



Falkland Islands Government

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5 March 2010

The Editor
The Times

As Matthew Parris knows because he interviewed me at the time, Falkland Islands representatives initiated, and were involved in, talks with the UK and Argentina in 1999 aimed at improving co-operation on a number of issues including conservation of fish stocks in the South Atlantic. Some years earlier a joint declaration on an area of Joint co-operation in oil exploration was agreed. We have worked hard to have a normal neighbourly relationship with a country 300 miles away.

The Kirchner government in Argentina renounced the declaration on the Joint co-operation area for oil exploration in 2007. They have also refused to allow charter flights from other South American countries to the Falklands. The Argentine government has also withdrawn from the Commission on fisheries management for the S W Atlantic. This had been set up to ensure that fishing in the area was sustainable, through joint experimental cruises and the exchange of scientific data. More recently the Argentine government had threatened to hinder shipping in the area. This is part of the attempt to prevent companies licensed by the Falkland Islands from exploratory drilling.

It is therefore deeply disappointing to see the suggestion of 'leaseback' of the Islands which never were part of Argentina. Such a move would, in effect be giving away the birthright of our grandchildren, some of whom are the eighth and ninth generations to live in the Falkland Islands. Self determination is a right recognised by the UN. Falkland Islanders did not displace an indigenous population, there was none.

Yours sincerely

The Honourable Jan Cheek
Member of the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly