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Objetivo: Práctica de examen final

INGLÉS III: FINAL

Lessons from Failure: The Malvinas/Falklands Conflict *The War that Should Never Have Been*

The dispute between Argentina and Great Britain over the Malvinas/Falkland islands led to the only major war between two Western countries since World War II. It is an interesting case for the study of preventive diplomacy and conflict management, as it involves a cross-section of international relations. Argentina and Great Britain formally brought the dispute over sovereignty to the attention of the international community, in 1965. **This process** included resolutions, grievances, and bilateral negotiations which carried on for seventeen years and culminated in the 1982 South Atlantic war. Eighteen years after the confrontation, and despite the latest changes in the status quo of the islands (commercial flights between the islands and Argentina were re-established in 1999), the conflict remains open, with Argentina still clinging to its claims of sovereignty over the Malvinas.

Scholars usually addressed the Malvinas/Falklands conflict by analyzing it as a war of colonialism, an ethnic conflict rooted in an ancient hatred between the two states. Their purpose was to determine who was really at fault in the dispute over sovereignty – Argentina or Great Britain. On the contrary, I intend to examine the role that the international community had in conflict prevention. I address the case of the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands war as a critical example of a series of international failures to avert conflict. To understand how this came to be, I will expose what I think were the two major triggers that led to distortions, prejudice, and finally war.

How was the Malvinas/Falklands dispute opened? It is uncertain who first saw the islands, but one thing is clear: this forlorn archipelago had been inhabited by the Portuguese, Spanish, French and British since 1680's. Due to the distant location of the islands and the dangerous sea that surrounds them, all the settlements, -except for the British and the Spanish- eventually vanished. While Great Britain claimed the right to the islands based on the fact that the vast majority of the population was British; Spain, a stakeholder in the Americas, claimed to own the islands based on their territorial proximity to Argentina. In 1810, a revolutionary movement overthrew the last Spanish viceroy in Buenos Aires, and in 1816 the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata (later Argentina) declared independence from Spain and therefore, appropriated the claim for the Malvinas. Initially, neither Argentina nor Great Britain wanted to engage in an armed conflict. As a result, Argentina and Great Britain started a series of diplomatic meetings, headed by General Leopoldo Galtieri and the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher between 1966 and 1978. In 1978, both agreed to elevate a mediation request to the UN in order to ensure that the conflict would be solved in a context of mutual understanding, good communication, and reliability.

The first reason why war broke out was that the U.S. never sprang into action as a mediator. The UN had allocated the U.S. as a conflict mediator based on its neutrality and geographical positioning, which literally located it in-between Argentina and Great Britain, but the U.S. was a superpower with multiple and contradictory alliance commitments in the international arena. On the one hand, there was the U.S. commitment to Great Britain through NATO, and the British demand for loyalty and intervention by its NATO partners. On the other hand, The United States was bound to Argentina through the terms of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Pact), drawn up in 1947. Legally, The United States was neutral in the Malvinas/Falklands question; but politically and militarily, it had a clear priority in this war. The U.S. viewed Great Britain as a vital partner in the alliance with Europe since it was the first line of defense for the Western civilization against the dangers of a potential Soviet aggression. Simultaneously, the U.S. did not want to impact negatively on its friendship with Argentina. If, contrary to expectations, the Soviet Union advanced on the American continent, the U.S. expected to be able to count on the assistance of Argentina, one of the largest countries of Latin America, in the conflict. The implications are plain to see: during the mediations held to decide on this matter, the U.S. abstained from voting on the resolutions because it did not want to be placed in a position of having to favor one country over the other. As a result, a two-party conflict was transformed into a three-party conflict.

The second trigger for the Malvinas/Falklands war was rooted in the UN decision to privilege Great Britain over Argentina. After years of frustration resulting from the U.S. in-existent mediation, Argentina submitted the Malvinas case to the UN's Committee of 24 in 1980 in order to do justice to its claims and rights. However, the UN decided it was more convenient to avoid upsetting the British nation, who was also a UN partner, in order to keep a defensive alliance against the great Soviet threat. Thus, the UN set favorable conditions for Great Britain to safeguard its interests.

On April 3, 1981 the UN had an unfair reaction toward the Argentinean claim by issuing the Security Council Resolution 502, which was founded on the *principle of self-determination*. This principle implied that the population living in the islands, who was mainly Scottish and English, had the right to freely choose its sovereignty. However, the application of self-determination was clearly one-sided since it defines a nation in terms of "ties of mutual affection". This definition ignores the rights of the Argentinean minority in the islands and the importance of territorial integrity, whereby geographical relationships are more important than a shared ethnicity, language or history since they foster cross-border cooperation and the expansion of the global market. It is clear that self-determination was supposed to have been "guided" by the "interests" of the island's population but was, in fact, fostered by the "wishes" of Britain.

Argentina was left alone, technically engaged in a problem that required political compromise at a high level and decisive input by a reliable neutral party to hone in on possible breakthroughs and lay the foundations for the settlement of the dispute. In 1982, in bleak and gloomy solitude, Argentina decided to take matters into its own hands in order to attract the international attention. On April 3, 1982 there was an "immediate" reaction to the Argentinean takeover: the UN issued a final charter (Charter XIV) based on the *principle of self-defense*, which refers to the legal right of a nation to defend its territory to counter an immediate threat of violence. However, self-defense derives from the concept of *dominium*, which states that a territory can be defended only in the case that it is the property of the victim, which should not have been applied in a territorial

dispute where the possession of a piece of land is legally unstated. Therefore, it is plain that all the charters issued by the UN were just another step back in the way of any viable peaceful outcome.

What lessons can be learnt from the Malvinas/Falklands failure? **Not only** do wars occur because of the parties directly involved but also because of failure on the part of potential interlocutors. Javier Pérez de Cuellar, a Spanish scholar, grimly said after the collapse of the peace initiative, in May 1982: “It was the sort of problem which should have taken ten minutes to solve if both sides had been equally heard.” His statement seems to be key to understanding the whole process and what ails it: ten minutes, but not under fire; if both sides are evenly heard, but not left on their own. In the case of the Malvinas/Falklands dispute, there were seventeen years during which the two sides were sometimes willing to talk and be listened. But the international community did little more than addressing its own needs, awaiting an agreement that was never to come.

Contestar las preguntas en español en hoja aparte.

1. Explain the purpose of this paper. Underline the lines where it is stated. (10pts)
2. Why did the Malvinas war begin according to the author? Give two different reasons. (20 pts.)
3. Why does the author state that the principles of self-determination and self-defense are biased? (16 pts)
4. What does “not only...” correlate with (in **bold** in the text)? What logical relationship does it establish? (10pts)

ADDITION / CONTRAST /PURPOSE

Which two concepts does it relate?

CONCEPT 1:

CONCEPT 2:

5. What do the following words refer back to? (in bold in paragraph) (7 pts.)

“This process”.....

6. Find an example of the following in paragraph eight. Copy it.
 - a. a criticism of a past action: (4pts)
 - b. a pseudo-negative word: (3pts)

7. Write the main idea of the text in TWO sentences. (30pts)

CLAVE DE CORRECCIÓN

1. I intend to examine the role that the international community had in conflict prevention. I address the case of the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands war as a critical example of a series of international failures to avert conflict. To understand how this came to be, I will expose what I think were the two major triggers that led to distortions, prejudice, and finally war.

2. Razón 1: Dado a que Estados Unidos no era realmente neutral en el contexto de las mediaciones, el autor irónicamente expresa que al conflicto original entre Argentina y Gran Bretaña se le sumó el de Estados Unidos, quien buscaba su propio interés personal aparentando ejercer su función de mediador cuando en realidad se mantenía al margen del conflicto para mantener una buena relación con Gran Bretaña y Argentina, con quienes se hallaba comprometido mediante diferentes pactos y alianzas.

Razón 2: Las Naciones Unidas privilegiaron a Gran Bretaña sobre Argentina puesto que la primera era un miembro de la UN y podría llegar a ser un aliado vital si la guerra fría estallaba. Por lo tanto, las Naciones Unidas crearon condiciones favorables para salvaguardar sus intereses, dejando a sola a Argentina.

3. El autor opina que tanto el principio de auto-determinación como el de auto-defensa fueron mediadas subjetivas y por lo tanto injustas. El principio de auto-determinación define a una nación como una mera conexión afectiva de personas que comparten una misma historia, raza o lengua en lugar de considerar las relaciones inter-territoriales de la zona en disputa con las zonas en proximidad geográfica. En este caso particular, el principio de auto-determinación favoreció a Gran Bretaña puesto que ignora la minoría de argentinos que residen en las islas. En cuanto al principio de auto-defensa, el autor aclara que éste se basa en el concepto de “dominio”, por el cual una nación puede legalmente defenderse de un ataque si esta posee el territorio amenazado. Sin embargo, esto no es aplicable a una disputa territorial, que por definición trata establecer quién tiene los derechos legales de un territorio en cuestión. Por lo que el autor cree que el principio de auto-defensa fue otra prueba del favoritismo hacia Gran Bretaña.

4. Not only: adición

C1: Las guerras ocurren por los partidos directamente involucrados.

C2: el fracaso de sus interlocutores potenciales.

5. El traslado de la disputa sobre la soberanía de las islas a la comunidad internacional

6. # 8: a criticism of a past action: It was the sort of problem which **should have taken** ten minutes to solve if both sides had been equally heard

9: a pseudo-negative word: Failure

7. Contrario a las creencias habituales, la guerra por la soberanía de las islas Malvinas en 1982 no fue tan sólo el resultado del odio entre Argentina y Gran Bretaña sino que, en la opinión del autor, fue la causa directa de las ambiciones particulares de la comunidad internacional, que irónicamente, intentaba protegerse a sí misma en lugar de proteger la paz.