The Falkland Islands War of 1982: a legal, diplomatic and strategic evaluation

Abstract
The Falkland Islands War of 1982 was fought over competing claims to sovereignty over a group of islands off the east coast of South America. The dispute was between Argentina and the United Kingdom. Argentina claims the islands under rights to Spanish succession, the fact that they lie off the Argentine coast line and that in 1833 Great Britain took the islands illegally and by force. The United Kingdom claims the islands primarily through prescription—the fact that they have governed the islands in a peaceful, continuous and public manner since 1833. The British also hold that the population living on the islands, roughly eighteen hundred British descendants, should be able to decide their own future. The United Kingdom also lays claim to the islands through rights of discovery and settlement, although this claim has always been challenged by Spain who until 1811 governed the islands. Both claims have legal support, and the final decision if there will ever be one is difficult to predict. Sadly today the ultimate test of sovereignty does not come through international law but remains in the idea that "He is sovereign who can defend his sovereignty." The years preceding the Argentine invasion of 1982 witnessed many diplomatic exchanges between The United Kingdom and Argentina over the future of the islands. During this time the British sent signals to Argentina that implied a decline in British resolve to hold the islands and demonstrated that military action did more to further the talks along than did actual negotiations. The Argentine military junta read these signals and decided that they could take the islands in a quick military invasion and that the United Kingdom would consider the act as a fait accompli and would not protest the invasion. The British in response to this claimed that they never signaled to Argentina that a military solution was acceptable to them and launched a Royal Navy task force to liberate the islands. Both governments responded to an international crisis with means that were designed both to resolve the international crisis and increase the domestic popularity of the government. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was facing an all-time low in popularity for post-War Prime Ministers while Argentine President General Galtieri needed to gain mass popular support so he could remain a viable President after he was scheduled to lose command of the army and a seat on the military junta that ran the country. The military war for the Falklands is indicative of the nature of modern warfare between Third World countries. It shows that the gap in military capabilities between Third and First World countries is narrowing significantly. Modern warfare between a First and Third World country is no longer a 'walk over' for the First World country.
war”, Francois Heisbourg, Director, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London. “The advantage to the reader is the wealth of maps and diagrams. (as the) campaign was actually very complicated”, Armed Forces. “concise and meticulous handbook de