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**Prospects for a Settlement of the
Falklands/Malvinas Dispute**

**An Analysis of Public Opinion in
Britain and Argentina***

by

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and

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INTRODUCTION

One of the research projects currently under way at the Institute is the monitoring of Anglo-Argentine relations after the 1982 war and the analysis of the protracted conflict over the South Atlantic islands, known in Buenos Aires as the "Malvinas" and in London as the "Falklands". [See an earlier product of this research in W. Little & C.R. Mitchell (eds) In the Aftermath, College Park, MD: University of Maryland Press, 1989.]

The original focus of our research was on the nature and causes of the conflict itself and on the efforts of the parties [the Argentines, the British and the Islanders] to rebuild relationships after the short, but violent war and to seek long term solutions to the fundamental issues in conflict. Recently, its focus has broadened to a more general consideration of alternative governance systems or "regimes" for small island communities and of innovative solutions for conflicts over such communities.

Whatever ingenious resolutions might be discussed or devised, however, there always remains the problem that options and agreements have to be "sold" to constituents and general publics, so that the process of arriving at a long term resolution of any conflict needs to take into account the barriers which public views and attitudes may [or may not] pose to policy changes. Accurate assessment of the "ripe moment" needs, therefore, to take into account both the flexibility or intransigence of public opinion as well as leaders' perception of their own room for maneuver within that range of opinion.

This present Occasional Paper throws considerable light on this issue by analysing the dynamics of public opinion in both Argentina and Britain in the period since the 1982 war. The Institute was fortunate that Dr. Noguera and Dr. Willetts were both interested in carrying out the survey they conducted in 1990 and agreeable to presenting their findings in both an Institute and in a South Atlantic Council Occasional Paper. We were able to support this work out of a grant from the Glad Foundation in New York. We would like to express appreciation to both researchers and to the Foundation for making the research and the publication of this paper possible.

C.R. Mitchell
Director

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