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Democratic Argentina's "Global Reach"

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The Argentine Military in Peacekeeping Operations

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> Buenos Aires, 10 March [1996] TELAM—Lieutenant General Martin Balsa, the Army chief of staff, has emphasized the high professional level shown by Argentine military officers who joined the peacekeeping forces. He favors an active and well-trained Army, instead of an empty and poorly trained Army.
>
> Balza told Radio America: "We are peace professionals. Our mission is to prevent wars. We, therefore, must be prepared to deter."[1]

SEVEN YEARS EARLIER, SUCH SENTIMENTS by an Argentine Army chief of staff would have been unthinkable. Argentina, although returned to civilian rule, was still dealing with a civil-military crisis of the first order, and the recently passed Law of National Defense did not list international peacekeeping among the roles and missions of the Argentine military. When on 9 July 1989 President Raúl Alfonsín's administration ended (with his resignation five months before the end of his term) and President Carlos Menem's began, Argentina had only a few peace observers on United Nations "blue helmet" missions.[2]

On the fourth anniversary of Menem's presidency, however, there were 1,021 Argentine military personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping operations, some 90 percent of them in Croatia in the UN Protection Force. United Nations "blue helmets" worldwide then numbered 78,444, an all-time high, up from

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14,724 in mid-1989. The Argentine contribution would peak, at 1,471, eight months later.[3]

These statistics reflect a major change in the foreign policy priorities and alignments of Argentina and also in the nature and scope of the roles and missions of the Argentine armed forces, including—very prominently—its navy. Why has this change occurred? What does it signify for the future?

Evolution of Argentine Military Participation Abroad

For most of its 187-year history Argentina has had no military forces deployed outside its borders or territorial waters. The only exceptions have been the Wars of Independence (1816–1824), the War of the Triple Alliance (1865–1870), and arguably, the 1982 war in the South Atlantic (although most observers outside Latin America regarded the brief occupation of the Malvinas/Falklands as an Argentine invasion of British territory, the Argentines emphatically did not). Argentina remained neutral in both World War I and World War II, declaring war on the Axis in the latter mostly to become a charter member of the United Nations and so avoid losing prestige and voice in the postwar order.

Indeed, Argentina was a reluctant partner in most international security arrangements until quite recently. Immediately following World War II the Juan Perón administration sought to make Argentina a Western Hemispheric rival to Brazil and even the United States for influence in South America. As with most countries in the Southern Cone, Argentine military doctrine at that time adhered to a geopolitical view of the world. Following Perón's political demise in 1955, however, the armed forces—who would be either in government or only a step away for the next twenty-eight years—assumed a purely national focus. They saw their roles and missions both in terms of internal security (preventing infiltration of local groups by communist cadres to foment insurgencies—a mission that would culminate in the "dirty war" of 1976–1979) and of external security (seeking to secure Argentina's borders and territorial claims, including most of the South Atlantic islands and a slice of Antarctica).

Consequently, Argentina's international presence in multinational collective security organizations or peacekeeping operations was minimal. Nonetheless, in the late 1950s Argentina began making small contingents of Argentine military officers available for UN observer missions. These contingents remained very small; when Menem came into office there were only twenty-one people involved, seventeen of them in UN missions authorized only the year before.[4]

Menem's predecessor, Alfonsín, had been preoccupied with severe economic and civil-military problems and so had not sought to make Argentina an international player. To the extent his administration had had an international theme at all, it was to end Argentina's status as something of an international

pariah, a consequence of the junta governments of 1976–1982, the "dirty war," and the Malvinas/Falklands debacle. To that end he espoused solidarity with Third World countries and sought mediated settlements of remaining international disputes involving Argentina. Defense policy languished (not until four years into his administration was a National Defense Law enacted), and President Alfonsín's attention to the military was restricted to attempting to reform its institutions and seeking to resolve the serious malfeasance and human rights charges stemming from the "dirty war" and the war in the South Atlantic. Moreover, Alfonsín had to deal with three uprisings by disaffected elements of the military. His defense policies were domestic in nature, designed for the most part to dissuade the military from political involvement and to reduce the armed forces' capacity to influence the government. He had little interest in foreign matters, and none in military missions in external venues.

President Menem, however, approached the government's relationship with the military, and Argentina's international role, quite differently. Within three months Menem pardoned most of those in the military accused of human rights violations and crimes (by a year and a half later he had pardoned them all, the last ones being the most notorious and politically prominent). He pardoned as well those arrested and charged with sedition in the three uprisings during the Alfonsín administration, and also a significant number of former insurgents. He himself had to put down a fourth uprising, at the end of 1990, but by then he could count on the support of the Argentine military hierarchy in so doing.

Menem's foreign policy forsook the traditional Argentine benchmarks of nationalism, statism, and protectionism. He was, and remains today, highly internationalist in his policies, considering it in Argentina's interest to be on the "right side" of the United States and the United Nations in the rapidly evolving post–Cold War era. Having defused with pardons the human rights and uprisings issues, and having apparently prevented a resurgence of military involvement in domestic political affairs, he began to employ the armed forces of Argentina to further his foreign policy agenda.

Menem's first opportunity to involve Argentina's armed forces in UN peacekeeping and monitoring on a larger scale came in February 1990, when the UN Secretary-General sought out Argentina to provide fast patrol boats to support the United Nations Observer Mission in Central America (ONUCA). This would be the first use of member-country naval forces in this type of mission; Argentina deployed four Israeli-built *Dabur*-class craft. The ONUCA operation had three positive consequences for Menem and the Argentine Navy: it integrated Argentina more fully into the expanding UN role in resolving conflicts (and signaled support of the evolving "New World Order"); it supported peace operations in Central America, as a part of the "Contadora Support Group," through which Argentina had sought to resolve the conflicts

of the 1980s; and it improved training, readiness, and crew experience without incurring additional cost to Argentina, since the UN paid for the operation.[5]

But Argentina's real "New World Order" debut would come as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, in the DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM operations, collectively known as the Persian Gulf War. Argentina sent a destroyer and a frigate (later relieved by a frigate and a support ship) and several air force cargo planes to support the United States–led blockade of Iraq, a part of DESERT SHIELD. These elements had a complement of six hundred officers, sailors, and airmen, the vast majority in the sea service. Argentina thus became part of a peace-enforcement operation sanctioned by the United Nations but executed by a multinational coalition force that would ultimately number in the hundreds of thousands. While somewhat controversial at home, especially in the Congress, the deployment was a clear commitment by the Menem administration to support international efforts more than rhetorically or in very small ways.[6] This action outside the hemisphere was unprecedented for Argentina. As the only Latin American country to commit forces in the Gulf war, Argentina stood out among Western Hemisphere nations.

As impressive as the Gulf war participation was, it did not in itself represent a sustained commitment on the part of Argentina to United Nation peacekeeping operations. Within a year, however, a new and major UN peacekeeping force sent to former Yugoslav republics would elicit further Argentine participation in such operations. Moreover, this new commitment would be fulfilled not by the wide-ranging, internationally oriented Navy but by the traditionally parochial Army.

On 15 February 1992, President Menem announced a major Argentine ground contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping operation being mounted for deployment principally to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Menem stated that Argentina would provide one of the twelve infantry battalions of the formation thereafter known as UNPROFOR (the United Nations Protection Force). The Argentine unit would consist of 850–900 personnel and be capable of operating independently. It would be stationed in Western Slavonia, in the northwest part of Croatia, rotating most of its personnel every six months. And it was expected to be in place and performing its mission by April!

The Argentine Army had no experience in the deployment of major combat units overseas. The Malvinas movement ten years before had not been considered a foreign deployment, and in any event it provided few if any lessons useful for this UN mission. No existing unit was close to being prepared, since formations of this size (regiments, in the Argentine infantry nomenclature) were geographically based and consisted of relatively small professional cadres and

large complements of conscripts; even those personnel were in short supply and not suitably trained for "blue helmet" units.

Moreover, the UN had specified that all members of units provided for its missions were to be volunteers and possess language skills, particularly English. Within days of Menem's announcement the search was begun for suitable volunteer officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). In the event, there were two or three times as many applicants as positions for the first 865-man unit. The perquisites for soldiers serving in this unit were considerable—especially pay, several times the normal level in the severely budget-constrained military. Initial preparation of the personnel was done at the corps level; the unit was then formed up at Campo de Mayo, a huge army installation outside Buenos Aires.

By May 1992 the Batallón Ejército Argentino (or BEA—the Argentine Army Battalion) was fully deployed in Western Slavonia, Croatia. There were also Argentine personnel in UNPROFOR staff and liaison positions, as many as seventy-two, over and above the nominal 865 in the BEA. These personnel—excluding perhaps a handful in command and staff positions—were rotated every six months until June 1995, when as a result of events on the ground and incipient changes in the status of UNPROFOR the Argentine contingent began to redeploy gradually back to Argentina. By the end of 1995, the BEA had stood down.

Coinciding with the BEA deployment, in April 1993 Menem appointed as his minister of defense Oscar Camilión, a highly respected and experienced diplomat. Camilión would bring his considerable skills to bear on the use of the military in diplomacy, starting with a second major deployment of the Argentine armed forces in support of UN peacekeeping. This time the setting was Cyprus, to which Camilión had been the UN envoy immediately prior to his appointment as minister of defense.

The Cyprus contingent, part of a UN mission set up in 1964, would consist of both army and marine corps elements, and even a small number of air force helicopter pilots. With an initial strength of 375, the contingent would stabilize at about 390, where it remains at this writing. On 17 February 1997 it was announced that Brigadier General Evergisto de Vergara, Argentine Army, would be the new commander of the UN peace force on Cyprus (thereby having under his authority, among others, British troops). He is the first Argentine military officer to have an entire UN "blue helmet" mission force under his command.[7]

The Argentine armed forces have undertaken three other significant troop commitments. In early 1995 Argentina provided a contingent of about 115 (of which about a hundred were civilian police) to the UN mission in Haiti until October of that year, when it was phased out. Also in early 1995, fifty-seven

Argentine military engineers went to Kuwait; an element of nearly that size is maintained there today. In addition, although the BEA and UNPROFOR have gone, the Argentine Army contributed a seventy-three-man reconnaissance unit, plus civilian police and several staff officers, to UNTAES, the UN temporary administrative mission in Eastern Slavonia, until that mission ended in August 1997. Argentina also provides civilian police personnel to the IPTF (International Police Task Force) in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

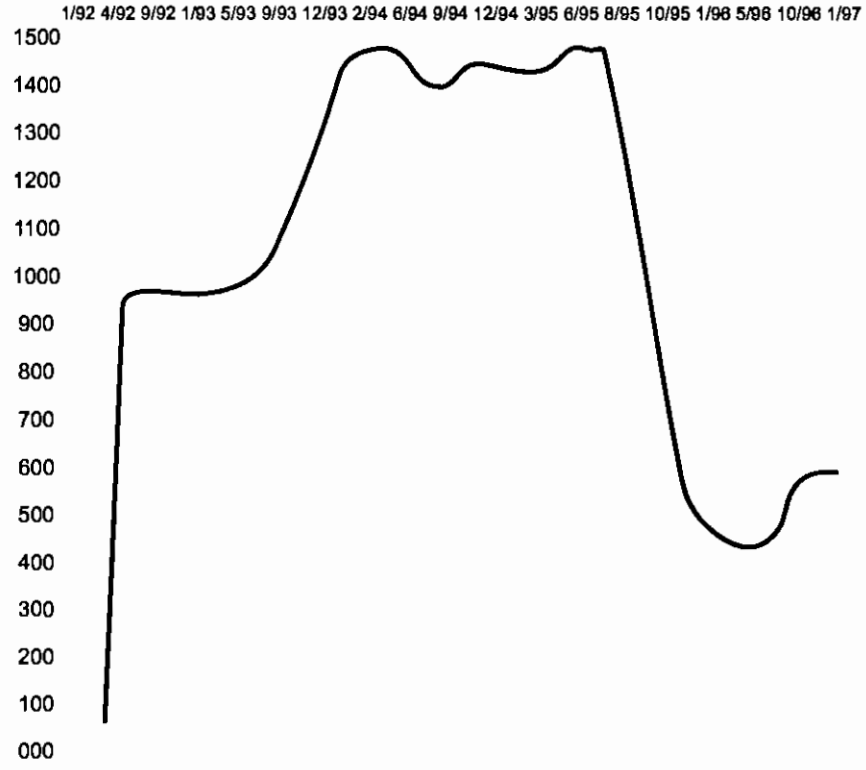
Two other Argentine contributions to peacekeeping and peace-observer missions deserve mention. One is the small contingent of observers sent to the Peruvian-Ecuadorian border in the wake of the 1995 outbreak of hostilities there. This non-UN mission resulted from the status of Argentina as a guarantor of a 1942 treaty that had ended an earlier conflict over the same territory, claimed by both nations. The operation (known as MOMEP, the Military Observer Mission Ecuador Peru) was multinational, with Brazilian, Chilean, Argentine, and U.S. observers. The other new mission, to which Argentina initially sent six observers, is the recently formed MINUGUA (UN Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala), established to monitor the new peace agreement in that country.

The Argentine commitment of military forces to UN peacekeeping operations has meant that from early 1994 until mid-1995, when Argentine contributions were at their highest, Argentina contributed about 2 percent of "blue helmets" at a time when UN forces were at their peak around the world. Thereafter, from mid-1995 to mid-1996, UN mission forces worldwide dropped by about half, in large measure due to the dissolution of UNPROFOR in favor of the Implementation Force (IFOR)—a Nato, not a "blue helmet," formation. The Argentine portion of all UN forces temporarily dropped to about one-third of its maximum size, but with UNTAES it stabilized at just under six hundred, including some eighty civilian police—or 2.4 percent of the total of nearly twenty-five thousand "blue helmets." The trend of Argentine participation in the post–Cold War era is shown in the figure; participation by mission, with comparable U.S. contributions (as of 31 July 1997) is shown in the table. Argentina and the United States each participate in about half of the seventeen current "blue helmet" missions.

Political and Military Effects

The employment of the Argentine armed forces in multinational peacekeeping and UN observer missions was a significant element of President Menem's internationalist foreign policy. As one scholar has noted, "The emphasis on UN peacekeeping also converges quite nicely with the government's overall strategy of economic liberalism and close political allegiance to the United States."[8]

Deployed Argentine Peacekeepers, 1992-1997



Source: *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, 1992-1997, passim.

The latest available figures (31 July 1997) show global Argentine contributions at 590 "blue helmets," or virtually unchanged from January.

Argentine participation in UN operations became a constant on the international scene in a wide variety of contexts. Argentina's "global reach" has achieved success not in terms of hegemonic pretensions or irredentist adventures—harking back to the old geopolitical imperatives—but of multinational, coalition efforts within the purview of international groupings and organizations, especially the United Nations. As Cyprus shows, Argentina can now be a full partner in this context even with a recent adversary.

Comparison of Argentine and U.S. Contributions to United Nations "Blue Helmet" Missions (as of 31 July 1997)

Mission	Argentina	United States	Location
UNTSO	3	2	Israel/Palestine
UNIKOM	45	15	Kuwait
MINURSO	1	15	Western Sahara
UNTAES	50	39	Eastern Slavonia
IPTF	62	228	Yugoslavia
UNPREDEP	1	498	Macedonia
UNFICYP	422	0	Cyprus
MINUGUA	(6)	0	Guatemala
UNOMIG	0	4	Georgia
UNMIH	0	47	Haiti
Total	584/(590)	848	

Source: *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, July–October 1997, pp. 18–19.

Notes: Total UN Peacekeeping/Observer Missions, 17; the source omits MINUGUA.

The military's new and important overseas mission can be counted as a domestic political plus as well. Along with other initiatives, it defused the military as a domestic political factor; this was significant, as political events in Argentina led to the unprecedented elaboration of a new constitution that permitted an incumbent to seek a second consecutive term. In 1995 Menem did so and won (terms now are four years instead of six, so Menem will likely serve a total of ten years, 1989 to 1999). He thereby achieved an opportunity for his internationalist policies to be accepted by the Argentine public as the appropriate long-term direction of the nation.

For the armed forces, the peacekeeping mission, with the commitment of personnel and resources to operations far from Argentina, is on balance very positive at both the individual and institutional levels. For the Argentine soldier,

sailor, airman, or marine, participation in UN peace operations has been highly beneficial. As noted above, Argentine military personnel enthusiastically signed up for the BEA because it meant far more generous compensation. But the benefits went well beyond that. Previously, only a very small fraction of Argentine military officers had ever served overseas, mostly as attachés, students, or procurement officers. Now there was an opportunity for a great many NCOs as well as officers to serve abroad. As an example, a single replacement cycle for the BEA in June 1993 involved fourteen field-grade officers, 113 junior officers, and 757 NCOs, for a total of 884.[9] Top-heavy on purpose and without untrained conscripts, the BEA and other Argentine peacekeeping units were drawn from the best the armed forces had to offer. Individuals in the BEA and other Argentine "blue helmet" contingents have served (and are serving) with military personnel from a wide range of other countries, in places far from somewhat isolated Argentina. Other countries' military professionals have formed a generally respectful regard for them; for example, an independent assessment comparing the contributions of Latin American countries rated Argentine peacekeepers quite good in most categories.[10] Perhaps even more importantly, as a result of these professional contacts, travel opportunities, new operational environments, and multinational operations, military service in Argentina is again seen, from within the armed forces and by the public at large, as honorable and prestigious.

From an institutional perspective, peacekeeping generally is perceived by the Argentine armed forces, like the government, as a net plus, producing benefits for the military and to the country. As do individuals, the Argentine military benefits financially from these commitments to UN service. Budgets continue to be tight for the Argentine public sector, and resources are severely constrained for the armed forces. Payments by the UN to Argentina for peacekeeping personnel, for the use of their equipment and consumables, and for other services under Letters of Assist (goods and services procured by national contingents but paid for by UN)—are highly welcome additions to salary, operations, and maintenance accounts. It should be pointed out that Argentine funds had to be used to stand up the contingents, give them initial training, and often to transport, field, and supply them in the first instance. Furthermore, UN reimbursement has not always been prompt; for example, as of the end of 1995 Argentina's military was owed a total of just under twenty million dollars.[11] Notwithstanding, Argentina should come out reasonably well financially.

The rewards in other respects to the Argentine military were substantial. As noted, peacekeeping provided a training and operational focus previously unavailable in Argentina, including regularly working with other military forces having the most advanced technology, best-developed doctrine, and extensive peacekeeping experience. Due to the frequent rotations, especially for the large

contingents in Croatia and Cyprus, significant proportions of Argentine officers and NCOs—approaching one-quarter or more of all those in the Army—have participated in a mission that enhanced the prestige of both the Argentine military and the country. Not incidentally, such commitments "showcase" the Argentine armed forces in a way no domestic mission or operation can, especially given the Argentine military's controversial history of internal security operations and political involvement.

Also, success in peacekeeping mitigates somewhat the lack of direct military participation in another high-profile mission that President Menem viewed as useful for his international aspirations and for cooperation with the United States: combatting illegal drugs. The military, barred from direct involvement in law enforcement and internal security operations by the National Defense Law passed during the Alfonsín administration, was reluctant to answer the antidrug call in a major way. It viewed combating illegal drugs as likely to lead to corruption of its personnel and a lessening of its capabilities in other areas. Because the government and the public are also uneasy about the armed forces taking on a high-profile internal mission, the military has managed to limit itself to supporting roles in the antidrug effort, leaving the Gendarmería Nacional (Border Guard), Prefectura Naval (Coast Guard), and federal and provincial police in the forefront. A recent accord reached with Brazil on bilateral efforts to combat illegal drugs implicitly affirms this supporting role for the armed forces of both countries.

Therefore peacekeeping is conspicuous as a high-profile if secondary mission that has generated substantial benefits. Nonetheless, peacekeeping on a large scale is not viewed within the military as entirely a good thing. There are two major reasons for these mixed views. First, the military has been, and is, intent upon preserving its primary mission of national defense—usually expressed now in terms of deterrence, as maintaining "credible deterrent capacity [sufficient to] discourage threats affecting vital interests."[12] "Subsidiary" missions, however worthy—including peacekeeping, combatting drugs, providing domestic disaster assistance, or maintaining the environment—must not compromise the primary mission.[13] The military does not want to replace that role with a set of collective, multilateral undertakings, a state of affairs that would strike at the heart of the military's corporate interests and reason for being.

Second, the peacekeeping mission was undertaken at a time when the armed forces, especially the Army, were seeking to restructure themselves, in large part to accommodate their changed circumstances under a civilian government intent on reducing the public sector. The outdated, dispersed, large-unit force that had long constituted the Argentine Army was being reconfigured into mostly mobile, rapidly deployable contingents, backed up by regionally positioned forces; the new structure would accommodate both the fundamental

deterrence mission and the greatly reduced resources available. The Navy and the Air Force were also being dispersed, but already having highly mobile assets, their problems centered more on operations, new or refurbished equipment, and maintenance.

This program would take time, and it was just as the restructuring plan was promulgated (in April 1992) that "the best and brightest" were being detailed to the United Nations for peacekeeping operations.[14] There was concern that Argentina might wind up with "two armies," one highly trained and supplemented by outside resources, the other a residual shell of the obsolescent territorial force. In the event, the restructuring has proceeded, if slowly; it costs money to restructure, too, and only meager funds have been available. Over time the peacekeeping veterans have leavened the home units, now manned by volunteers rather than conscripts due to Voluntary Military Service (Servicio Voluntario Militar), which began in 1995.[15]

Nonetheless, the simultaneous demands of restructuring and peacekeeping made apparent the need for formal training for peacekeepers within the Argentine military framework. The CAECOPAZ—Argentine Joint Peace Keeping Operations [PKO] Training Centre—was inaugurated by President Menem on 27 June 1995.[16] The mission of the Centre, operated by the Army at Campo de Mayo, is "to train personnel to perform tasks and/or duties as members of peacekeeping military organizations in order to meet requirements according to international agreements signed by the Argentine Republic."[17] Its goals are to fulfill Argentina's international commitments, train the Argentine military forces in the post–Cold War era's noncombat operations, test organizations and equipment under realistic and stressful conditions, and perform technical and professional exchanges with other armies, all in the interests of a stable and secure world. The Centre has sixteen classrooms, lodging for eighty-eight students, and other support facilities, including Army aviation.

Training is conducted in two ways, collective exercise (for contingents assigned to specific UN missions) and individual instruction in classroom settings. In 1996, the first full year of operations, the Centre trained 167 officers and NCOs in the individual format and 907 in the collective track.[18] In addition—and indicating the high level of interest by the United States in the Centre and in Argentine peacekeeping operations generally—CAECOPAZ hosted seven official U.S. delegations between November 1995 and October 1996.[19]

At the same time that CAECOPAZ was opening its doors, five countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the United States) came together for a peacekeeping staff exercise entitled Fuerzas Unidas '95. The event was hosted by Argentina at its Superior War College, with support from the United States. Each country sent a "battalion staff" of eight to ten officers to work through a

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peace-operations scenario. Each country also contributed two or three officers for a FUERZAS UNIDAS staff (corresponding to a UN mission headquarters). The overall commander in the first exercise was Argentine. The success of the initiative led to a second evolution in 1996 in Uruguay, with a Uruguayan commander. Brazil was designated the lead country for the third iteration in the summer of 1997.[20]

Implications for U.S. Policy and Operations

The emergence of Argentine peacekeeping capabilities and activities reveals not only a modified concept of roles and missions for the Argentine military forces but establishes Argentina as a major actor in multilateral efforts to monitor peace agreements and deal with breaches of the peace worldwide. Argentina is now seen as a regular contributor to UN peace operations, and the appointment of General de Vergara as the mission commander on Cyprus indicates that Argentina is considered able to take the lead in the UN framework. Also, the CAECOPAZ and FUERZAS UNIDAS initiatives make it the leader in Latin America in training future members of peace operations. The Argentine peacekeeping efforts have modified perspectives on security at both the regional and hemispheric levels, and the likelihood is that this will continue to be the case, particularly in the naval realm.

Although by no means the first country to deploy naval assets for a UN peacekeeping operations, Argentina has been conspicuously present in many of the more recent operations involving naval forces (in addition to the Gulf of Fonseca, noted above). Argentine naval deployments have played a significant role in support of UN peace operations in the Persian Gulf, Haiti, and Cyprus (the last-listed involving marines). It has often been the only Latin American country represented in UN or UN-sanctioned naval operations. These commitments clearly have strengthened Argentine–United Nations ties, and they have been in consonance with United States policy and efforts as well. Recent changes in Argentine naval force structure, particularly the decision to complete and commission two more MEKO 140 frigates and discard the aged aircraft carrier *Veinticinco de Mayo*, lend themselves to enhanced and continued participation by Argentina in UN naval peacekeeping operations. The Gulf operations and the Haiti embargo, for instance, employed frigate and destroyer-sized combatants extensively, and Argentina is prepared to assist in the future in such work.

The attention given in recent years by Argentina to extraterritorial missions has apparently also given it new impetus to seek accommodation within the Southern Cone region, through bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation. Argentina has sought closer ties with its neighbors. A possible MERCOSUR

(the Southern Cone Common Market) defense arrangement was alluded to by President Menem in his traditional armed forces friendship dinner message on 7 July 1997.[21] A meeting of the foreign ministers, defense ministers, and chiefs of staff of Argentina and Brazil to pursue the idea was arranged for the end of July 1997 at Rio de Janeiro to examine this and other issues.[22]

In the last year or so other initiatives have been made by Argentine defense and military authorities concerning Chile. Chile remains the major external security concern of Argentina, as evidenced by misgivings over planned bilateral military exercises with Chile in 1998 (misgivings reciprocated by Chilean authorities). Moreover, the recent lifting of long-standing U.S. restrictions on arms sales in Latin America, notably in the area of aircraft, has been perceived in Argentina as favoring Chile, at least potentially. Unlike Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, Chile has not made significant contributions to overseas peacekeeping or other multilateral missions.

However, in August 1997 the Argentine minister of defense, Jorge Domínguez, announced that Chilean officers will join Argentine peacekeeping forces on Cyprus under Argentine auspices, after being trained at CAECOPAZ. They will be stationed at Camp San Martín, near Skouriotissa, as have Brazilian and Uruguayan officers before them, and will be part of the UN peacekeeping mission headed by General de Vergara.[23]

All of these incipient changes in the Southern Cone reverberate in U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), the regional command for South and Central America and, now, the Caribbean. (Mexico, like Canada, remains outside the U.S. regional command system in the Western Hemisphere.) Southern Command is focused on "operations other than war," being less concerned with the prospect of major theater wars or warfighting per se, even in smaller-scale contingencies, than with nontraditional roles and missions. Always an "economy of force" theater, even during the Cold War and the Central American conflicts, SOUTHCOM has few military assets compared with the European or Pacific commands. It is now undergoing a restructuring (recently highlighted by the transfer of its headquarters from Quarry Heights, Panama, to Miami, Florida), and Southern Command assets today are fewer yet, even though its area of responsibility now includes ocean areas in the South Atlantic, South Pacific, and the Caribbean. Therefore the substantial participation of Argentina in peacekeeping and such naval exercises as UNITAS positions that nation as a significant player in hemispheric security, in collaboration with the United States and its neighbors.[24]

In fact, on 16 October 1997, during his visit to South America (Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina), President William J. Clinton designated Argentina a "major non-NATO U.S. ally," a distinction enjoyed by only seven other countries in the world: Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, New Zealand, and

South Korea. This unprecedented designation of a Latin American country stems in large part from Argentina's involvement in peacekeeping operations around the world and from the clear determination of the Menem administration to align itself with the United States in the Western Hemisphere and beyond. This is a historic departure from traditional Argentine foreign policy stances, which have been characterized by real or fancied rivalry with the United States for South American influence, à la Juan Perón after World War II; by studied neutralism, such as during World War I; or more recently, by nonalignment, in the Alfonsín administration (1983–1989). The extraterritorial use of the Argentine military has complemented the political and economic initiatives of Menem, at home and abroad, including privatization and the creation of MERCOSUR, and has helped establish Argentina's reputation as a reliable international partner.

Should this new pattern of relationships, civilian and military, persist, it will, to use an old Soviet term, change the "correlation of forces" in the Western Hemisphere and particularly in the southern part thereof. It will have lasting repercussions for regional arrangements and hemispheric cooperation, not only in the military sphere but in the broader web of inter-American relationships. Consequently, while Argentine military participation in UN peacekeeping operations may have originally been an effort to burnish the nation's international reputation and to reassert Argentina's role in the international arena, it has catalyzed something more: the arrival of Argentina as a partner in the international security arena, with a standing that Argentine governments could once only dream of. Argentina's new relationship with the United States—which lies at the core of its policy of foreign engagement—may finally give Argentina that "place in the sun" depicted on the Argentine national banner.

Notes

1. Buenos Aires, TELAM, 10 March 1996, in Foreign Broadcast Information System, FBIS-LAT-96-049, 12 March 1996, p. 45.

2. *United Nations Handbook*, 1989 (Wellington, N.Z.: Ministry of External Relations and Trade), pp. 40–2.

3. "Summary of Personnel Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations by Countries," *Peacekeeping and International Relations*, vols. 21–26, 1992–1997. Unless otherwise noted, all country contribution figures and numbers of personnel in UN missions come from this source. For UN "helmet color" usages, see Myron H. Nordquist, "What Color Is the Peacekeeper's Helmet?" *Naval War College Review*, Summer 1997, esp. pp. 9–13. (The full-length study of which the article is an extract and adaptation was published as Myron H. Nordquist, *What Color Helmet? Reforming Security Council Peacekeeping Mandates*, Newport Paper no. 12 [Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1997].)

4. *United Nations Handbook*, 1989, p. 41. The two UN missions were UNIIMOG (the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observers Group) and UNAVEM (United Nations Angola Verification Mission).

5. Juan Carlos Neves, "The Argentine Navy and UN Peacekeeping Operations in the Gulf of Fonseca," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1994, pp. 40–67, esp. p. 48.

6. Deborah L. Norden, "Keeping the Peace, Outside and In: Argentina's UN Missions," *International Peacekeeping*, Autumn 1995, p. 332. For a discussion of the Argentine naval experience in the Persian Gulf,

see Juan Carlos Neves, "Interoperability in Multinational Coalitions: Lessons from the Persian Gulf War," *Naval War College Review*, Winter 1995, pp. 50–62.

7. *Clarín* (Buenos Aires) online (<http://www.clarin.com.ar/>), 17 February 1997, p. 1. General de Vergara also served as a deputy commander of the BEA in Croatia.

8. Norden, p. 334.

9. Martin Balsa [General, Argentine Army Chief of Staff], "Peacekeeping and the Inter-American Military System," interview by Jack Child, in *Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Coalition Warfare: The Future Role of the United Nations*, ed. Fariborz L. Mokhtari (Washington, D.C.: NDU Conference Report, 1994).

10. Thomas S. Szayna et al., *Peace Operations Deficiencies: A Global Survey* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1995). The categories were: general education (high), military proficiency (moderate to high), discipline (moderate to high), leadership (high), equipment (moderate to high), English language training (low, as was true for all Latin American contingents), special peace operations training (moderate), overall deficiencies minimal.

11. "Amounts Owed to Member States for Troops, Contingent-Owned Equipment, Goods and Services Provided under Letters of Assist and Death and Disability," *Report of the High-Level Open-Ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations*, 9 April 1996. The amounts by category were: troops $8,703,000; contingent-owned equipment $8,572,000; Letters of Assist $2,275,000; total $19,550,000. Worldwide, the UN owed $1,080,530,000 in the first two categories and $280,766,000 for Letters of Assist and "death and disability."

12. Norden, p. 342.

13. Ibid.

14. *Verde Oliva* [bulletin of the Argentine Army], April 1992.

15. This change was announced by President Menem in a speech on 9 July 1994 in *Clarín*, 9 July 1994, in FBIS-LAT-94-150, 4 August 1994, p. 38.

16. Informational brochure, CAECOPAZ, n.d.

17. Ibid., and briefing slides used by CAECOPAZ (in English) in 1996.

18. Briefing slides, CAECOPAZ. The specific individual courses offered in 1996 were the Peacekeeping Operations Commander, Subunit Commander, and Junior Officer Course (five iterations, with students grouped by the mission to which they were going: UNTAES, UNFICYP, or UNIKOM); the Military Observers Course (one session for all); and Military Police, Radio Operator, and Helicopter Squadron courses for UNFICYP. Collective training was provided for the reconnaissance squadron (ECA) going to Eastern Slavonia (twice), the Argentine task force to Cyprus (twice), and an Argentine engineer company to Kuwait (once).

19. Ibid.

20. Lt. Col. Stephen C. Stacey, U.S. Army, interview by Herbert C. Huser, Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va., May 1997. Colonel Stacey was a participant and observer at Fuerzas Unidas '95.

21. President Carlos Menem, remarks as reported by TELAM, 8 July 1997, in FBIS-LAT-97-189 (<http://fbis.fedworld.gov> [hereafter online]), 8 July 1997.

22. Maria O'Donnell, "Defense Agreement for Mercosur Countries Considered," *La Nacion* (Buenos Aires, Internet version), 15 July 1997, FBIS-LAT-97-202 (online), 21 July 1997.

23. "Chilean Officers to Join Argentine Force in Cyprus," *Clarín*, 22 July 1997 (Internet version), in FBIS-LAT-97-217 (online), 5 August 1997.

24. For a discussion of this point from a Chilean perspective, see Edmundo Gonzalez, "U.S. Hemispheric Interests: A Bold Naval Agenda for the Twenty-First Century," in this issue.

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