

in a position to damage further its public image by such a gesture.

Since hostilities had not ceased, Britain could of course not afford to let down its guard where the islands were concerned. This situation fed the already obvious view in Whitehall that it would be important not to send Buenos Aires any wrong signals, as had doubtless been done on several occasions before the war, as to the UK's determination to hold on to the islands. The result was the construction of a major British military base in the interior of East Falkland Island at Mount Pleasant. Land and air forces of considerable size were based there and the infrastructure became increasingly permanent as time went on. In addition, the Royal Navy deployed warships on a permanent basis to the region, all of this with the intention of ensuring the Argentines knew that another military attempt to seize the islands would not succeed.

In essence one part of the issue was concern over incidents getting out of hand more than any thought that there might be some sort of major assault on the Falklands. Nationalist elements in Argentina frequently called for harassing tactics against the islands and in the past this had taken a number of forms which the British felt it necessary to guard against. These had included landings on the islands, aircraft hijackings, and similar problematical and usually non-state inspired actions which were meant to be pinpricks showing London how untenable its position was in the long run.

A further issue was that of surprise attack. British military intelligence could never entirely discount the fact that hostilities had not formally ended, that the Argentine military still included many influential officers keen to have another go, that their resources in the region were vastly greater than were those available to the British commander on the islands, and that Argentine behaviour on this particular issue had often in the past been seemingly erratic and incomprehensible when seen from London. Thus British preparations had to include some degree of 'worst case planning' in the sense of the scenario of a renewed military attempt to take the Falklands. Long term Argentine unwillingness to end formally the conflict thus fed into British thinking on how best to defend the islands in the future in a major way.

This is interesting from the perspective of wider thinking in Latin America about confidence building measures. In general authors from the region, and indeed its governments as well, have dismissed the idea of a need for planning against surprise attack as an issue of moment within Latin American security discussions. The argument is the oft-repeated one that has run along the lines that Latin America is a region of relative peace, with smaller armed forces than elsewhere in the world, living in a sort of Commonwealth of similar ideas, traditions, history, religion and language, and with outstanding issues which were well short of the sort which would bring about surprise attacks.

In this context especially there has been a tendency to resist dealing with surprise attacks when talking about CBMs in the region. Indeed, the importance in East-West and European CBM discussions of guarding against such attacks has reinforced those who feel this other international experience with confidence building is essentially irrelevant in the Latin American context. This appears both counterintuitive and simply wrong when dealing with the Falklands issue. Whatever one can say about the failure of British intelligence to foresee the 1982 attack, the assault on the