

# Argentine Strategic Culture

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FINDINGS REPORT

**FIU**

Applied Research Center

Latin American and Caribbean Center

Florida International University



Applied Research  
Center

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

### **The FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership**

#### **Strategic Cultures Assessments**

Florida International University's Applied Research Center (FIU ARC), in collaboration with the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC), has recently formed the FIU-SOUTHCOM Academic Partnership. The partnership entails FIU providing the highest quality research-based knowledge to further explicative understanding of the political, strategic, and cultural dimensions of state behavior and foreign policy. This goal will be accomplished by employing a Strategic Culture approach. The initial phase of Strategic Culture assessments consists of a year-long research program that focuses on developing a standard analytical framework to identify and assess the Strategic Culture of ten Latin American countries. FIU will facilitate professional presentations of the following ten countries over the course of one year: Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. In addition, a findings report on the impact of Islam and Muslims within Latin America will be produced.

The overarching purpose of the project is two-fold: to generate a rich and dynamic base of knowledge pertaining to the political, social, and strategic factors that influence state behavior; and to contribute to SOUTHCOM's Socio-Cultural Dynamics (SCD) Program. Utilizing the notion of Strategic Culture, SOUTHCOM has commissioned FIU ARC to conduct country studies in order to explain how states comprehend, interpret, and implement national security policy *vis-à-vis* the international system.

SOUTHCOM defines Strategic Culture as follows: "the combination of internal and external influences and experiences—geographic, historical, cultural, economic, political and military—that shape and influence the way a country understands its relationship to the rest of the world, and how a state will behave in the international community." FIU will identify and expound upon the strategic and cultural factors that inform the rationale behind the perceptions and behavior of select states in the present political and security climate by analyzing demography, history, regional customs, traditions, belief systems, and other cultural and historical influences that have contributed to the development of a particular country's current security rationale and interpretation of national security.

To meet the stated goals, FIU ARC will host a series of professional workshops in Miami. These workshops bring subject matter experts from all over the US and Latin America together to explore and discuss a country's specific history, geography, culture, economic, political, and military climates *vis-à-vis* Strategic Culture. At the conclusion of each workshop, FIU publishes a findings report, which is presented at SOUTHCOM.

The following Argentine Findings Report, authored by Dr. Felix E. Martin and Dr. Marvin L. Astrada, is the product of a working group held in Miami on February 4, 2010, which included 13 prominent academic and private sector experts in Argentine history, culture, economics, politics, and military affairs.

The views expressed in this findings report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the US Government, US Department of Defense, US Southern Command, FIU-ARC, or Florida International University.

On behalf of FIU-ARC, we wish to acknowledge and thank all of the participants for their contributions, which made the Argentine Strategic Culture workshop a tremendous success.

*Preliminary Report*

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## **Executive Summary**

### *Origins of Argentine Strategic Culture*

- Historically, Argentine Strategic Culture (hereinafter ASC) has demonstrated remarkable continuity over time, although in the past two decades there have been signs of possible changes in the core assumptions and themes that have undergirded ASC.
- The key historical elements of ASC that have endured are an obsession with the lost opportunity for greatness, a recurring pattern of making foreign policy decisions to shore up support in domestic politics, and non-acceptance of the consequences of international actions, even if such actions should render the nation marginal and/or irrelevant in the international community, or cause long-term harm to the overall national interest.
- Throughout the nation's history, ASC has remained functional despite tension between two conflicting tendencies among Argentine ruling elites, that is, a traditionalist faction that has preferred isolation and looked inward for symbols of national identity and greatness, and a modernizing faction that has been cosmopolitan in its outlook, and has looked abroad for models upon which to base the nation's development.
- Through the period of recurring military dictatorships, from 1955 to 1983, there was a persistence of myopic foreign policy based on notions of Argentine exceptionalism.

### *Keepers of Argentine Strategic Culture*

- The keepers and purveyors of Strategic Culture in Argentina are the sitting president and his/her inner circle. Both the military as an institution and the foreign ministry as an institution are absent from the design/creation of defense and foreign policy. In the best case, their role is simply to implement policy that is handed down from the executive branch, although at times they are even bypassed at this stage of the process. However, in no case are either career officials (military or civilian) in the Ministry of Defense, the Armed Forces, or career officials in the Foreign Ministry allowed to play an active role in the design and implementation of key policies in this arena.

- As a result of being created and purveyed by the president and his/her inner circle, Strategic Culture in Argentina is heavily influenced by the political pragmatism and short-term mindset that guides the behavior of the political elite in power.
- The State is weak in all its capacities, be it coercive, extractive, developmental, regulatory, and/or distributive. The important implication of this fact for Strategic Culture is that, especially in the recent decade, Argentina does not have much of a systematic, stable foreign policy; all policy is domestically-orientated.
- For the past quarter of a century, the political elite's understanding of national identity and the country's position in the world can be summarized by three propositions, which are understood in divergent ways by different factions of the elite. First, in terms of its economy, Argentina is a relatively primitive, peripheral country, a status that government policy seeks to redress. Second, it is a democratic nation, and democracy is the only acceptable form of government. Third, the country's foreign policy rests on three central principles: that is, non-intervention, reliance on the U.N. and international treaties, and the rejection of the use of force in international relations.

#### *Continuity and Change in Argentine Strategic Culture*

- Argentina is country that has suffered from polarization of its society for most of its history. In the formative years of its independent, national history, it was divided between the influence of the agro-export sector and the nascent urban elite. The fragmentation of Argentine society resurfaced again in the post-1930 economic crisis, when two economic models—agro-exporters and import substitution industrialization—remained stalemated, preventing a national political consensus and agreement about the image of the country and its proper role in the international state system.
- Argentina has been immured in nostalgia for most of the last seven decades. Clearly, after gaining independence in 1810, the country grew rapidly by following the precepts of classical economic liberalism and taking advantage of international trade. By the mid-1860s, the country used its power and forces to reassert its status and to consolidate its territory and boundaries.
- The economic, political, and social boom of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries gave way to disillusionment and pessimism during the post-1930 economic crisis. This condition helped to usher in populist, nationalist, and corporatist tendencies, culminating with the military coup that brought Juan Perón to power. This is a watershed event that divides the history of Argentina and its

national mood between the pre and post-Perón eras. After the post-1930 economic crisis, Argentina suffered cyclical social upheavals, economic crises, and political traumas. In short, Argentina has not recovered its lost power and prestige in the region and the world.

- With the exception of its post-independence wars, Argentina did not use its armed forces for external, offensive purposes from the end of the Paraguayan War to the invasion of the Malvinas Islands in 1982. Despite a number of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) with its regional neighbors, the military was used extensively to quash internal political and social upheavals.
- There is consensus that the use of force throughout most of the history of Argentina has been for defensive, deterrent purposes, except for the debacle in the Malvinas. Also, Argentina has traditionally opted for neutrality in major wars or conflicts such as WWI and WWII. For example, Argentina only declared war against the Axis Powers in order to overcome its international isolation and join the efforts of the United Nations.
- Argentina remains polarized and seriously weakened by poor economic performance and a serious political impasse between populist and economic nationalist ideals of the present ruling elite and the agro-export sector. The position of the military institution is a faithful reflection of the general condition of Argentina over the last two decades. The military is in total state of abandonment and disarray, particularly under the Kirchner regime.
- Given the meager resources available to the military, and the dilapidated equipment of the armed forces, the use of force in Argentina's immediate future seems to be destined to aiding in nothing more than minor domestic rescue operations, relief efforts, policing activities, and multilateral token operations. The use of force, as one of Argentina's tools of statecraft, appears to be a thing of the past. It is highly unlikely that force will be a significant and effective tool in the next decade. In the meantime, Argentina continues to live in a state of perennial national melancholy.

## Introduction

Argentina is a resource-rich country that has never quite reached its full potential. Its vast territory, its vast store of natural resources, and its large reservoir of human capital certainly make it a leading candidate for a top position among the most influential countries—if not in the world, certainly in the region. Argentina, nonetheless, has wavered historically, and it is presently bogged down in yet another uncertain political and economic program that negatively affects all its institutions (particularly the military), weakens its internal socio-political and economic cohesion, distorts its national strategy, and hampers its external power projection. This is a perplexing evolution in both historical and contemporary dimensions. It is an evolution that affects, particularly, how the Argentine State has defined, equipped, and used its armed forces with respect to its own society, its regional neighbors and rivals, and in the international state system. In sum, Argentina’s tortuous historical development has impacted the ideas (symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, texts), the behavior (habitual actions, standard operating procedures, repeated policy outcomes, military training, military exercises) and the artifacts (weapons systems adopted, war plans devised) that have defined and continue to influence perceptions of security and the use of force.

The analytical focus of the workshop leading up to this Report was Argentina’s puzzling socio-political and economic development. Specifically, it aimed at identifying and explaining the presence or absence, the challenges to, and the continuity or change in Argentina’s Strategic Culture. Clearly, the workshop’s level of analysis was the nation-state, and how multiple internal components of the country did or did not influence the Strategic Culture of the state. As Jack Snyder points out, in the study of culture and strategy, the unit of analysis could have been, also, the military institution itself, or a systemic level as represented, for example, by the three “cultures of anarchy” in the international system as defined by Alexander Wendt in his work: that is, brutally-warlike Hobbesian ones, more limitedly-competitive Lockean ones, and more cooperative Kantian ones.<sup>1</sup> With the State unit analysis in mind, the workshop participants were charged with analyzing the national strategic dimensions of the State and to what extent,

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<sup>1</sup> Jack L. Snyder, “The Concept of Strategic Culture: A User’s Guide,” paper prepared for Florida International University, Applied Research Center, April 8, 2010, p. 4.

if any, a variety of physical, ideational, attitudinal, political, economic, and/or societal factors contributed to the formation, formulation, evolution, transformation, and/or continuity of a distinctive Argentine Strategic Culture or, shall we say, the culture that influences the strategy of the country—that is, how forces are used for purely national objectives. This Report will examine each of these components, viz., the relationship between strategy and culture, and how they are amalgamated into a synthetic notion of Strategic Culture in the case of Argentina.

Strategy is the way any social entity—an individual, a group, an institution, or a state actor—devises a rational plan to advance and protect its interests in any type of competitive context, ranging from personal relationships, sports, markets, and battlefields to the international state system. Force, in addition to economic, diplomatic, and political actions, is one of several tools of statecraft available to any Nation-State in the international system. How military force has been used in Argentina (that is, internally, defensively or offensively) seems to be predicated on both state-building and state-consolidation historical processes, and on institutional (armed forces) and socio-economic elite interests. This corresponds with the general trend in the literature on Strategic Culture over the years, where the concept refers to beliefs, attitudes, and habits pertaining to the uses of force that are distinctive, enduring, and shared within a group.<sup>2</sup> With this caveat in place, this report will isolate and summarize the findings in each of the major sections comprising the workshop on Argentina’s Strategic Culture. The Report will discuss how the workshop participants causally linked Argentina’s possible or potential use or non-use of force with physical, ideational, attitudinal, political, economic, and societal variables. Clearly, given Argentina’s socio-economic and political position, and its relative power in the region, it has used its armed forces in an offensive posture several times in its history. Thus, the following questions present themselves: Is Argentina’s Strategic Culture essentially offensive or defensive? If it is oscillating between extreme offensive and defensive postures, what internal and external factors

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey S. Lantis, “Strategic Culture: A Multifaceted Cultural Approach to the Study of Latin America,” Florida International University, Applied Research Center, 2009; Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” *International Security* 19:4 (Spring 1995), 32-64; John Glenn, “Realism versus Strategic Culture: Competition or Collaboration?” *International Studies Review* 11:3 (September 2009), 523-551.

caused the fluctuations? What is the present state of Argentina's strategic use of force? Are there any discernable patterns of continuity or change in the culture that purportedly influence the strategic behavior of Argentina? And what does the present suggest about the future use of force by the Argentine State?

## **History and Strategic Culture**

Historically, Argentine Strategic Culture (ASC) has demonstrated remarkable continuity over time, although in the past two decades there have been signs of possible changes in the core assumptions and themes that have under-girded ASC. The key historical elements of ASC that have endured are the following:

- First, an obsession with the lost opportunity for greatness—the greatness for which the nation was destined but that never has been achieved, and an obsession that includes a longing for territory lost in past conflicts.
- Second, a recurring pattern of making foreign policy decisions, even the decision to go to war, with the purpose of shoring up support in domestic politics; that is, Argentina's foreign policy has always been geared toward domestic political purposes.
- Third, a disdain for the consequences of the government's international actions, even if such actions should render the nation marginal or irrelevant in the international community, and/or cause long-term harm to the overall national interest. Argentina is a country entering the future with a sense of nostalgia as the basis for its future. With nostalgia firmly entrenched in the national psyche, ASC retains remnants of nostalgia in thought and application.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the nation's history, ASC has remained functional despite tension between two conflicting tendencies among Argentine ruling elites: that is, a traditionalist faction that has preferred isolation and has looked inward for symbols of national identity and greatness, and a modernizing faction that has been cosmopolitan in its outlook, and has looked abroad for models upon which to base the nation's development. Both

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<sup>3</sup> See Joseph S. Tulchin, "Argentine Strategic Culture," paper prepared for Argentine Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, FL 2010.

factions, historically, have retained and incorporated the key elements of ASC enunciated above.

The origins of ASC can be traced back to the colonial period. Argentina presents a case study in which several political practices initiated in the nineteenth century set it apart from many other Spanish American republics, while other political experiences indicate that it conformed to patterns seen elsewhere in the postcolonial era. Argentina underwent an unusually early and successful transformation, by Spanish American standards, from a highly-restricted regimen of political participation typical of colonial systems to a republican implementation of an egalitarian concept regarding popular political involvement codified in regulations that provided for male suffrage.<sup>4</sup> Political mobilization during electoral periods and political campaigning were encountered early in the national experience, particularly in the city of Buenos Aires.

The quest to find solutions to the nature of national political authority was much more difficult. Following almost immediately from the initial moves toward independence from Spain, regionalist dissension became a significant and long-lasting element in the course of Argentine political and economic development. Militant regionalism was a feature observed in the process of nation-building among some of the larger Spanish-American nation states in the nineteenth century. However, unlike political expressions of regionalism elsewhere, the Argentine experience was not associated with highly-differentiated ethnic populations concentrated variously in different regions, as was the case in most Mesoamerican and Andean countries; in fact, ethnic and racial tensions were not Argentine conditions affecting the highly-charged debates regarding the range of the central government's power and the militarized responses to the absence of consensus on such matters.<sup>5</sup> In Argentina, the protracted debates and struggles regarding political rights, obligations, and limitations of central political authority revolved around political theory and resource distribution, and did not involve the additional issues of contested ancient rights accorded to indigenous populations under the Spanish Crown.

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<sup>4</sup> See Mark D. Szuchman "Strategic Culture in Argentina and the Impact of Legacy," paper prepared for Argentine Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, FL 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Szuchman.

Since 1810, Argentine identity has struggled with a set of competing options that can be labeled nationalist and internationalist. These two notions telescope into issues of regionalism. The nationalist sentiment embodies values and belief-systems drawn from the Spanish tradition of self-subsistence and the mutuality of interests found in landed production, both agricultural and pastoral. It is suspicious of cosmopolitanism and its associated materialism, which invariably places foreign interests above the needs of the nation. It does not normally advocate isolationism, but is wary of international pacts and entanglements that compromise Argentine flexibility, leading to a tradition of neutrality and/or independence of action (for example, military contributions to the first Gulf War effort by President Carlos Menem caused concern throughout the country).<sup>6</sup> We can see some elements of Gaullist practices insofar as Argentina's international position has been informed by a sense that alliances would bind Argentine options excessively, with Argentina preferring a more independent path regarding its international calculations. The internationalist identity holds that Argentina is "naturally" destined to play a role in the community of trading nations, that it is the repository of the cultural values of the historically-advanced European capitals—London, Paris, Berlin—and that its material destiny is inscribed in economic liberalism and a free-trade paradigm with its historical trading partners in western Europe.<sup>7</sup> Manifestations of this contested dualism underlie the entire history of Argentina, but they had different modes of expressions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries..

Regarding the historical development of the elite sectors of society, geographic orientation has had a formative impact on the development of ASC. The elite concentrated in the coastal area around Buenos Aires derived most of its wealth from contraband exports of agricultural products, creating an elite that willfully violated Spanish imperial rules. Rebelliousness became an ingrained trait in the elite from the coast.<sup>8</sup> The interior elite of the country derived most of its income from trade with members of the Spanish imperial system to the north and northwest, but always as a marginal frontier area. After independence, the separation between the littoral and the interior elite intensified, creating distinct regional elites. The agro-exporting elite of the

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<sup>6</sup> Szuchman.

<sup>7</sup> Szuchman.

<sup>8</sup> Tulchin.

interior, of which Rosas was the prototype, engaged in legal international trade instead of contraband. In a few decades, it was clear that Buenos Aires and the Littoral provinces had the most concentration of immigrants and most of the “modern” features of economic and social development, while the interior provinces remained anchored in traditional ways and, with a few exceptions, to a stagnant, antiquated economic paradigm. In the long run, this uneven development produced a vision of “two Argentinas” coexisting side-by-side but founded on very different material realities and espousing very different ideologies and worldviews.<sup>9</sup> Buenos Aires and the Littoral provinces benefited from the primary products, export boom and assimilation of not only capital inflows but cultural and ideological influences from Europe; the Interior remained enveloped in an ever-present past, with little prospect of economic modernization because the elite were faithful to traditional Creole ways. However, these elite conducted the new nation’s international relations in such a nonchalant, careless manner as to infuriate its trading partners. A disdain for the consequences of international actions became a pattern of behavior in the nation’s Strategic Culture; it was as if there was an absence of preparation or seriousness of purpose in the conduct of foreign relations. Estanislao Zeballos, twice foreign minister at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, recounts an episode (Zeballos, *Lectures at Williamstown*, 1924) in which he was to represent Argentina in an arbitration with Brazil over a disputed territory near the triple frontier between Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina.<sup>10</sup> Zeballos went to the national archives to build a documental base for his argument, only to find that the materials he was looking for were not to be found. He arrived at the arbitration session and was dismayed to find that his Brazilian counterpart had all the necessary colonial documents and maps to support the Brazilian case. In the absence of Argentine documentation, the arbitrator, former United States President Grover Cleveland, decided in favor of Brazil. This episode is not anomalous. Former foreign minister Miguel Ángel Cárcano was in a bargaining session with Chile over contested territory on the border between the two countries that arose during the 1960s, and he too experienced a paucity of archives, documents, and official communiqués that would have facilitated a legal resolution of the

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<sup>9</sup> Eduardo Zimmermann, “Argentina’s Strategic Culture,” paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, FL, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Tulchin.

issue at hand. Fortunately for Argentina, this difficulty was corrected by research completed during the Menem government in the 1990s under foreign minister Guido Di'Tella, when the last 24 disputes with Chile were settled in an amicable fashion.

From the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century (1880-1910), Argentina enjoyed a period of economic growth which it had never before seen, and has not seen since. This dramatic growth, which included massive flows of foreign capital and massive immigration, and which transformed the country, became the iconic moment for the development of ASC. The growth was so explosive and the new role of the country as Europe's food supplier so widely recognized that there was a widespread sense of the nation's impending greatness. In the preparations for the celebration of the nation's centennial in 1910, an editorial in *La Nación* noted that Argentina would overtake the United States as the dominant country in the hemisphere within a generation. This sense of impending greatness, made inevitable by Argentina's importance in the international market, produced a myopic foreign policy in which disdain for the United States was combined with total confidence in the absolutism of the market. The preeminent importance of the nation's exports created a form of power and influence that would supposedly protect the nation from the negative consequences of its foreign policy actions or statements.

The outbreak of World War I proved that this view of the world was fundamentally flawed. In wartime, strategic interests trumped trade and the UK, together with its allies, subordinated Argentine interests to their own. Despite editorials of disbelief in *La Nación* and speeches of outrage in the Congress, Great Britain stopped exports of coal to Argentina after the outbreak of hostilities, and there were power outages in the city of Buenos Aires in the summer of 1914-1915. As the war went on and the United States decided to intervene, Argentine president Hipólito Yrigoyen took the sense of non-accountability in Argentine foreign policy and ASC to a new level. Yrigoyen labeled his foreign policy *principismo*.<sup>11</sup> He declared his support for certain ideals or principles, but never followed up on his declarations in any empirical way to win support for his principles from others. Perhaps the most famous case was Yrigoyen's demand that the League of Nations should be reformed to increase the role of nations,

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<sup>11</sup> Tulchin.

such as Argentina, that had remained neutral during the war. When his demands were ignored, he had the Argentine representative to the first General Assembly walk out.

The sense of improvised policy and the absence of serious consideration of possible consequences of actions taken are evident in the cynical manipulation of foreign policy for personal gain by Foreign Minister Carlos Saavedra Lamas, who meddled in the war of the Chaco on his own authority to broker a peace. He made it clear that he expected to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, and he was. The apotheosis of Argentine self-declaration of greatness came when President Juan D. Perón offered an Argentine alternative to the United States and Soviet Union that he called The Third Way. There is no evidence that this effort was based on anything other than a sense of Argentine greatness; any material or empirical support for the Third Way was utterly lacking. Such ratiocination raises the question of how Argentines see the world around them, and whether they perceive how others understand the world, including how Argentina is perceived and understood. There has been a tradition of “realists” among Argentine leaders, but they have been in the minority and their views rejected. Zeballos, who was a student of international affairs, argued that Argentina should build its military power to match its economic power, and urged Argentina into an arms race with Brazil and Chile at the beginning of the twentieth century. Zeballos wanted Argentina to demonstrate its power in a manner European and US leaders would take for granted. He was thrown out of office by presidents who considered the policies he proposed to be unnecessary and excessively aggressive.

In the 1920s, Alejandro Bunge and his student Raúl Prebisch drew lessons from the country’s experience in the war and anticipated the impending changes in the international market. They urged Argentina to balance its agriculture with local industries, even if building an industrial base might require protectionist policies that might run counter to the dominant view that Argentine exports were sufficient to guarantee the nation’s well-being and prosperity. Even during the Great Depression, Argentine governments clung to the trade policies they had followed since the 1880s, including public rejection of cooperation with the United States. There was a brief moment under President Roberto Ortíz, from 1939-1941, when the government moved to a policy of collaboration with the U.S. in forging a hemispheric partnership as protection

from the impending war in Europe. Ortíz died in office, and his successors returned to the historic line of Argentine policy, remaining neutral during World War II until the very last moment, when Perón's government declared war in order to gain admission into the United Nations.

The teachings of Prebisch continued to resonate in Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century. The principal influence that Prebisch had on economic policy was that the terms of trade for agricultural products had turned against exporting nations like Argentina, and that they would become progressively dependent on industrial imports.<sup>12</sup> The correct policy response to this dependence was to build a domestic industrial capacity. This argument did not lose its persuasiveness until the 1990s, when neo-liberal fiscal policies became fashionable and, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when commodity prices soared, making agricultural exports central to economic growth in Argentina and other countries.

Throughout the period of recurring military dictatorships (1955 to 1983), there was a persistence of myopic foreign policy. Among the cases, the most remarkable were the public statements made in the 1960s by the Minister of the Interior, General Harguindeguy, who referred to Brazil as a nation of monkeys that the Argentines should not take seriously in their dispute over water levels behind the new dams on the tributaries of the River Plate. At the end of the 1970s, the Argentine government almost went to war with Chile over access to the Beagle Straits. The most significant episode, of course, was the invasion of the Malvinas Islands in 1982. In that case, the Argentines demonstrated that they did not understand the value of having a worldview that comports with empirical realities; Argentina had no grasp of British or American strategic interests and capabilities vis-à-vis Argentine capabilities, and this myopia cost the lives of many Argentines. There was a counter-movement that arose during this time, an attempt to insert realism and empirical geopolitical considerations into the discussion of security policy. Gugliemeli, a retired general who published a journal called *Estrategia*, led this movement. On the civilian side, an organization that modeled itself on the Council of

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<sup>12</sup> Tulchin.

Foreign Relations in New York, that is, CARI, was created to promote discussion of international affairs.

The return to democracy in 1983 brought the first signs that the myopia and absence of accountability might be coming to an end. President Alfonsín blended principismo with some realism, and came up with a form of idealism that retained an element of the historic nostalgia that inevitably created tension between Argentina and the U.S. Alfonsín declared that Argentina was a weak, developing nation, and must behave as such. At the same time, he began an historic rapprochement with Brazil, ending the nuclear competition between the two countries and signing the first agreements that would open the way to Mercosur. At the same time, however, he demonstrated the influence of principismo in his policy toward Cuba, which could not have any other consequences other than irritating the United States. Carlos Menem took the change one step further by insisting that Argentina had to align itself with, rather than be against, the U.S. However, this apparent break with traditional ASC was less radical than it seemed because Menem believed that such alignment would be the means to achieving the elusive greatness of Argentina. His foreign minister, Guido Di'Tella, had no such illusions, and saw the world with remarkable clarity. His goal was to make Argentina an unremarkable yet reliable partner. He pushed through the final settlement of the many border disputes with Chile, brokered the end of the Condor missile project that had vexed both Brazil and the U.S., and reversed the history of Argentine voting in the United Nations, where for forty years, Argentina voted against the U.S. as often as it voted against Libya, Yemen, and Cuba. Also, during this period, the first graduate programs in international relations were established in both public and private universities.<sup>13</sup> In the long run, these degree programs and the connections to the outer world provided by the Internet created a new generation of Argentines who were able to perceive a world beyond the history, culture, traditional mindset, and borders of Argentina.

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<sup>13</sup> Tulchin.

In the meantime, however, the current Kirschner government has returned Argentine foreign policy to being an instrument of domestic policy, and has plunged the country back into a state of irrelevance in the international community.<sup>14</sup>

## **Social, Political, and Cultural Variables and Strategic Culture**

The keepers and purveyors of Strategic Culture in Argentina are the sitting president and his/her inner circle. Both the military and the foreign ministry as an institution are absent from the design/creation of defense and foreign policy. In the best case, their role is simply to implement policy that is handed down from the executive branch, although at times they are even bypassed at this stage of the process. However, in no case are either career officials (military or civilian) in the Ministry of Defense or in the Armed Forces, or career officials in the Foreign Ministry, allowed to play an active role in the design and implementation of key policies in this policy arena.<sup>15</sup>

In the absence of the Armed Forces and/or the Foreign Ministry as relevant institutions in the policy-making process, ASC is determined by the incumbent president and his/her key confidants. As a result of being created and purveyed by the president and his/her inner circle, ASC is heavily influenced by the political pragmatism and short-term mindset that guides the behavior of the Argentine political elite in power. During a presidential administration, the specifics of ASC will change somewhat due to domestic political needs, but when there is an alteration in the control of the presidency (i.e. a new president), the particulars of ASC can be expected to shift, at times dramatically. All the same, it is important to remember that the principal underlying determinants of elite behavior in Argentina remain relatively constant across presidential administrations (especially Perónist administrations). Foreign and defense policy are hence driven by immediate domestic political needs, where in turn the elemental priority is to retain and augment the degree of presidential power and control over the political system via dominance over the management and distribution of resources, with pragmatism the

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<sup>14</sup> Deborah L. Norden, "Depoliticizing the Military and De-Militarizing Politics: The Armed Forces and Strategic Culture in Post-Authoritarian Argentina," paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, FL, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Carlos H. Waisman, "Elite Worldviews in Argentina and Their Implications for Foreign and Military Policy," paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, FL, 2010.

overriding precept for politicians. In sum, foreign and defense policy in the minds of Argentine elites are simply tools to be utilized to further short-term domestic political goals.

Something that has been standard in the analysis of the country but that has been downplayed in recent decades (because the process ended several decades ago) is the fact that Argentina is a country of mass European immigration; most of its population (including the large majority of the elites and middle-classes) is the product of large-scale immigration from Italy, Spain, and Central and Eastern Europe, which occurred between 1860 and 1930.<sup>16</sup> This fact has at least two important implications for Strategic Culture. First, elites and members of the middle classes do not view themselves as carriers of indigenous identities that would have been subjugated or destroyed by European colonization, or of mestizo cultures that combine European and non-European values. Second, the contemporary elites and intelligentsia are aware that their forbearers moved to Argentina because, two or three generations ago, standards of living and opportunities for social mobility were higher than in the countries of origin. Also, they are, in relation to the citizens of other Latin American countries, unusually sensitive to the relative standing of their country *vis-à-vis* developed nations, their ancestral homelands in particular, and feel relatively deprived if the outcome of these comparisons is negative for Argentina.

Argentina was a very prosperous country until World War II, but overall it has been declining ever since. At the onset of World War I, the Argentine per capita GDP was comparable to that of Switzerland. At the time of the Great Depression, it was still twice that of Italy. In the mid-1960s, it was almost three times greater than Brazil's and one-third higher than Chile's. Today, the country's per capita GDP is 16% lower than that of Brazil and 21% lower than that of Chile. This fact has a major implication for collective identities: individual downward mobility generates feelings of anger and resentment, and often a search for explanations that rationalize failure by blaming others for one's predicament. It makes sense to expect that collective downward mobility will have similar effects.

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<sup>16</sup> Waisman.

The state is weak in all its capacities, be it coercive, extractive, developmental, regulatory, and distributive. This was not always the case; at one time, the state was strong, and its capabilities were substantial in most areas. Following the country's unification in the mid-nineteenth century, it was the state that incorporated the country into the world economy as a large-scale exporter of foodstuffs, attracted mass European immigration, and established a liberal and democratizing polity. In the mid-twentieth century, again a strong state reversed some of these traits by embarking on economic autarky and putting in place a corporatist-populist regime. But the weakening of the state has been the correlate of economic decline in the past decades.

The important implication of this fact for Strategic Culture is that, especially in the recent decade, Argentina does not have much of a systematic, continuous foreign policy.<sup>17</sup> What Henry Kissinger famously said about Israel in the 1970s (“It does not have a foreign policy: [a]ll its policy is domestic”) applies to Argentina.<sup>18</sup> Three examples are the permission granted to the government's left-wing allies to carry out large-scale anti-Bush demonstrations during the Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005, the acquiescence to a three-year blockade of the international bridge with Uruguay by environmentalist NGOs opposed to a paper mill on the border (whose polluting activity had not been demonstrated), and the nationalization of the Spanish-controlled Argentine Airlines, partially at the urging of the unions. In each of these instances, the government satisfied or appeased domestic groups (some of little significance), but these decisions have had substantial costs for the country's international relations.

Another facet of the relationship between elites and ASC is that of the unusual position of the military within the state. This position has been peculiar in the past decades (but quite common in Latin America): between World War II and the early-1980s, the military was an autonomous segment of the state apparatus, which either ruled directly through authoritarian regimes or behaved as the arbiter of the legitimacy or efficacy of civilian governments.<sup>19</sup> While it could be argued that in the coup of 1955, which overthrew Juan Perón, the military acted as the representative of a coalition of social forces, both elite and non-elite, which pushed it into action, no thesis of this sort

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<sup>17</sup> Waisman.

<sup>18</sup> Waisman. See Tulchin.

<sup>19</sup> See Norden, Waisman.

would fit the facts in relation to the coups of 1943, 1966, and 1976. In each case, there were social forces that supported the coups or consented to them, but all these were instances of the military organization acting as an autonomous agent and establishing a government under its total control.

In order to understand the current situation of the military within the state, it is important to make a reference to one of these regimes, that is, the one in power from 1976-1983. Its behavior was quite different from that of its counterparts in Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay at that time in two main respects. First, its struggle against armed groups, Marxist and left-wing Perónist in this case (which called themselves “guerrillas,” but never exercised control over any territory), involved violence outside legal parameters at a much larger scale than in the other countries, including the murder or “disappearance” of thousands of persons, who in many cases had no known ties to the insurgents. It also involved the appropriation of hundreds of babies and the widespread theft of private property. Second, this regime practiced a reckless foreign policy. In 1978, it almost embarked on a war with Chile over a minor border dispute, a conflict that was thwarted by international intervention at the last moment. In 1982, the government provoked a war with Britain, also in connection with a long-standing dispute about sovereignty over the Falklands (Malvinas) Islands. The unambiguous defeat in a war the military had initiated but was not prepared to fight effectively contributed to its de-legitimization, both as a political actor and as a professional organization. It was as a consequence of this failure that the leadership of the military lost the will to continue in power, and that whatever consent it had in some sectors of the society evaporated.

Following the restoration of civilian rule, the military closed ranks in defense of the perpetrators of illegal deeds and of the officers who either ordered or allowed the commission of these acts. Thus, when civilian authorities ordered military judges to try these individuals, the proceedings were perfunctory and ended in exculpation. When the civilian judiciary carried out trials, military officers on active duty mobilized and demonstrated in favor for the exculpation of the defendants. It took over a decade, along with intense prodding by civilian officials and politicians, to get the military leadership to finally recognize the violations of human rights under their regime. Over the past two

decades, the reassertion of civilian control over the military was gradual and difficult, but it has been substantially completed at this time.

The consequence of this fact for Strategic Culture is that the members of the elite, as well as the general public, have a strong reluctance to strengthen the military, and much more so to use military power as an instrument of foreign policy, even in a latent manner (for instance, by attempting to reduce the strategic gap with Brazil, enhanced by this country's large-scale arms purchases, or to maintain military parity with Chile). The reason, of course, is the fear of reinvigorating a latent threat to democracy, a sentiment much more intense in Argentina than in Brazil or Chile. In fact, the military has been functionally deactivated, and it is not clear whether it even trains for contingencies based on hypotheses of conflict with other nations.

### **Elite Worldviews in the Present**

For the past quarter of a century, the political elite's understanding of national identity and the country's position in the world can be summarized into three propositions, which are understood in divergent ways by different factions of the elite. First, in terms of its economy, Argentina is a relatively backward, peripheral country, a status that government policy may redress. Second, it is a democratic nation, and democracy is the only acceptable form of government. Third, the country's foreign policy should rest on three central principles: non-intervention, reliance on the U.N. and international treaties, and the rejection of the use of force in international relations.<sup>20</sup> In addition to these propositions, Mark Jones notes that the overriding concern of retaining control of its territory (or obtaining control, if out of power) makes Argentine politicians extremely pragmatic, with access to financial resources far more important than ideology or public policy preferences. This is not to say that ideology is unimportant in Argentina, but rather when forced to choose between resources ("caja" in Argentine political vernacular) and ideological preferences, an overwhelming majority of Argentine politicians will choose the former. Such pragmatism is especially prominent among Perónists, who have been especially dominant in Argentine political life over the past twenty years. Perónism is both a political movement (Perónists are active in a host of

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<sup>20</sup> Waisman.

different parties across the political spectrum) and a political culture that places the utmost priority on being in power; being a Perónist means prioritizing being in control of the executive branch (president, governor, mayor) at all costs.<sup>21</sup>

Returning to the three propositions mentioned above, in terms of American foreign policy debates, these principles combine elements of isolationism and liberal internationalism. These propositions represent the shared “tool kit” of values that different groups can invoke in order to justify policies, and are the source from which various ideologies and foreign policy doctrines derive their principles. However, the elite is fractured in terms of the values that underlie Strategic Culture, and can be conceived in terms of two extreme ideal-typical worldviews that, in order to avoid ambiguous political or ideological labels and the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, can be labeled “Argentina as an emerging market” and “Argentina as part of the global South.”

As far as the first proposition is concerned, one extreme interpretation of backwardness, that is, “emerging market,” holds that the main obstacles to the country’s prosperity are internal (weakness of property rights and the rule of law, protectionist and statist economic policies, inadequate levels of education, etc.), and that through the correction of these deficiencies and an open economy, that is, engagement in international trade and investment, Argentina would be able to join the club of rich countries. This interpretation views globalization as an opportunity to facilitate the country’s progress vis-à-vis other states. The opposite vision is based on the premise that Argentina belongs in the global South, and that the principal obstacles to its progress are external. The country’s underdevelopment is the result of its dependence, which springs from the organization of the world economy. In this vision, the unequal patterns of trade with rich countries, exploitative investment by multinational corporations, and rich countries’ financial policies necessarily generate poverty throughout the periphery, Argentina included. Prosperity could be reached through protectionist policies (of which the Postwar Import Substitution Industrialization is the model) and economic integration with other Latin American countries. Since Argentina is a victim of the international division of labor, globalization is more a threat than an opportunity.

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<sup>21</sup> Mark P. Jones, “Argentine Political Elites, Politics, and Strategic Culture,” paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, FL, 2010.

Overall, the elite sectors support democracy, but different factions of the elite understand this concept in very different ways.<sup>22</sup> There is agreement about the fact that democracy includes competitive elections, political rights for the opposition, and basic political freedoms (of speech, organization, etc.). However, there is affinity between the “emerging market” position and a republican understanding of democracy, which implies a firm subordination of the government and elites to the law and, in a presidential regime like Argentina’s, a strong separation of powers. This, in turn, presupposes a president with limited legislative capacity, and an autonomous Congress and judiciary, the latter with robust powers of legal review. The “South” position, on the other hand, tends to conceive of democracy in a plebiscitary manner. This implies a strong pre-eminence of the executive in relation to the other two branches of government, and an instrumental and flexible understanding of the law.

In relation to foreign policy, both positions adhere strongly to the principle of non-intervention. However, supporters of the “emerging market” worldview try to reconcile this tenet with their goal of seeking accession to the club of industrial nations (a symbol of which would be joining the OECD, as Mexico, Chile and Brazil have done or are in process of doing). For this reason, their foreign policy preferences would often be more pro-Western than those of the “global South” segment. The latter’s worldview, on the other hand, formulates, in practice, something similar to the Monroe Doctrine of the nineteenth century: non-intervention basically means that foreign powers (and primarily the U.S.) should not intervene in the internal affairs of Latin American countries. Within the region, some forms of intervention may be necessary in order to preserve Latin American independence or institutions. Thus, the current Argentine government has condemned Colombia’s military agreement with the U.S. (because this agreement gives American troops access to Colombian military bases), has broken diplomatic relations with Honduras following the overthrow of President Zelaya, and has not recognized Lobo’s successor’s administration.

These ideal types are quite coherent cultural frameworks, which roughly correspond to what are commonly known as the liberal (in both the economic and political senses of the term) and populist ideologies. In contemporary Argentina, the

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<sup>22</sup> Waisman.

mentality of the Kirchner administration, the sector of Perónism supporting it, and the most important groups to the left of the current government could be considered a moderate version of the “global South” worldview. The “emerging market” position, on the other hand, would be a good approximation to the mentality of the previous de la Rúa government, and currently to the worldview of a large segment of the opposition to Kirchner (much of anti-Kirchner Perónism, radicalism, and other centrist parties). However, although ideological frameworks may be coherent, the people and groups that carry them are not necessarily so. Often, individuals, parties, and governments combine inconsistent and sometimes incompatible value preferences. Important groups within the Perónist opposition to the government, and some radicals as well, conceive democracy in a plebiscitary manner, and many radicals and other opposition forces (such as the Socialists) blame the country’s backwardness on external forces, an argument typical of the “global South” position. The first democratic administration, Raul Alfonsín’s, represented in many respects the “emerging market” worldview, but its economic outlook owed much to the dependency arguments. In the 1990s, Carlos Menem’s government adhered consistently in its economic perspectives and its foreign policy to the “emerging market” position (including, in foreign policy, the element of realism implied by the country’s symbolic participation in the Gulf War), but its interpretation of democracy was quite plebiscitary. Finally, the Kirchner government’s version of “Argentina as a country of the global South” is relatively moderate, within the South American context; even if Argentina coordinates its foreign policy with Venezuela, it tries to maintain friendly relations with Brazil and keep confrontation with the U.S. at a low level.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Kirchners have not undertaken extensive nationalizations of foreign firms (as their ally Chávez has); they recognize separation of powers to a greater extent than the typical populist regimes in the region, and their foreign policy does not involve incorporation into the ALBA, the alliance of populist regimes.

## **Prospects**

Countries whose political elites are fractured in terms of their worldviews are likely to experience periodic swings of the policy pendulum (national security policies

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<sup>23</sup> Waisman.

included), as power shifts from one segment to another. This is the case in Argentina: the evidence at this point indicates that the Kirchners will not win the next presidential election in 2011. Therefore, segments of the elite whose values are close to the “emerging market” position are likely to control the government in the next administration. However, for as long as the cultural basis of this value fracture remains, the pendulum is likely to swing back to populist policies at some point in the future.

As far as the place of the military within the state, it is reasonable to expect that, in the next decade, there will be a gradual normalization of the relationship between the civilian government and the armed forces. Within the political elite, the memory of the autonomous military is bound to fade, and so will the culture of tutelage within the military. Moreover, in the next few years, all the officers who were on active duty during the military regime will have retired, and the trials of officers accused of human rights violations will end. At any rate, the most important defendants in these trials are in their late 70s or 80s. Once civil–military relations are regularized, the government will in all probability seek to restore or improve the strategic balance with Chile and Brazil, a policy that will entail substantial arms procurement and the reactivation of standard hypotheses of conflict.<sup>24</sup>

## **Geopolitics and Strategic Culture**

The analysis of Argentine geopolitical elements in the formation, evolution and present condition of its Strategic Culture reveals two complementary perspectives. One emphasizes a longitudinal continuity since its independence, based on five constitutive elements: geography, history, the process of state-formation and consolidation of the national territory, economic relations with the world, and the demographic composition of its people.<sup>25</sup> In this section of the report, only the first three elements are discussed and analyzed in depth. The economic and demographic variables are discussed in the geo-economics and societal variables sections of the Report.

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<sup>24</sup> Waisman.

<sup>25</sup> Alberto E. Dojas, “La cultura estratégica en la Argentina,” paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

The second perspective underscores the evolutionary character of Argentine strategic thinking, particularly since the advent of Perónism in the 1940s.<sup>26</sup> This perspective identifies, on the one hand, the polarization of Argentine society between the agricultural sector and the import substitution industrialization model. This schism prevented any member of the socio-political elite from decisively achieving dominance over the decision to implement a developmental model and clearly establish the proper role of Argentina in the world. On the other hand, the evolutionary analysis maintains, interestingly enough, that while social polarization prevailed in other areas of Argentine society, the military establishment was able to enjoy a significant predominance and autonomy over all military issues, the definition of strategy, geopolitical orientations, and the guiding principles for the use of force. In short, the Argentine armed forces were central to the Strategic Culture of the country, particularly from the 1940s to the advent of democracy in 1983.

## **Geography, History and Territorial Consolidation**

Geography and international politics in the Southern Cone have influenced the continuity of Strategic Culture in Argentina. The national territory is the product of a long process of interactions between the delimitation of its borders and its occupation, the settlement of that territory and the productive linkages with the interior.

When the Spanish arrived in America, the present Argentine territory was sparsely populated (an estimated 330,000 people lived there): there were no large pre-Columbian cultures, but only nomadic gathering groups. Except in the Northwest, where certain settlements were integrated with the far reaches of the Inca Empire, there were no aboriginal cities. The territory was largely uninhabited.

The division of the American continent between the Spanish and Portuguese empires, first by the Papacy in 1493 and second by the Treaty of Tordesillas of June 7, 1494, was insufficient to prevent the Portuguese from occupying territory west of the agreed-upon demarcation. In fact, the mission of Juan Díaz de Solís, which led to the discovery of the Río de la Plata in 1516, was the product of Spanish concern for the

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<sup>26</sup> Rut Diamit, "Pensamiento estratégico en Argentina," paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

presence of Portugal in South America and its interest in finding an ocean passage to the east. The competition between the two empires for territory east and northeast of present-day Argentina endured throughout the colonial period and the first decades of the nineteenth century, even subsequent to Argentina's independence in 1810. In addition to the Portuguese rivalry, the Spanish empire was also preoccupied by Dutch, British, and French involvement in the region.

The actions of the Spanish Empire against other powers in what is now Argentina were mostly defensive in nature. Spain preferred negotiation, containment, and deterrence to war. The use of force by Spain was very limited, and used in specific circumstances to prevent Portuguese expansion and attempts by the British and Dutch to establish military bases on the mainland or on islands adjacent to this territory. The late creation of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata in 1776 was due to both strategic interests as well as the goal of preserving the monopoly of trade over the competition from other European powers. The Spanish military presence in the area, however, remained low. As is discussed below, this concept of territorial defense transcended the war of independence and has remained a constant in the Strategic Culture of Argentina.

Subsequent to the process of gaining independence from Spanish rule in 1810, several areas, formerly parts of the Viceroyalties of the Río de la Plata and of Peru, gained their independence after having been liberated by armies from the United Provinces of Río de la Plata. Argentina was able to retain half the territory formerly occupied by the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata. This promoted the popular belief that the country had lost territory as the result of both military defeats and ineptitude in diplomatic negotiations. The final consolidation of Argentina ultimately culminated in the twentieth century, with the exclusion of the Malvinas Islands and other disputed territories in the South Atlantic. It is thus instructive to subsequently review or highlight the major events leading to the consolidation of Argentina.

In 1825, the only war between Argentina and Brazil began. The Argentina-Brazil War or Guerra Cisplatina was an armed conflict over an area known as the Banda Oriental or "Eastern Shore" (roughly present-day Uruguay) between the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata and the Empire of Brazil in the aftermath of the United Provinces' emancipation from Spain. This war led to the negotiated independence of the Eastern

Republic of Uruguay, as a “buffer state,” preventing in this manner Brazilian access to the Río de la Plata and South of the River Uruguay. A bilateral Treaty of 1857, and an arbitration award by U.S. President Grover Cleveland, established the rest of the border with Brazil on February 5, 1895.

The border with Paraguay resulted directly from the War of the Triple Alliance, also known as the Paraguayan War (and in Paraguay as the Great War). This war was fought from 1864 to 1870 between Paraguay and the allied countries of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. It caused more deaths than any other South American war and particularly devastated Paraguay, killing most of its male population. This war was the last military confrontation to settle the boundaries between the heirs of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. As a result of complex negotiations between the warring parties, following the defeat of Paraguay, Argentina gained, through the 1876 Treaty, territory near the Pilcomayo River, and certain islands of strategic value for the control of the rivers Paraná and Paraguay. An arbitration award from U.S. President Rutherford Hayes on November 12, 1878 granted Paraguay territory north of the Pilcomayo River. The war with Paraguay was the last war waged by the Argentine armed forces up to the outbreak of hostilities against the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Island in 1982.

Despite efforts by three successive armies sent from Buenos Aires to defeat the Spanish imperial forces, Bolivia gained independence in 1825 with the intervention of the forces of Bolivar. Argentina supported Bolivian independence. However, an area comprising the departments of Tarija and Potosí was the center of several militarized interstate disputes between Argentina and Bolivia. The territory in dispute was finally assigned to Bolivia as the result of a treaty signed in 1889, which exchanged territory in the Puna de Atacama that Bolivia had lost during the 1879-1884 War of the Pacific with Chile.

Argentina and Chile share a border of over 5,000 km. The final demarcation of this border was completed at the end of twentieth century. During this protracted negotiation, Argentina had four strategic objectives: to establish the Andean mountain ranges as the natural boundary, to preserve Patagonia to the east of the Andes, to guarantee free passage to the Pacific Ocean, and to possess part of the Big Island in Tierra del Fuego and in the islands further south. Argentina accomplished these four

objectives at the end of the twentieth century, after nearly two centuries of conflicts and negotiations.

In 1843, Chile established a stronghold called “Fuerte Bulnes” in the area of the Strait of Magellan. This action led to a protest by Argentina and to the beginning of a debate about the boundaries between the two countries. The dispute was resolved by the adoption of the Boundary Treaty of 1881. This treaty stipulated that the highest peaks in the Andes would set the boundary-line between both countries. This criterion would set limits to divide the territorial water in the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans and on the Straits of Magellan, the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, and other islands south of the Beagle Channel.

Using the highest peaks in the Andes to set territorial limits between Argentina and Chile resulted in a number of discrepancies that were ultimately resolved over the course of the nineteenth century through negotiation and arbitration. This permitted Argentina to consolidate its presence in the Puna of Atacama and to prevent Chilean presence on the eastern slopes of the Andes. However, two different situations created conflict situations between the two countries. First, an arms race peaked around 1900, in which Argentina developed a modern army and a major naval capacity to match Chile’s formidable naval power. Second, the Beagle Channel crisis in 1977 resulted mainly from the Argentine military dictatorship’s failure to acknowledge the award of the British Crown in 1977 of the islands south of the Beagle Channel. This crisis escalated, became out of control and ultimately brought both countries to the brink of war in 1978. Both crises were resolved through mediated negotiations. The solution to the arms race with Chile paved the way for an agreement between Argentina, Brazil, and Chile in 1915 that consolidated a reasonable balance of power for Argentina in the Southern Cone.

Two additional conflicts evolved between Argentina and Great Britain. The first was about free trade and free navigation of the inland rivers from 1840-1850 (France was also included in these incidents). While these incidents were resolved through negotiation, they were the subject of military pressures and naval blockades. The second controversy with Great Britain over the Malvinas Islands and other islands in the South Atlantic Archipelago ultimately led to the Malvinas War in April 1982.

In the final analysis, the process of state-building and consolidation of Argentine territory and national integrity over the last two centuries since independence in 1810 benefited from the same strategic tools that the Spanish Empire utilized to reassert its presence and control over the same geographical region since 1516, namely: negotiation, pressure, deterrence, containment, and ultimately war.<sup>27</sup>

## **The Evolution of Strategic Thinking**

During the heydays of the agricultural products export model, the port of Buenos Aires became the hub of all converging lines of communications running from the interior of the country. The armed forces played a decisive role in securing, strengthening, and protecting the state and its territorial integrity. But the notion to reorganize and integrate the national territory in order to facilitate access to markets in the Pacific and Brazil never received the necessary budget or the national support.

To be sure, from the end of the Paraguayan War in 1865 to the Malvinas War in 1982, the Argentine armed forces were not involved in any armed conflict. During this period, the strategic focus was to maintain a state of general or diffuse deterrence and containment in the Southern Cone. The objective was to prevent the emergence of a military alliance among neighboring countries that could potentially threaten the national security of Argentina.

Regarding systemic considerations, Argentina did not perceive any direct threats coming from extra-hemispheric actors. Thus, it opted for a pacifist approach, favoring neutrality in great power politics. By the end of World War II, however, neutrality was interrupted by the 1943 military coup that brought Juan Domingo Perón to power. Perón's affinity for the Axis Powers brought Argentina international isolation. While Argentina pursued a pro-Western position during the Cold War, it sought to prevent super power involvement in the region.

From the consolidation of the national territory in the 1850s to the economic crisis in the 1930s, Argentina enjoyed a very high economic growth rate, which in turn allowed it to face several strategic challenges without major difficulties. Those “glorious” eighty

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<sup>27</sup> The above discussion is based entirely on the paper submitted by Alberto E. Dojas, “La cultura estratégica en la Argentina,” Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

years impressed the idea in the national psyche that Argentina was a great power and that it should strive to regain international status. Therefore, the Argentinean people, including the military institution and the political leaders, were and continue to be perplexed by the relative decline of the country in both regional and global contexts. Particularly, two elements influenced the Strategic Culture of Argentina during this period from 1930 to 1983. First, the lack of confidence over Argentina's prospect for sustained economic growth since the 1930 crisis influenced ASC. The second involved the increasing fear of a leftist social uprising. The convergence of these two factors brought a wave of nationalist, populist, and anti-liberal thinking that inspired a major part of the military.

The inability of the agricultural export sector model to generate an internationally competitive and technologically advanced industry influenced the development of a tendency within the armed forces called "industrialism." This trend promoted the notion that in order for the state to guarantee the national defense, it should develop an industrial capacity that private enterprises were either unable or unwilling to produce. With that objective in mind, it called for the armed forces to develop scientific and technological industries, and to be a leading entity in this strategy. Internal and external factors prevented this approach from developing completely; nonetheless, the "industrialist trend" has remained part of the strategic thinking in Argentina. This idea converged with those of a predominantly civilian sector that believed that mastery of advanced technologies for dual uses serves as a major international deterrent, even if specific weapons systems that use these technologies are not immediately developed. According to this perspective, Argentina should seek to maintain a status of regional strategic advantage in the field of advanced dual technology.

The fear of leftist social uprisings, manifested in the social revolutions of the twentieth century, was a major catalyst of the so-called "doctrine of national security," which caused the intervention of the armed forces in domestic politics and, ultimately, made the military an active player in the campaigns of internal political repression and the disappearance of political opponents to the regime in the 1970s and 1980s.

The decline of Argentina has been the result of the difficulty in designing a successful national reinsertion into the international market. Also, it is due to the twin

failures to understand the crucial role of scientific and technological innovations, on the one hand, and the evolution of an industrial entrepreneur class capable of reviving economic growth on the other hand. Since the 1930 economic crisis, Argentina has had difficulty in successfully interpreting the opportunities and risks involved in the international arena.

### **Strategy in the Age of Democracy**

The description of the territorial consolidation process and the analysis of strategic thinking in Argentina bring us to the final part of this section. That is, how best to explain the evolution of Argentine strategic thinking and how it has influenced the use of force since the collapse of military rule and the Bureaucratic Authoritarian model in 1983.

In order to examine these important questions, it is crucial to underscore two crucial features of Argentina's culture. First, it is a fact that Argentine society has been deeply polarized, particularly since the 1940s. The deadlock between the opposing agricultural export sector model and the import substitution industrialization approach prevented Argentine society in general from comprehending the root causes of Argentina's lack of sustained economic growth and, consequently, the place of the country in the international system. This impasse effectively prevented the overwhelming domination of any member of the social elite over the rest of the country, and the development of a homogeneous political consensus about the national strategy. The absence of a national consensus from 1930 to 1983 led to cyclical and multiple military coups. This historical fact may be responsible for the repeated tendency to redefine the national interest, the national project, and the strategic orientation of the country.

Second, with regard to military issues, strategic definitions, geopolitical guidelines and principles for the use of force— notions that should be part of a political debate—all these utterances were predominantly in the hands of the establishment's military. Accordingly, the capacity of the society and of civil servants has always been limited and lacking legitimacy. As a result, it is quite difficult to determine and specify ASC.

This background makes it difficult to grapple with the following queries: What is the strategic model of Argentina? Though which mechanism(s) does the state concert the contrasting interests of the national bureaucracy? How is the policy direction of Argentina in the field of international security defined? In short, what are the means to reach a policy-making process of international security and democratic defense?

One cannot understand defense policy or the use of force after the process of democratization in the 1980s without first considering the need to demilitarize the state and society, and consequently the priority to establish a new pattern of civil-military relations. On the other hand, we must recognize that the military resistance to these policies led the institution to strongly defend its own interests against the will of a society diametrically opposed to military authoritarianism.

As discussed above, it is also important to keep in mind that Argentina's neutrality in world affairs has been an enduring value of the political elite since the beginning of the twentieth century. This is both an expression of the profile of political alliances as well as a desire of Argentine society, in a large part made up of Europeans who came to Argentina fleeing World War II. Clearly, after the military dictatorship, the Argentines understood that internal and regional peace were prerequisites for stabilizing the country and inserted these measures into the international community. Therefore, most citizens supported the decision to prosecute officials of the dictatorship, reduce the role and budget of the armed forces and rely on diplomacy and international law as sources of legitimacy and justice.

In closing, one can argue that democracy is an acceptable continuity of policies with different accents. The non-proliferation issues, for example, have matured in democracy, and Argentina is a committed member of the existing nonproliferation regimes and an active promoter of international peace. Also, Argentina's contribution to peacekeeping missions has remained a key foreign policy objective and enjoys strong support from most of the national sectors. The emphasis on multilateralism is another important principle in the post-1983 period in Argentina's national strategy. Since 1983, two trends in Argentina's international strategy regarding external partnerships have moved the country in different directions: one emphasizes a strong alliance with Western powers, and the other prioritizes the building of a South American alliance.

There is a significant shift in the territorial composition of threats. Argentina has eliminated the possibility of conflict with its neighbors as the focus of military training. No traditional threat perception prevails, despite notable fluctuations; since 1983, Argentina has demonstrated the desire to integrate itself more closely and amicably with South American nations. It is important to emphasize that Argentina has gone through several political and economic crises over the last twenty-seven years of democracy that redirected the focus of strategic issues from international competition to internal demands. Yet, in the past two decades, Argentina ceased to be a regional power and, instead, has projected the image of a distant and isolated country that lacks a strategic projection. Perhaps it is necessary in the near future to open a public debate to recapture the image of the country representative of the majority of Argentines.<sup>28</sup>

## **Geo-Economics and Strategic Culture**

The economic determinants of the use of force in Argentina are the focus of this section. This section will examine, first, how different economic doctrines influenced the economic context of the Argentine state, and their possible impact on the national strategy. Second, it will discuss how the experience of the 1930s and the subsequent advent of Perónism, and how its lingering influence on society may still condition the economic projection of Argentina. Finally, the section closes with a discussion of the correlation between economic conditions and the use of military force in internal and external affairs.

Three important economic doctrines have helped to mold the organization of Argentine society, its institutions, and the economic national context since its independence. These are the Spanish, centralist tradition, the influence of classical liberalism (including the revolutionary experiences against absolute monarchies), and the corporatist experiences of the interwar period that affected the Italian-Spanish dominant vision in Argentina.

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<sup>28</sup> This section relies heavily on the report prepared by Rut Diamit, “Pensamiento estratégico en Argentina,” paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

The emphasis of the Hispanic tradition from the beginning of colonization in Latin American countries and in Argentina was a centralized, vertical power in the monarchy. This was specified in the regulations embodied in the Laws of the Indies. This legislation was very detailed, ranging from domestic and productive activities to the rules of procedure and the monopoly over foreign trade. Further, this tradition promoted the allocation of rights and privileges as a natural feature of the time and power. It also advanced the monopoly to extract resources from the fields as a natural consequence of the exercise of power.

The reaction against the centralism of the Hispanic tradition promoted in part the May Revolution in Argentina, the struggle for independence from the metropolis, and the promulgation of classical liberal ideas. Further, the quest to gain national sovereignty was closely linked to the effort to break away from the Spanish monopoly over international trade. The many and long civil wars in Latin America prevented these ideas from permeating governing function in these countries. Nonetheless, many of these ideas found their way to the mid-nineteenth century Argentine Constitution. This document established the notions of free trade, private property, free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of press and expression, a system of checks and balances, and federalism. Particularly, this Constitution promoted confidence in the international integration of Argentina, migration and unfettered capital movements. These measures brought prosperity to Argentina.

The economic crisis of the 1930s caused major problems in the world, and Argentina was no exception. The fall of international trade and the lack of capital flows hit Argentina very hard, leading to a corporatist backlash against the liberal order that had characterized the national culture and society since the 1850's Constitution. The reaction against liberalism promoted fear of the market economy, private initiative and capital movement. Instead, the country turned to mechanisms of State intervention in the economy, in internal trade and exchange controls. The experience of the 1930s and those subsequent to World War II influenced Argentina definitively toward a more centralized

society, fearful of market mechanisms.<sup>29</sup> As was the case in Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Soviet Union, the reaction against the classical liberalism in the 1930s and 1940s pushed these countries toward totalitarian ideologies and populism. Argentina followed a similar fate by falling prey to the Perónist populism and statism of the 1940s. The economic dimension of the Strategic Culture of Argentina, as with much of its political and social dimensions, is overwhelmingly dominated by the inheritance of Perónism. Perónism, which has been the overall umbrella ideology of the country, is a combination of populism, nationalism, and Latin fascism.

In its economic manifestations, Perónism dutifully reflects the corporate state of Portuguese Salazarism, Italian fascism and Spanish Falangism. An extensive private sector is continuously subjected to state controls and regulations, and responds by extensive corrupt attempts to influence the state in its favor. Thus, a counter-productive symbiotic relationship is permanently reinforced. Populist economic and financial measures lead to recurrent economic and financial measures that routinely produce hyper-inflationary episodes, over-indebtedness and international and domestic defaults. All of these factors lead to a psychological and sociological fatalism, and a persistent sense of lost opportunities.<sup>30</sup>

How do the economic conditions of Argentina translate into strategic action and the use of force?

It is important to examine the role of Argentina's military in two capacities. The first is in dealing with "external threats," which has led it to be involved in interstate disputes. From an economist's point of view, this is the main, if not the only role for the military. This function is justified since the primary role of the state is to provide for national security since, as a public good, it cannot be provided efficiently by private individuals. The military has undertaken a second role in Argentina—one that is not justified by a liberal interpretation of the role of the state—as an arbiter of disputes by different domestic actors vying for control of the state's redistributive powers for their own group's self-interest. In this capacity, the military has intervened and ousted elected

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<sup>29</sup> This section borrows from the report prepared by Ricardo López Murphy, "La cultura estratégica argentina: Una nota con énfasis en sus aspectos económicos," paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Norman A. Bailey, "The Strategic Culture of Argentina: Economic Dimensions," paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

officials to “stabilize” the economy after policies by popular governments have threatened the collapse of the economy and, therefore, the wellbeing of the society.

According to the Correlates of War Project, Argentina has been involved in 36 militarized interstate disputes (MIDS) since 1846 (see [www.correlatesofwar.org](http://www.correlatesofwar.org) for a history of the project and description of the data sets). Of these, fourteen have been with Chile, one with the United Kingdom in 1880 and three more with the UK starting in 1976. Others include three with Paraguay, three with Brazil and two with Uruguay. The rest have been mainly declarations of war against participants in World War II. From an economic point of view, one would like to explore whether these MIDS are correlated with economic factors, or are used to “signal” the military’s resolve to settle the disputes of domestic actors.

The first fact that should be clear is that from 1846 to 1946, there were 15 MIDS, a number which includes the declarations of war against Germany and Japan toward the end of WWII. Yet, from 1947 to the present, there have been 21 MIDS. In other words, during the last fifty years, there have been over 40% more MIDS when compared to the amount that occurred over the entire previous century. The propensity of the military to engage in interstate disputes has increased dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century. Note that since 1993, Argentina has not been involved in a militarized dispute, while the period of military control of the political process saw a very active involvement in interstate disputes. What are the implications of these correlations for an understanding of the economic determinants of Argentina’s use of force or Strategic Culture?

First, Argentina, unlike any other nation in Latin America, was able to experience a level of economic growth that permitted it to have one of the highest per capita incomes in the world by the early 1900s. The importance of this is that early and rapid economic growth, followed by the export of agricultural commodities and large direct investments from countries such as the UK, had differential impacts on different sectors and groups in society. An example of the impact that this increase in wealth had on the development of society is that, by 1884, Argentina had enacted laws that provided for universal, free education to all children. In addition, the political participation of different members of society increased with the passage of universal suffrage in 1912. Furthermore, the general

increase in living standards led to an increase in demand by primarily urban workers (as in all developed countries) for greater leisure, i.e. a shorter work-week and a demand for other non-pecuniary amenities to be provided by employers. The political outcomes of this “income effect” were measures such as the passage of the Ley Palacios in 1904, which regulated labor and working hours, and in 1921, the enactment of minimum wage legislation and the right to strike.

These political outcomes came about because, as we have seen in the U.S. and elsewhere in the developed world, there is a tendency for different groups and sectors of society to attempt to use the state to redistribute income. For Argentina, given its rapid development, it came earlier than the rest of the continent. This ability to “effectuate” the redistribution of income is obviously facilitated by universal suffrage and by a low inequality of incomes. That is, Argentina’s high and relatively equal distribution of incomes stimulated the growth of government. These labor legislations mentioned here, as well as others, did not come out exogenously by the benevolence of government, but endogenously by the political pressure exerted by some groups of society relative to other politically weaker elements. Another factor that tipped the balance toward redistribution was the increase in immigration from European countries that were exposed to anarchical and socialist ideologies.

Historically, Argentina seems to be mired in an internal fight for control over the instruments of taxation, regulation and control over monetary policy (inflation) by different interest groups in order to favorably redistribute income toward them. Within this arena, there appears to be a strong correlation (not causation) that the military is the social institution that periodically intervenes when the economic costs of redistribution policy (deadweight loss) become too large. As the economic crisis subsides, new politicians are put in place, redistribution begins again, and when the economy fails, the process is repeated. In other words, the role of the Argentine military in society (or the internal use of force) has been influenced by economic events. This role dates back to the 1800s with the history of conflict between centrist and federalist politicians. During this time, Rosas established a “military” force, La Mazorca, and in the 1880s, General Roca played a role. In fact, there are indications that the political power of the agricultural exporters in Argentina during WWI influenced Argentina’s neutrality during this war.

The history of military involvement in domestic affairs appears to correlate with several periods of economic turmoil. This leads one to suspect that there is a close connection between economic problems at home and the use of the force for internal political ends. First, The Barings Bank Crisis occurred in 1890. It is the first banking crisis to require intervention by a Central Bank, in this case the Bank of England. This led to riots against Juarez Celman's government and Mitre-enlisted military support, which ultimately launched a revolt against the government. Although not a "typical" military coup, it appears that the involvement of segments of the military ultimately led to Celman's resignation. This was to be the first of many such military involvements driven by domestic economic conditions.

Jumping ahead in history, during the Great Depression, on September 6 1930, the first "official" army-led coup of the twentieth century occurred, led by junior-officer cadets. Although labeled the first, the history of military involvement in domestic political situations predates this event. In this case, unemployment was the major economic crisis. Yet, in future years, inflation and its destabilizing effects became the motivating factor. In this economic environment, there was a military coup in 1943. Similarly, the rate of inflation was 89% during 1952, then fell to 26% during 1953, and rose back up to 79% in 1954. Again, in 1955, there was another military coup. This pattern of economic crisis and internal use of the military continued with the army's insistence that Frondizi annul the results of the 1962 elections. When he refused, he was deposed and arrested. During this time, the per capita GNP had fallen by 8.6%, and it was estimated that per capita income was only 1% of its level in 1949. This process of economic crisis and military intervention ceased after the defeat of the military in the Malvinas Islands War in 1982.<sup>31</sup>

## **The Military, Security Issues and Strategic Culture**

Over the past decades, rapid advances in information technology have magnified the impact of such major international changes as the end of the Cold War. In Argentina,

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<sup>31</sup> This section benefited from the study by Carlos Seiglie, "Argentina: The Military as an Arbiter of a Redistributive State," paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

these shifts converged with that country's own historical experiences, including the legacies of the failed and traumatic military regime of 1976-1983, the disastrous war with Great Britain over the Malvinas Islands, and the determined efforts of subsequent civilian governments to redefine the military's position within a society. As a consequence, Argentina's military has lost its traditional status as a—if not the—leader in defining the national interest. At the same time, organizationally, the armed forces has also changed from an isolated and elite institution, often in conflict with the mobilized, “popular sector,” to a less elite organization with a higher level of integration with the general population. With respect to the political leadership, however, relations between the military institution and the political elite have remained distant and often conflictive.

### **Historical Events and Their Influence on Argentina's Strategic Culture**

The Argentine military traces its roots to Argentina's independence from Spain. Argentine General San Martín formed the first non-Spanish military body that served as a military academy, “Colegio de Honor,” to different South American leaders teaching ideas that combined military discipline with ideologies of a unified America, “Padre de la Patria.” In the late 1800s, the Argentine military campaigned against the indigenous people of the interior, “Conquest of the Desert,” to expand and secure internal borders for use in agriculture and cattle ranching, and cemented the presidential election of General Julio A. Roca. The military more actively entered Argentina's political arena, beginning in 1930, with the first of many *coups d'états*. With the Cold War and national security doctrines of the 1960s and 1970s, the Argentine military found justification for an increasingly expansive role in domestic politics based on a philosophy that identified issue-areas as diverse as education, economic development and popular culture as “security” issues naturally within the purview of the armed forces in its quest to defend against potential revolutionary challenges.

The period from the mid-1940s to the 1950s was critical in defining the military's role in Argentina and, in particular, its relationship with different sectors of society. Juan Perón's mobilization of the working classes in the mid-1940s, and the subsequent effort to “Perónize” virtually all sectors of the society and State, including the armed forces, polarized both the nation and the military. In 1955, anti-Perónist sectors of the military

ousted Perón from office, subsequently purging remaining Perónist sympathizers from the ranks. Historical divisions between liberal and nationalist orientations continued to divide the armed forces. However, the military increasingly allied itself with economic elites in opposition to the increasingly vocal, drum-pounding and banner-wielding Perónist descamisados. In 1962, 1966, and finally 1976, military forces organized in order to oust or block Perónists from power.

## **Process of Change**

The Proceso regime (1976-1983) failed to ensure economic stability, and the disastrous unfolding of the Malvinas Islands military campaign greatly diminished the military's credibility as both policy-maker and defense professionals. Civilians and military officers alike questioned the desirability of military rule. At the same time, increasing revelations during this regime deepened the public's distrust of the armed forces and triggered a notable policy backlash by civilians to determine that this would never again—"Nunca Más"—occur in Argentina.

Government policies reinforced the public rejection of the military's involvement in internal security and politics. The 1988 National Defense Law (finally enacted in 2006) explicitly differentiates internal security from national defense, designating only the latter as purview of the armed forces. Started by Carlos Menem and continued with subsequent governments, the Argentine armed forces participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Policies that diminished military budgets made it difficult to restore the image of professional competence in the area of defense. At the same time, the governments of Raúl Alfonsín (1983-89) and the Kirchner governments (2003-2007 and 2007-present) sought to punish those responsible for the human rights offenses of the military regime. Given the sizeable number of military personnel in this repression—considered by the armed forces to be a necessary war against insurgents—these trials unavoidably contributed to the deterioration of the military's public image and leadership role within the society. As a consequence, military traditions over thirty years old, as well as many customs have changed. The School for Military Justice and the Tribunals of Honor have been eliminated. Hardly any military parades are organized, and the lack of

military presence at schools and universities for recruiting to the voluntary armed forces has had a severe effect on the military's relationship with society.

International trends also contributed to transforming ASC, including beliefs about the reasonable roles of the military within society. Democracy became a renewed priority after the end of the Cold War. International and regional organizations, like the United Nations, the Organization of American States and Mercosur, elevated democracy to among their priorities, thus actively establishing norms and procedures to discourage any return to military authoritarianism. Broader, longer-term globalization increased international interactions, augmenting the influence of the international community on national decision-making and culture.

### **Military and Strategic Culture in Contemporary Argentina**

In contemporary Argentina, the military does not engage in policing, including counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism, other than in the most peripheral of support roles. Likewise, it does not threaten, influence or intervene in the political process.

The military's current responsibilities include peacekeeping and national defense. It should be noted that the armed forces probably has an insufficient budget to effectively defend the country, not to mention the extended borders. Thus, cooperative and diplomatic approaches to achieving security may be not a normative preference of leaders, but a practical necessity.

The military continues to seek to develop alternative roles, such as the defense of natural resource like water. As important as the military's role is the question of who defines these roles. Notably, civilian leaders have set some of the parameters, yet the military remains partially empowered to set its own agenda. Nevertheless, the armed forces have unquestionably lost its ability to oversee Argentine politics in general, including foreign policy.

The military's position within Argentine society has changed in more subtle ways. Reduced salaries have increased the number of military personnel with second jobs. Holding multiple jobs means developing multiple workplace identities, unavoidably breaking down the military's ability to function as a "total" institution and diminishing the cultural gap between the armed forces and the general population. Ending obligatory

military service in 1994 professionalized the enlisted ranks. A 2007 military education reform created an office within the Ministry of Education to deal with questions of military education. One goal of this reform was to introduce more “civilian” courses into the military, with an emphasis on citizenship and human rights, as well as international relations and organizational behavior. Also, the plan allows for military courses at civilian universities.

Overall, the military has clearly lost its authority and leadership within Argentina. Historical experience, international developments, and government policies have diminished the legitimacy of military involvement in politics and contributed to the overall deterioration of the military’s public image. No longer is the military the primary “keeper of Strategic Culture” in Argentina.<sup>32</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Six key analytical elements were established in the introduction to this report in order to set the stage for the presentation and analysis. First, it was established that “strategy” is the mode by which any social entity, from an individual, a group, or an institution, to a State actor, devises a rational (i.e. behavior that maximizes the objectives within any actor’s utility function) plan to advance and protect its interests in any type of competitive context, ranging from personal relationships, sports, markets, and battlefields, to the international state system. Second, it was established that the use of force is one of the tools available to social actors in a competitive milieu. Third, it was established that that, depending on the type of force, actors will develop a series of ideas, attitudes, and artifacts that mold their competitive behavior. Fourth, it was established that, depending on each actor’s individual set of formative experiences, beliefs, attitudes and available resources, the pattern of competitive behavior of players is defined as “culture”—an otherwise synthetic notion that may be used by social actors to differentiate themselves from others, reaffirm their identities and goals, and to socialize

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<sup>32</sup> This section draws from the reports submitted by Julio Hang, “Breve reseña de la participación de las Fuerzas Armadas Argentina en la cultura estratégica nacional,” paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010; and Deborah Norden, “Depoliticizing the Military and De-Militarizing Politics: The Armed Forces and Strategic Culture in Post-Authoritarian Argentina,” paper prepared for Argentina Strategic Culture Workshop, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, February 4, 2010.

into shared patterns of behavior. Fifth, it was established that, for the sake of understanding “Strategic Culture,” or how a particular actor uses force in a competitive environment, it is necessary to be mindful of the unit or level of analysis in question. That is, in utilizing a Strategic Culture perspective, particularly, to describe, explain and predict the use of force by any nation-state, one has to be attentive to overlapping as well as distinctive layers of individuals, interest-groups and institutions that constitute the national political process as it relates to the use of force. Finally, it was established that the national use of force by most Latin American countries has been, mostly, for internal or domestic purposes, and the external use has usually been defensive rather than offensive in nature.

The preceding narrative and analysis of the Strategic Culture of Argentina presented in this Report reveals a number of interesting findings. First, Argentina is a country that has suffered a strong polarization of its society for most of its history. In the formative years of its independent, national history, it was divided between the heavy influence of the agro-exporter sector and the nascent urban elite. The fragmentation of Argentine society resurfaced again in the post 1930-economic crisis, when two economic models—agro-exporters and import substitution industrialization—remained stalemated, preventing a national political consensus and an agreement about the image of the country and its proper role in the international state system.

Second, the country has lived in a nostalgic mood for most of the last seven decades. Clearly, after gaining independence in 1810, the country grew rapidly by following the precepts of classical liberalism and by taking advantage of international trade. The country used its power and forces to reassert its status and to consolidate its territory and boundaries by the mid-1860s. The economic, political, and social boom of the nineteenth and early twentieth century gave way to gloom and doom in the post-1930 economic crisis. This helped to usher in populists, nationalist and corporatist tendencies, culminating with the military coup that brought Juan Perón to power. This was a watershed that divided the history of Argentina and the national mood between the pre- and post-Perón era. The country has suffered cyclical social upheavals, economic crises, and political traumas. In short, Argentina has not recovered its lost power and prestige in the region and the world.

Third, with the exception of its post-independence wars, Argentina did not use its forces for external, offensive purposes from the end of the Paraguayan War to the invasion of the Malvinas Islands in 1982. Despite a number of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) with its regional neighbors, the military was used extensively to squelch internal political and social upheavals. In fact, one study demonstrates a strong correlation between the use of the military for internal, political purposes when the country and the administration in office faced domestic economic problems and crises. A case in point was the post-Malvinas debacle that set the stage for de-legitimization of the military institution and its absolute decline as one of the most—if not the most—powerful institution in Argentina. It seems that that this event signifies the denouement of the Argentine military.

Fourth, there is consensus that the use of force throughout most of the history of Argentina has been for defensive, deterrent purpose, except for the debacle in the Malvinas. Also, Argentina has traditionally opted for neutrality in the major or general war. For example, Perón only declared war against the Axis Powers in order to overcome its international isolation and join the effort of the United Nations.

Finally, it was established that the country remains polarized and seriously weakened by poor economic performance and a serious political impasse between populist and economic nationalist ideals of the present ruling elite and the agro-exporter sector. The position of the military institution is a faithful reflection of the general condition of Argentina over the last two decades. The military is in total abandonment, particularly under the Kirchner regime.

In sum, given the meager resources available to the military, and the dilapidated assets of the armed forces, the use of force in Argentina's immediate future seems to be destined for no more than minor domestic rescue operations, relief efforts, policing activities, and multilateral token operations. The use of force, as one of Argentina's tools of statecraft, appears to be a thing of the past. And it is highly unlikely it will be a significant and effective tool in the next decade. In the meantime, Argentina continues to live in a state of perennial national melancholy.

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