

Confidence was indeed being rapidly built up. At the same time the political context continued to favour the process in both capitals. The end of the cold war made Britain feel itself a more secure country and allowed for Mrs. Thatcher's 'peace dividend' to come into play. European unity, globalization and other trends emphasized cooperative and not confrontational approaches to problem solving between countries. And British prosperity seemed to give added confidence to the country after its long years of decline.

British confidence in the Argentine will to peace seemed well placed indeed and the Menem government continued to show its priorities were elsewhere than in renewed disputes over the Falklands. A major revision of defence policy noted a new and determined approach to resolving outstanding difficulties with Chile as well. The long sacred idea of self-sufficiency in defence production was formally abandoned by the government. A formal rejection of nuclear weapons development and key offensive missile production underscored these new foreign and defence policy stances.

Argentina also became a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations taking part in a large number of such activities from the early 1990s on. Indeed, the Argentine and British contingents in Cyprus worked especially closely together and joint supply arrangements on the island emphasized the special and new situation for the two armed forces. Both in the Persian Gulf War, to which the Argentines sent two warships, and in the ex-Yugoslav operations the British and Argentine military came to forge closer links than perhaps ever before.¹⁹ At the same time those operations proved the degree to which the Buenos Aires government wished to be seen to be cooperative in the new world order then being brought into existence. The links with Washington were to be the bedrock of Argentine diplomacy under President Menem and those links were incompatible with a foreign policy seen as excessively nationalistic. Economic prosperity for Argentina, all too absent in recent years, was seen as depending on a responsible foreign policy which eschewed adventurism and accepted the realities of the post-cold war world, including the need for regional economic integration whatever the nationalists said about it. The Falklands issue, in the words of one key observer of the Argentine scene, "should be settled in the best Western tradition: through cooperation, mutual respect and compliance with the law".²⁰

¹⁹ For the two navies the links went back well before Argentine independence. The Royal Navy had always been the model for the Argentine naval service and midshipmen and officers from the latter had often served or trained with the former. Argentine naval purchases were for long largely placed in British shipyards and British naval training missions had often been bought in by Buenos Aires. The traditions of the two national services were in many ways almost identical.

²⁰ Andrés Cisneros, "Foreign Policy and Argentina's National Interest", in Colin Lewis and Celia Szusterman (ed), *Argentina: Foreign Relations and the New Foreign Policy Agenda* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies Occasional Paper No. 14, 1996), pp. 10-5.