

one which does not depend on Argentine good will for its functioning.

### **The Consolidation of Confidence Building between the Two Countries**

Returning now to the Madrid Joint Declaration of 1989, it can be seen that this result of the new context thus set the scene for what were clearly confidence building measures between the two countries and to a more limited extent between Argentina and the Falklanders themselves. While islanders would have preferred an Argentine renunciation of their claims, most Falklanders knew this to be virtually impossible. Therefore an umbrella over the sovereignty issue seemed a reasonably good temporary solution to many outstanding matters.

Both sides spoke openly of the new situation as one where confidence building was at work and of the measures set in place as CBMs. The working groups set to work on their two sets of issues and were soon tabling ideas to the two foreign and defence ministries. Not only would one of the two working groups directly address building confidence and avoiding military incidents, but the atmosphere was now positive where further initiatives were concerned. In that sense the second round of talks planned for early 1990 favoured the work of both working groups.

The lifting of visas likewise, discussed at this stage, gave a positive public image of what was going on, and one which many in both countries could easily understand given the broad range of bilateral relations which had prevailed in the past. Re-establishing sea and air communications was another visible sign of the new mood and the advantages of putting the past at least partially behind. And exchange of information on fishing and conservation could hardly fail to help both countries given the very special conditions of the South Atlantic.

Events now moved rapidly. In early December 1989, British and Argentine military officers met in Montevideo with the express objective of finding ways to reduce the stresses and strains of the military situation in the southern Atlantic. This meeting resulted in another, now strictly military but still major breakthrough. The potential for useful cooperation in the search and rescue field was not only acknowledged but future mutual help in such circumstances was agreed to by the two sides. This was accompanied by an increase in measures for the security of one another's ships and aircraft. It was also agreed that the two sides would work to find means to avoid any military incidents in the area.

This progress occurred in the context of other political moves. The Queen and some parliamentarians met that autumn with Argentine congressmen visiting London and there was a general agreement on the value of reinforced bilateral relations. At the same time the two foreign ministers John Major and Domingo Cavallo met. The winter of 1989-90, as so dramatically elsewhere in the world, proved eventful. The UK protective zone around the islands was lifted early in the new year. Visas were finally and formally dropped as requirements for visits between the two countries. And on 16 February full diplomatic relations were re-established.