

## AGREEMENT OF 14th JULY 1999

Comment - AGREEMENT - Side Letter - Press Conference - Implementation

### **I Introduction**

United Kingdom and Argentine delegations met in London on 13 and 14 July in a constructive and friendly atmosphere, to continue the dialogue begun in London on 26 and 27 May and continued in New York on 2 July. The United Kingdom delegation was led by the Secretary of State, Robin Cook, and the Argentine delegation by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Worship, Guido Di Tella. The United Kingdom delegation included members of the Falkland Islands Legislative Council.

The two Ministers recalled the Joint Statements made by the United Kingdom and Argentine delegations in Madrid on 19 October 1989 and 15 February 1990, which made possible the normalisation of relations between the two countries, and the re-establishment of successful co-operation in the bilateral sphere. They agreed that the formula on sovereignty in paragraph 2 of the Joint Statement of 19 October 1989 applied to this Joint Statement and to its consequences.

They welcome the improved understanding and degree of reconciliation in the bilateral relationship marked by the exchange of visits of the President of Argentina in October 1998 and HRH The Prince of Wales in March 1999.

The two parties reached agreement on the following points.

### **II Access and Air Services**

1. Argentine citizens will be able to visit the Falkland Islands, on their own passports. This provision applies equally to Argentine citizens travelling by air and sea.
2. Full support for the immediate resumption of direct scheduled civil air services between Chile and the Falkland Islands by Lan Chile or any other carrier agreed between the Parties. From 16 October 1999, these services will include stops in mainland Argentina, where they will be able to take on and discharge passengers, cargo and mail.
3. The possibility of flights between the Falkland Islands and third countries was welcomed with the option, from 16 October 1999, of making stops in mainland Argentina.

### **III Fishing**

In the light of the shared commitment to the maintenance and conservation of fish stocks in the South Atlantic, existing levels of cooperation between the United Kingdom and Argentina will be enhanced. In this context officials will meet shortly to consider the question of the relative stability of fish stocks, poaching, and other questions related to it and to recommend coordinated programmes of practical measures with the objective of putting them in place before 9 October 1999.

### **IV Confidence Building**

1. With a view to the further development of reconciliation and mutual understanding: a memorial to members of the Argentine armed services killed in action in 1982 will be constructed at the Argentine cemetery in the Falkland Islands.
2. The Argentine Government is prepared to look at the question of toponymy in the Falkland Islands. To that end it will continue to consult the appropriate national institutions.
3. As the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the President of Argentina agreed in October 1998, the two Governments will continue to work together to evaluate the feasibility and cost of clearing the land mines still present in the Falkland Islands.

## **V Procedures**

1. The implementation of the arrangements detailed in this joint statement will be recorded in an exchange of letters between the two Governments.
2. The Governments will jointly send the text of the present statement and the accompanying letters, in English and Spanish, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for distribution as an official document of the General Assembly under the appropriate item of the Agenda of the next regular session.
3. This joint statement, as well as the arrangements deriving from it, will be kept under review by the two Governments.

*The document was signed by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook for Britain and by Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella for Argentina. Two Falklands Councillors, Michael Summers and Sharon Halford, who were technically members of the British delegation, signed as witnesses.*

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*More detail about the Agreement is to be found in the following side-letter to it also dated 14 July 1999 which was sent to Argentine Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.*

His Excellency Dr. Guido Di Tella,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Worship,  
Republic of Argentina

I have the honour to refer to our Joint Statement signed in London on 14 July 1999. This Statement provided for an exchange of letters, to which the formula on sovereignty in paragraph 2 of the Joint Statement issued at Madrid on 19 October 1989 applies, to record the understandings between our Governments on its detailed implementation.

In this respect I have the honour to propose the following arrangements:

#### **I Visits**

- (1) An Argentine passport valid for the duration of the intended stay will be needed by an Argentine citizen for visits to the Falkland Islands.
- (2) Argentine passports presented by visitors to the Falkland Islands will be stamped on the same basis as all other passports presented by visitors to the Falkland Islands.
- (3) The number of visitors to the Falkland Islands at any one time needs to reflect local capacity including the availability of accommodation. Visitors will be required to arrange accommodation in advance and to have a return ticket and sufficient funds for their intended stay.

#### **II Air Services**

- (1) The Argentine Government will seek the consent of the Chilean Government to the immediate resumption of civil air services between Chile and the Falkland Islands, operated by Lan Chile or any other carrier agreed between the Parties.
- (2) It is envisaged that civil air services between Punta Arenas and the Falkland Islands will take place once a week. From 16 October 1999 they will make initially two stops per month at Rio Gallegos, one in each direction. This arrangement will be kept under review.
- (3) In the event that the Punta Arenas service does not continue, one of any successor or substituting civil air services will make a stop in mainland Argentina, initially at a rate of two stops per month, one in each direction.
- (4) Flight clearances issued by the Argentine authorities for civil air services to the Falkland Islands will enable the carrier or carriers to postpone flights for natural or technical reasons.
- (5) Should civil air services between the Falkland Islands and third countries be operated then the option of making stops in mainland Argentina may only be exercised after 16 October 1999 by the operators based on overall commercial considerations and subject to the appropriate authorisation by the parties.
- (6) The Argentine Government will seek the support of its Mercosur partners for these arrangements.

#### **III Transit**

The Argentine authorities will consider as "in transit" all passengers, cargo and mail arriving by air in the Argentine mainland which is en route to or from the Falkland Islands when they are not destined for the Argentine mainland.

#### **IV Fisheries**

(1) The British and Argentine Governments will convene a meeting of the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission. It will discuss ways of developing their mutual interest in the conservation of fisheries resources of the South Atlantic including the relative stability of stocks and their economic significance for the area. The meeting's agenda will also include consideration of multilateral arrangements relating to the high seas fisheries.

(2) They will also explore and recommend practical ways of dealing with poaching in the South Atlantic including amongst other things the exchange of information and data, ways of enhancing fisheries protection measures and helping develop secure fisheries communications channels.

#### **V Confidence Building**

The details of the memorial referred to in Paragraph IV. 1 of the Joint Statement of 14 July 1999 will be agreed mutually.

#### **VI Humanitarian Visits**

(1) The Joint Statement of 14 July replaces the special arrangements based on humanitarian considerations and the provisions in Paragraph 10 of the Joint Statement of 15 February 1990 for visits to the Falkland Islands by close relatives of Argentine nationals buried there, including civil charter flights between the Argentine mainland and the Falkland Islands for the purpose of these visits.

(2) Argentine nationals visiting the Falkland Islands will continue to be able to visit cemeteries where members of the Argentine armed services killed in action in the 1982 conflict have been buried.

#### **VII Detailed Arrangements**

Officials of our two Governments will discuss the detailed implementation of these arrangements as a matter of urgency.

I should be grateful if you could confirm that the foregoing represents the understanding of our two Governments with regard to this matter.

Robin Cook

**Edited Transcript of Press Conference given at London on 14 July 1999**  
**By British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and Argentine Foreign Minister Guido di Tella**

**Foreign Secretary**

May I first welcome my colleague Guido di Tella, the Foreign Minister of Argentina. Guido has visited me on many occasions since the general election and on those meetings we laid the groundwork which has culminated in today's agreement. I want to pay tribute to him for the patience and imagination with which he has pursued his approach of seeking a new basis of understanding between Argentina and the Falkland Islanders.

I am also pleased to welcome Councillor Sharon Halford and Councillor Mike Summers who have represented the Council in the latest round of talks. I would record my respect and admiration for the major contribution made by all of the Falkland Islands Councillors who have taken part in this process. They have been firm throughout in defending the rights of the Islanders, but they also have been constructive and forward looking in securing the interests of the islanders. As a result they have secured an agreement that is very much in the interests of the community they represent.

This week has been the third round in a series of meetings between the government of Argentina, the government of the United Kingdom and the Falkland Islands Council. This is an historic occasion. This round of meetings has been the first successful dialogue between the Foreign Ministers of Argentina and Britain, including members of the Falkland Islands Council, since the conflict began in 1982. It is a measure of the degree of mutual respect and understanding that we have built up through these talks that we are all able to be present before you today.

As a result of that new approach we have been able to conclude an agreement on a package of measures that will build confidence and reduce tension between the Falkland Islands and Argentina. Immediately before this press conference the Argentine Foreign Minister and I signed the relevant documents and both delegations, including the Falkland Islands Councillors, signed as witnesses to it.

There are four main elements to our agreement:

- The Falkland Islands will end the ban on access by Argentine citizens that was introduced in 1982. Holders of Argentine passports will have the same rights of access as any other foreign national, without discrimination.
- Flights by Lan Chile between the Falkland Islands and South America can resume. We hope these flights can begin again in the immediate future from Chile. From October they will include two stops per month in Rio Gallegos in Argentina.
- Both the Falkland Islands and Argentina have a common interest in the management and conservation of the rich fish stocks of the South Atlantic. Both sides have agreed to enhance cooperation on conservation and as a priority to agree to a co-ordinated programme of practical measures against poaching.
- And finally we have also agreed to symbolic steps of reconciliation. On their side the Falkland Islanders will give permission for a memorial in the Argentine cemetery for those of their servicemen who lost their lives in 1982. For its part, the government of Argentina will review the Spanish place names for locations in the Falkland Islands which were imposed by decree by Galtieri.

This agreement has the wholehearted support of the British government. This government has worked hard to build a new and constructive relationship with Argentina. The visit by President Menem, whom we invited to Britain last November, gave great impetus to the relationship between our two countries. His act of reconciliation in laying a wreath at St. Paul's Cathedral has helped us to reach this agreement which can open a new era of practical cooperation between our governments and the Falkland Islanders.

This agreement also has the support of the opposition in the Argentine Congress. Yesterday I met four of their representatives who are with us this morning and they are in London as part of a multi-party delegation observing the talks. I had a friendly discussion with them, and in the course of that discussion they impressed on me their broad support for this agreement. It has given me and the Falkland Islanders extra confidence to know that the position taken by the government of Argentina in these talks represents a wide national consensus.

This agreement will be good for relations between Britain and Argentina and will also be good for Britain's relations with Argentina's neighbours in Latin America. But most of all it will be good for the Falkland Islanders who can look forward with new confidence in their dealings with Argentina and a new security on the future for themselves and their children. We have found a way in which we can do practical business together. The dialogue between us has produced real concrete benefits, but it has also produced a new climate in our relations. In the long run the greatest gain from this agreement is it marks a change from an era of confrontation to a new chapter of dialogue and cooperation. For its part, Britain commits itself to play its full part in that dialogue, to carry out this agreement and to respect the rights of the Falkland Islanders.

### **Guido di Tella**

For us it is a very important day, particularly in relations with Great Britain. I think that what is happening, what has happened already, is the evidence of the beginning of an element of trust. It isn't that with trust you do anything you want, but without trust you do nothing. And certainly I am convinced that trust is being born again with the full possibilities that this is creating. Here there are no winners or losers, we are all winning, we are all enhancing the possibilities that the South Atlantic offers us.

### **Question**

Some people see this as the beginning of the end of sovereignty. What would you say to that?

### **Foreign Secretary**

There is nothing whatsoever in this agreement that compromises the position either of Britain or of Argentina in relation to sovereignty. What this agreement does though is show that we have managed our disagreements on sovereignty in a way that has enabled us to make practical agreements between us and to carry forward the practical business that inevitably arises between the Falkland Islanders and the immediate neighbour on the Latin American mainland. We have got out of this practical measures that will be to the benefit of both sides, and that includes the Falkland Islanders. But nothing here compromises either our position on sovereignty, or for that matter the position of the government of Argentina.

### **Question**

I understand that in the Falkland Islands, although you have emphasised that the agreement has the backing of the Councillors who have been involved in these talks, there is a good deal of opposition to this on the grounds that the elected representatives of the Falkland Islanders are moving too far and too fast. Have you any concerns about a sort of democratic deficit, a lack of support in the place where it really matters for what you have agreed here today?

### **Foreign Secretary**

First of all, can I say there is no democratic deficit on the Falkland Islands. It is a small and intimate community which elects its own Council. On that Council there has only been one dissenting voice. The great overwhelming majority of the Islands Councillors are in support of this agreement and many of them have been involved in negotiating this agreement. Secondly, yes there have been some on the Falkland Islands who have rejected this agreement. Our understanding, and very firmly the understanding of the Council as well, is that they represent very much a minority view within the Falkland Islands. Of course people are entirely at liberty, that is an important part of their freedom as citizens of British territory, to express their view, but I would appeal to all those who have a view to express to do so legitimately, without violence and without intimidation which is not acceptable on the Falkland Islands or anywhere else. One of the other points that I should make is that, of course, to be fair to people on the Falkland Islands they also have not had a chance to see the full agreement, indeed the full agreement was only finalised early this morning. I hope that when that full agreement becomes known throughout the Falkland Islands it will meet the concerns of some of those who have expressed anxiety, particularly when they understand that this does not touch in any way on the question of sovereignty and that it offers real practical benefits which are important to them and to their families.

### **Question**

Do you have the concurrence of the Chilean government for the resumption of the flights, and weren't these flights suspended due to issues which don't relate to British-Argentine relations?

**Guido di Tella**

We have talked with the Chileans and they have said that they would concur to make possible everything that we have signed here this morning.

**Question**

The Falkland Islands are British territory and Britain is keen on a good relationship with Argentina. How comfortable has Britain been that for the past few years Argentines have been unable to come to a part of Britain?

**Foreign Secretary**

That is not the reason for this agreement. This agreement arises because we want to take the tension out of relations between the Falkland Islands and Argentina which remains its largest and most immediate neighbour. We have good relations with Argentina, but this is not about us fostering our good relations with Argentina, this is about us assisting in making sure that the Falkland Islanders can have a secure future and can have services that are going to be of benefit to them. And I do want to record here that the driving force in these negotiations have been the Falkland Islands Councillors. It was they who approached us in order to set up this particular round of talks, it is they who have come to those talks with their own proposals and their own ideas and I want to pay tribute very much to the creative input they have had.

**Question**

The publication of the Overseas Territories White Paper in March heralded a new age for more modern territories, a more modern spirit. Is it a coincidence that this is happening within three months of that?

**Foreign Secretary**

Well I don't know whether it is coincidence or causative, but it is certainly the case that this government has given great attention to its overseas territories and one of the first things we are seeking to do is to rename them from dependent territories because most of them, and this includes the Falkland Islands, most certainly are not dependent. We do give great priority to making sure that we serve the interest of the overseas territories and I personally would regard our commitment to these talks, the arrangements we have made for them, the patience we have shown in taking them through, and the successful agreement as a success of our commitment to our overseas territories.

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### Comment - Agreement - Side Letter - Press Conference - IMPLEMENTATION

"In 1999 I was all for the agreement. I think at least 60% of the population supported it at the time. But now I don't think there's a single person in the Falklands who supports the agreement. Argentina have shown time after time that they can't be trusted. They have made a mockery of the agreement. They haven't kept any of their promises, they haven't shown any respect for the spirit of the agreement. They haven't even changed our place names. I don't think we should have anything more to do with them, whatever they do or say."

*August 2004 - Falkland Islands Businessman, age 58*

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Proposed Mine Clearance Study

### **Written Answer dated 3 November 2004 to Parliamentary Question addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Jack Straw**

Since 1999 and the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention no funds have been specifically dedicated to the clearing of landmines in the Falklands Islands. Given the unpredictability of the environment, landmine clearance in the Falklands is particularly hazardous. Since August 1982 the landmines have been clearly marked and have very little impact on the local community. When landmines do surface they are cleared by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams based on the islands as part of their duties. Between 1997-2001, 156 mines were discovered and destroyed in this way. Between 2001-04, 268 mines were discovered and destroyed.

Under the Ottawa Convention, the obligation to clear all the landmines by 2009 falls upon the United Kingdom. States Parties in a position to do so are obliged to provide assistance for mine clearance and related activities.

On a bilateral basis, the United Kingdom and the Argentine Government signed a Joint Statement in 1999 and under the heading of Confidence-Building it was noted that:

"the two Governments will continue to work together to evaluate the feasibility and cost of clearing the land mines still present in the Falklands Islands."

Subsequently, an Exchange of Notes dated 11 October 2001, detailed how the UK and Argentina should proceed on the landmine issue. It included a provision for the establishment of a Joint Working Group, the first meeting of which took place in Buenos Aires on 3-4 December 2001. The second meeting was in London, on 26-27 October 2004.

At the 2004 meeting a list of action points was agreed, including the need for the preparation of a draft work programme and draft budget for a Feasibility Study, both of which are to be considered at the next Joint Working Group, due to be held in Buenos Aires during the second quarter of 2005.

*Source: [www.publications.parliament.uk](http://www.publications.parliament.uk)*

Attempted Interference by Argentina with Falklands Tourism Industry

**Letter sent August 2004 by the Argentine Embassy in Washington to the Jacksonville, Florida offices of W.H. Coleman Inc, a company which specialises in the organisation of international events for the travel trade and specifically Travel Mart Latin America, prompted by the inclusion of companies from the Falkland Islands among the destinations represented**

"The Argentine Government wishes to remind that the Malvinas Islands, Southern Georgias and South Sandwich Islands and the maritime spaces around them are an integral part of the Argentine national territory, illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland, and are the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two countries.... The Argentine Republic also rejects the participation in the Travel Mart and the registration in its web site of individuals or entities that define themselves as originating from the Islands as them being a territory separate from the Argentine Republic."

Travel Mart Latin America is an annual commercially organised event, which brings together specialised travel operators from around the world and South American destination representatives. It is held each year in a different city in Latin America. Every year since 1998, the Falkland Islands have been represented, originally by the Falkland Islands Tourist Board and more recently also by representatives of receptive travel agencies in the Islands. Similar representations have been made before to the organisers, W.H. Coleman Inc, who have chosen to ignore them. Usually, however, they have been made at a local consular level.

*Source: Penguin News 8 October 2004*

Harassment by Argentina of Vessels in Falklands Waters

**Formal protest made to Argentine Government over naval vessel's policing of Falklands' waters - Written statement by British Government to Parliament dated 29 March 2004 (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs - Mr Bill Rammell)**

"On 15 and 16 March 2004 the Argentine naval icebreaker, *Almirante Irizar* sailed through the Falklands Outer Conservation Zone and the Falklands Interim Conservation Zone. These are areas for which the Falkland Islands Government issues fishing licences. During the time that it was inside these zones, the Argentine vessel was challenging other vessels to identify themselves. While transit of the conservation zones is permissible, the policing of the zones by a foreign vessel contravenes the Falkland Islands' exclusive jurisdiction.

We asked the Argentine government for an explanation of the vessel's actions. Their response was not satisfactory. We have therefore made a formal protest to the Argentine Government concerning the actions of the *Almirante Irizar*, underlining the need to ensure that this type of incident does not happen again. This note also reiterated that Her Majesty's Government have no doubts about UK sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.

I have spoken to Falkland Islands Councillors about this incident. I share their concerns and have briefed them on our response. I have assured them of our continued firm support."

*Source: [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk)*

Interference by Argentina with Charter Flights to the Falklands

**Written statement by British Government to Parliament dated 1 March 2004 (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs - Mr Bill Rammell)**

"I made a Statement to this House on airlinks between the Falklands and Argentina on 19 January. I would like to report on developments since then.

I travelled to Argentina on 16/17 February on a pre-planned bilateral visit. I held talks on a wide range of international, regional and bilateral issues. The question of airlinks featured in my talks with the Argentine Foreign Minister, Dr. Rafael Bielsa. The talks were frank and constructive and we made some progress. Some proposals were discussed which we each agreed to look at further. These proposals primarily focused on temporary arrangements for charter flights for 2004. I made clear that any arrangements would need to be acceptable to the Falkland Islanders.

Regrettably, shortly following my visit, an article appeared in an Argentine newspaper, giving details of my talks and wrongly asserting that a "deal" on airlinks had been agreed. As I have indicated, this was not the case.

I spoke subsequently to Falkland Councillors. They concluded that the proposals for temporary arrangements did not meet their concerns. However, they agreed that we should continue to discuss the issue with the Argentine Government with a view to securing a permanent solution to the question of charter flights rather than having further temporary arrangements.

We are now taking this forward with the Argentine Government, with the full agreement of Councillors. I will keep the House informed of progress."

*Source: [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk)*

**Written statement by British Government to Parliament dated 19 January 2004 (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs - Mr Bill Rammell)**

Air links between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland are the subject of two understandings reached between Her Majesty's Government and the Argentine Government, under a sovereignty umbrella (which protects both sides' positions on the question of sovereignty). Following the UK/Argentine Joint Statement of July 1999, LAN Chile resumed its weekly flight between Punta Arenas (in southern Chile) and the Falkland Islands. Once a month this flight makes a stopover in each direction in Rio Gallegos (in southern Argentina). In February 2001 a further understanding was signed to permit private flights. Under these arrangements aircraft, including Argentine aircraft, can undertake private flights between Argentina and the Falkland Islands. These arrangements continue in place and are unaffected by developments set out below.

In recent years there have also been a number of charter flights to the Falkland Islands, mostly originating in Chile and servicing tourist cruise ships. These charter flights are not covered by either of the two understandings described above. They require permission to use Argentine airspace between Chile and the Falkland Islands. Until this season Argentina has not raised any difficulties with these charter flight authorisations, though it had periodically indicated that it would wish to review the situation at some point.

On 3 November 2003, without warning, Argentina announced the suspension of permission for charter flights to use Argentine airspace and proposed that a scheduled air service between Argentina and the Falkland Islands by an Argentine carrier be put in place. The weekly LAN Chile scheduled flight was not affected by this announcement.

We made clear to Argentina that while we were prepared to enter into discussions about ways of building on existing arrangements for air links between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland, any future arrangements must be acceptable to the Falkland Islanders, and that the Falkland Islanders were not prepared to accept a scheduled service by an Argentine carrier. We also made clear that such discussions needed to take place against the backdrop of charter flight authorisations proceeding normally.

Regrettably, despite considerable efforts it has not been possible to reach agreement with the Argentine Government on opening talks on air services on acceptable terms. This means that there is little prospect of charter flights to the Falkland Islands being authorised to overfly Argentine airspace for the rest of this tourist season. Unless such an understanding can be reached with the Argentine Government, it seems likely that charters for the next tourist season will also be affected. Falkland Islands councillors have been kept fully informed of our exchanges with the Argentine Government.

The cancellation of the charter flights will obviously have some negative impact on the tourist industry in the Falkland Islands. However, Falkland Islanders believe that there are principles at stake here which outweigh short-term economic costs. We respect and agree with that view. Argentina is fully aware of our position and we hope that an acceptable arrangement can be reached in the interests of all parties to resolve the charter flight issue."

*Source: [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk)*

Argentina Threatens Falklands Fishing Industry

**Extract from a speech by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr Bill Rammell dated 11 February 2003 during a Parliamentary debate on Argentina**

"Any assessment of relations between the United Kingdom and Argentina must take account of progress on South Atlantic issues. I will briefly restate the Government's policy on the Falkland Islands. Sovereignty is not negotiable unless that is the wish of the Islanders themselves. The Government remains committed to the right of the Falkland Islanders to determine their own future. The Islands will be British for so long as the Islanders wish them to remain so. We make that clear in all bilateral discussions with the Argentine Government.

However, our goal is to maintain a fruitful dialogue with Argentina on issues of mutual interest in the South Atlantic. These two approaches are not contradictory. It is to the advantage of both the Islanders and the Argentines to work together on challenges such as the preservation of fish stocks and continental shelf delimitation. We also want to make further progress on implementing the 1999 Joint Statement. We are working with the Argentine and Falkland Islands Governments on the construction of a memorial to the Argentine fallen in the Falkland Islands.

We continue to make progress in the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission. That Commission, which comprises United Kingdom, Argentine and Falkland Islands officials, will meet again soon to discuss issues of mutual concern, including the prospects for a multilateral high seas fisheries agreement. However, we are concerned that that welcome progress will be set back if the draft fisheries poaching Bill that is currently before the Argentine Congress becomes law. The Bill would have damaging implications for the Falkland Islands fishing industry as well as for the work of the Commission.

Although there are still differences on South Atlantic issues, the important thing is to manage them sensibly and discuss practical matters affecting the Falkland Islands in a low-key, constructive way. That is in the interests of the people of both Argentina and the Falkland Islands. Such an approach is encouraging. It shows a new maturity in our relationship with Argentina, and we want to build on that. That maturity was also demonstrated by the way in which the 20th anniversary of the South Atlantic conflict was remembered in the United Kingdom, the Falkland Islands and Argentina. The emphasis was, rightly, on reconciliation rather than recrimination. That view was reflected during visits to Argentina by my Right Honourable Friend the Defence Secretary and the Chief of the Air Staff, and by the visits to the Falkland Islands of His Royal Highness the Duke of York and the Minister of State from the Ministry of Defence.

Argentina faces many challenges in 2003. The path to economic stability and prosperity for the people of Argentina is a difficult one. They have been through one of the worst recessions experienced anywhere in the world. Our role is to work with the Argentine Government and help in whatever way we can to ensure that they take the right decisions and seize opportunities. In the longer term, the prospects for Argentina are very positive, and the British Government very much want to work with its Government."

*Source: [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk)*

Falklands Admit Argentine Passport-Holders

**Written Answer dated 7 December 1999 to Parliamentary Question addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Robin Cook**

"A number of the measures set out in the British-Argentine Joint Statement of 14 July have already been implemented. The Falkland Islands Government have admitted Argentine passport-holders to the Falklands since July. All deadlines have been met to restore air links between the Falklands and South America and to introduce measures to combat the common menace of poaching of fish stocks.

We continue to consolidate progress on the remaining issues. We are working with Argentina on a Memorandum of Understanding on the terms of a study to determine the cost and feasibility of removing the remaining land mines from the Falklands. Both sides continue to work towards a multilateral arrangement to regulate fishing in the high seas of the South-West Atlantic. An Argentine architect has recently visited the Falklands to discuss proposals for construction of a memorial at the Argentine cemetery there. The Argentine Government are committed to reviewing their use of Falklands place names.

None of these developments affect our commitment to defend the Islanders' right to determine their own future. The sovereignty of the Falkland Islands is not for negotiation."

*Source: [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.gov.uk)*