

The functioning of the military and other security CBMs at the practical and technical level could hardly have been much better. There are a few small complaints at the fishery patrol and related levels but in general things have worked very well indeed. Not only have incidents been few and easily handled but there has grown up a degree of confidence between a number of levels of commanders. There is no sense of tension in either the Falklands or on the continent where the other is concerned. If nationalists in Argentina refer to the threat of 'Fortress Falklands', they are usually at a loss to put forward a credible scenario for when this fortress would cause real security concerns for the Argentina of today. And while Falklanders insist that one should not let down one's guard, few think another attack really likely, even over the long term. Thus responsible leaders on both, or all three sides have seen something of a transformation in their perceptions of the opponent, even if it is not yet the case that such a transformation is complete or anchored fully.

It should also be said that other Track II type initiatives, as well as the financial, wider economic, political and cultural elements of the re-establishment of relations and confidence building arrangements have also worked well. The general context of recent years has been of good mutual support in those areas where there had been promises given in the early negotiations on resuming relations.

Britain was not only instrumental in assisting Argentina to get a closer relationship with the European Union, a key plank of Menem's international economic and political strategy, but also was helpful in the building of deeper links between the Argentines and NATO as greatly desired by Buenos Aires.<sup>23</sup> Trade between the two countries is now seen by most analysts as being at a normal level. Investment trends are also favourable. Cultural relations are now almost back to their pre-1982 circumstances, with a number of new accords signed as recently as the Menem visit to the UK in late 1998 and the series of trips made there by his dynamic foreign minister Di Tella.

All of this has given a positive context for the working of more formal CBMs in the defence and security sector. Menem's policies have found favour in the City and the strong business contacts between the two capitals, while hardly up to their historic levels, have improved markedly. The British are still respected in Argentine business circles despite the war and while Labour governments have not historically been as well seen as Conservative the general affection is noted by many observers.

### **The Current Situation**

Argentina and Britain enjoy very good relations overall as of the time of writing. The visit of President Menem to the United Kingdom in the autumn of 1998 showed to what extent this is true

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<sup>23</sup> See the composition of the audience, the participants' list, and the concrete subject matter in the proceedings of the 1993 Argentina-NATO Seminar of Global Security, edited by Andrés Fontana, *Argentina-NATO: Perspectives on Global Security* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Latinoamericano, 1994).