

The Battle for the Falklands

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Individual Website

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Process Paper:

498 words

The Falklands War was an unofficial war between Great Britain and Argentina over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands and its territorial dependencies in 1982. I originally learned about this historical event while reading an article about former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who, as I would find out later, played an important role in the Falklands crisis. My interest in this topic grew as I continued to research, realizing how well this event fit into this year's National History Day theme, Debate & Diplomacy: Successes, Failures, and Consequences. The Falklands War was the outcome of failed diplomacy, a concept repeatedly stressed throughout my project.

During the initial stages of my research, I mostly consulted basic history websites, such as Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, and History.com, to help gain an overview of my topic. Hoping to gain a deeper understanding, I reached out to experts on my topic and secured interviews with Professors Victor Bailey and Lowell Gustafson. Professor Bailey explained the political aspect of the war and its aftermath; while Professor Gustafson went in-depth about the diplomacy and misunderstandings seen throughout the conflict. To further enhance my project, I examined a diverse collection of witness accounts, newspaper articles, memoirs, and multimedia that helped me make sure my information was accurate and without any bias.

To convey my historical argument effectively, I needed a project format that allowed me to concisely present all my information through an assortment of text, quotes, and multimedia. Creating a website seemed to be the best option for me. It would allow me to showcase my research to viewers and thoroughly explain my historical argument by taking a more modern approach to this project. By creating an interactive project, I would be better able to keep my audience engaged during my presentation.

The most substantial abstractions portrayed in my project are failed diplomacy and prolonged debate. The absence of diplomatic principles, specifically transparency and understanding, was detrimental to negotiations and harmed relations between the two countries. Before the war started, the United States served as the mediator during negotiations. US Secretary of State Alexander Haig sought to lead the mediations, but he faced several difficulties that were irreconcilable. Moreover, both countries' leaders were facing sharp criticism from the public, so neither was willing to compromise in fear of damaging their public image. Concerns for political self-preservation and diplomatic principle impaired the two parties' ability to reach a consensus.

The Falklands War significantly impacted British, Argentine, and even worldwide politics. Margaret Thatcher's victory in the Falklands saved her political skin, building the foundation for her later terms as Prime Minister. Thatcher's success was celebrated all over the world as a role model for aspiring female government officials. In Argentina, losing the Falklands finally forced the Junta to withdraw from their dictating position. Argentina's government has shifted towards a more democratic standpoint, similar to many Western and European countries. However, neither side has abjured their claims, so the battle for the Falklands is still alive today.