

- generally work to increase mutual knowledge on military subjects in the Southwestern Atlantic.¹⁸

With these measures in place the military and overall situation in the South Atlantic was rapidly improved. Commanding officers and personnel, especially those in the air and naval services, had clearer rules with which to work. Incidents were now less likely to occur and more likely to be resolved quickly and amicably than in the past. The perception of a danger of surprise attack was reduced markedly. And a framework for perceiving the former opponent's activities was given which was much less fraught with suspicion. While there were obviously now more complications for the military in planning their activities, the gain in building confidence was obvious to all but the most die-hard.

Such was the success of these measures, and the diplomatic, military and public reaction to them, that in September 1991, a whole new series of such measures were added to those already in place. At this stage, it was agreed to:

- maintain in future a special communications net between the two foreign ministries;
- set up a 24-hour a day communications system to put the above into effect;
- add an alternative means of communications directly for military authorities;
- organize reciprocal visits to one another's military bases;
- organize reciprocal visits to one another's naval vessels;
- establish norms for radio procedures for naval exercises; and
- establish an annual review of agreements in the bilateral working group.

The communications accords in particular pointed to the mutual desire to avoid incidents and control them when they occurred. And the establishment of both military and foreign ministry networks for communicating between the two countries showed clearly the seriousness with which the confidence building activity was now being taken. There would now be more than one route for information transferal and more than one way to signal intent, avoid confusion and misinterpretation of events, and provide timely reassurance when doubts existed. Despite the obvious costs of a full-time system, both sides felt such an arrangement more than worth the price.

¹⁸ These details come from interviews with Argentine and United Kingdom diplomats and military officers as well as Rut Diamint, "La Seguridad estratégica regional y las medidas de confianza mutua pensadas desde Argentina", in Augusto Varas and Isaac Caro (eds), *Medidas de confianza mutua en América Latina* (Santiago: FLACSO, 1994), pp. 141-63, especially p. 147.