

and was seen by official Buenos Aires as a confidence building exercise in itself. Indeed, in Argentine official circles the term confidence building is less often used now. And the reason for this is found in the success of the CBMs put in place to date. Argentine diplomats now refer generally to a state of confidence currently existing, which is so advanced that it is no longer necessary to talk of building it.

During the presidential visit, many commercial and cultural accords were signed as well as some touching defence matters. While not necessarily the triumph it was portrayed to be in Argentina, there is little doubt that the visit was a success. Mr. Menem worked hard to give the visit high visibility and to demonstrate that his foreign policy had successfully put Argentina's unfortunate recent past behind it.

The mere fact that an Argentine president could again visit the United Kingdom, only sixteen years after the Falklands War, was a demonstration of how much things had changed from the aftermath of the war or even the end of the Alfonsín presidency a decade before. The British had not been overly keen to receive the visit, fearful of it being used for propaganda purposes on the subject of the islands and wary of some of Menem's assertions that he would raise the issue formally with British authorities, perhaps even with the Queen herself. Such a situation had not made the planning of the visit easy for either side as attested to by the late announcement of a date for the long awaited event.

As it happened, Menem was able to say he raised the sovereignty issue with the British, something he had for long promised to Argentines. And the British could say they did not discuss the matter when they spoke with Falklanders or their supporters at home, since while they listened politely to the Argentine position, they did nothing more. In return, the British got further CBMs on the military side, for some a consolidation of the status quo, and a furthering opening up of political, economic and cultural relations with a long valued partner.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Confidence building can be credited with much of the background to this relatively happy set of circumstances. For nearly a decade the British and Argentine armed forces, Falklands and Argentine fishery protection personnel, and a variety of levels of diplomats from Buenos Aires and London have worked to ensure the smooth functioning of a wide range of CBMs in a number of fields. That common goal has underscored the confidence each has felt in the other and reduced markedly the heat of the debate on Falklands-related issues in all three capitals. This is no mean achievement in a dispute where heat rather than light has been the main rule for discussion.

It is also interesting to note that the whole wide range of elements in the Macintosh definition referred to at the beginning of this paper has applied in the Falklands case. That is, there have been a variety of arms control measures entailing state actions. In the context here, the most useful have obviously been bilateral but it has been seen that early on there were also unilateral acts as well.