that the old argument will prevail that the islands can only be returned to Argentina if a strong stance is taken against the British occupants. Patience and cautious deliberation will probably bring both sides ultimately to delivering control of the islands to those whose livelihood depends most on them. Against the predictions of doomsayers, the miscalculations and mistakes that led to the unnecessary war of 1982 are being carefully avoided by the negotiators of today. If this trend continues, the conflict over the Falklands/Malvinas will not be replayed in the future.