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On the evening of Aug. 1, Foreign Minister Domingo Carvallo announced that Argentina had eliminated obstacles to trade with the United Kingdom. According to Carvallo, the decision was a unilateral one, although the British government had "ordered a similar measure a short time ago." Following the war with Britain in 1982, trade has been conducted through third countries. Eliminating the third party, said Carvallo, reduces costs for Argentine importers and raises profits for domestic exporters. In the absence of diplomatic relations between Argentina and Britain, the Brazilian Embassy in London has acted as go-between for Argentina, and the Swiss Embassy in Buenos Aires has performed the same role for Britain. On July 31, President Carlos Menem said Argentina had no immediate plans to declare a formal end hostilities with Britain over the Malvinas Islands. However, talks on the archipelago cannot be postponed indefinitely, he added, because Western Europe is headed for formation of a single market in 1992 and Argentina has no desire to include British allies in the conflict. Shortly after Menem's inauguration July 8, the British government said it would be willing to start talks on reestablishing diplomatic relations, but ruled out any discussion on the sovereignty of the islands. Argentina has claimed the archipelago for more than 150 years. (Basic data from AFP, 07/31/89; Xinhua, 08/02/89)

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