

ROUGH DRAFT

**Paraguayan Foreign Policy: The Legacy
Of Authoritarianism**

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Introduction

As scholars have often noted, democratization is very much a path-dependent process. This chapter suggests that foreign policy decision making and priorities are dependent on the structure and nature of the democratization process. The case of Argentina demonstrates how a rupture mode of transition resulted in a dramatic shift in the foreign policy of the democratic regime of President Raul Alfonsin. All the actors and institutions of the previous authoritarian regime were discredited and replaced by a new structure and interests. On the other hand, the path of Paraguay's transition *from above and within*—provoked by a crisis of internal decomposition in the sultanistic regime of President Alfredo Stroessner—allowed many institutional and structural vestiges of the regime to survive and shape the foreign policy of Paraguay's incomplete and precarious democracy. Moreover, Paraguay's strong caudillo heritage, exaggerated personalism, and weak institutionalization have led to the dominance of the executive in all areas of public policy (Lezcano Claude 1989). Therefore, presidentialism or the overwhelming influences and autonomy of the executive is an important legacy and determinant of Paraguay foreign policy during the authoritarian and democratic periods.

Despite democratization, Paraguay's institutions and bureaucracy are still permeated by patrimonial and clientelist networks. Personal networks and membership in the ruling Colorado party remain the *sine qua non* of public sector employment. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, like many other organs of the state bureaucracy, lacks the professionalism, modernization and rationalization needed to become an efficient actor in foreign policy formulation and decision making. It remains stranded in the improvisation and institutional deficiency of the previous authoritarian regime, highly dependent on the

whims and initiatives of the Palacio de Lopez. In other words, the incompetence of the foreign ministry resulted in a more executive-dominated foreign policy decision-making process. As reflected in the analysis of personalism in Latin America small state foreign policy, “weak countries with limited foreign policy bureaucracies provide ample opportunities for individual leaders to leave their mark.” (Hey 1998:112) This is certainly the case with Paraguay with the important caveat that after 1993, when the executives were weak and increasingly illegitimate, foreign policy was left in disarray because of the vacuum at the top. Therefore, because of the structural continuity and immobilism of Paraguay’s “protected democracy” and its continuing status as a small, underdeveloped and dependent state, the determinants that conditioned and shaped Paraguay’s foreign policy during the Stroessner era have not changed dramatically in the post-Cold War, post-authoritarian period.

This excessive presidentialism and weak institutionalization and participation of society and the state bureaucracy in foreign policy does not serve the national interests of democratic regimes, particularly if the executive branch is itself weak and discredited. This was the case under the administrations of President Raul Cubas Grau (1998-1999) and President Luis Gonzalez Maachi (1999-present) who were not able, because of political crises and weak leadership skills, to fill the large vacuum of presidential leadership needed to formulate and implement public policies. As a result, Paraguayan foreign policy was left ill defined and in disarray as neither state organs nor society had the capacity, interests or practice of engaging in matters related to international relations and Paraguay’s foreign policy interests. Therefore, Paraguay’s foreign policy has suffered from at best, improvisation or, worst, inaction.

Finally, in addition to these idiosyncratic and national characteristics of Paraguayan foreign policy, there have also been important systemic or external determinants that are of tremendous value in explaining Paraguayan foreign policy. The literature on small state foreign policy has emphasized that because of their weak political and economic power base, small states are vulnerable and constrained in their behavior by the structure of the international system (Elman 1995). The international environment is not only an important determinant of Paraguayan foreign policy, but it is, as with many small states, a critical factor in the consolidation of a regime type. Whether it is the Argentine-Brazil sub-regional rivalry, the Cold War and US policy, or the globalization of democracy and markets, Paraguay's external behavior (and regime type) is strongly influenced and dependent upon power relations and paradigmatic changes in the international system.

The chapter will examine Paraguay's foreign policy during the Cold War (authoritarian period) and post-Cold War (democratic transition) periods, focusing on patterns of change and continuity between both eras of the international system and regimes. The analytical section of the chapter will use James Rosenau's (1966) set of explanatory variables of foreign policy (i.e. levels of analysis) to answer the question, "what explains foreign policy behavior and change in Paraguay?"

Cold War Foreign Policy Trends in Paraguay

Since the end of the Triple Alliance War (1870), when Paraguay's economy was decimated and sovereignty compromised, Asuncion has been extremely vulnerable and dependent upon external forces and actors that often penetrated and shaped the country's political and economic system. As a result, Paraguay suffered from marginalization,

economic underdevelopment and foreign intervention. Between 1870 and 1954 Paraguay was characterized by staggering levels of underdevelopment and economic dependence and high levels of political instability, specifically military coups and dictatorships, civil wars, and conflict with Bolivia. Political instability (constant presidential changes and social turmoil) and economic dependence impeded Paraguay from developing a coherent foreign policy that served the interests of the nation rather than that of a very small and narrow elite and/or external hegemon (i.e. Argentina) (Mora 1993).

The personalist-patrimonial regime of President Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) put an end to the instability that had plagued Paraguay for decades. An important factor that helped strengthen and consolidate the Stroessner regime was the international environment (i.e. Cold War). The regime lacked any ideology other than xenophobic nationalism and a virulent anticommunism. Stroessner identified with the West in the Cold War and wasted no time in declaring the regime's full support for the Truman Doctrine. As a result of Stroessner's strong support for US containment policy, Asunción received political support/legitimacy and invaluable material support in the form of military aid and economic and financial assistance that helped prop his regime (Mora 1997). Until the mid-1980s, the international system proved quite advantageous for the regime and Stroessner effectively manipulated it to serve his interests. For example, Stroessner's strong anticommunist stance and the internalization of the US National Security Doctrine regime exemplified the desired objective of exploiting the external for domestic political gain. International factors have historically impacted Paraguayan

politics, and in the case of Stroessner external actors such as Brazil and the US, contributed to the regime's longevity, at least until the mid-1980s.

Fernando Masi (1991a: 3) characterized Alfredo Stroessner's foreign policy during much of the regime as "benign isolation." This approach consisted of discriminating and diversifying economic and commercial relations with select states, necessary in overcoming Paraguay's geopolitical prisonality (and in strengthening his domestic position), while maintaining a "low profile" in order to minimize criticism and pass unnoticed under the façade of "representative democracy." In other words, the Stroessner regime did not seek an active role in world affairs for fear that it would attract attention, resulting in pressures against his regime, but made sure to solidify bilateral ties with states that could directly help sustain his regime. Conveniently, political instability and dictatorship in many of Paraguay's neighbors and US preoccupation with Communism in the region diverted attention from Stroessner's repressive but stable regime. President Alfredo Stroessner, the dominant foreign policy making actor, was skillful in taking advantage of an ideological and polarized international system (i.e. Cold War) that proved propitious for the type of "ideological and praetorian-caudillist" foreign policy that helped him strengthen and consolidate his patrimonial regime.¹

At this point, it is also important that we briefly discuss Stroessner principal foreign policy objectives. First, as mentioned above, maintain a low profile foreign policy to avoid undue attention to the repressive nature of the regime while seeking political and economic support and legitimacy from key allies: Argentina, Brazil and the US. Second, enhance and balance political, economic and commercial ties with the US and the two powerful neighbors. In addition to attracting much needed capital and aid

for development and modernization, this pendulum policy would diminish Paraguay's vulnerabilities. Third, expand trade and contact with regional organizations and ideologically sympathetic or neutral regimes, especially South Korea, Taiwan, South Africa, and Japan. This not only diversified Paraguay's external relations, but provided alternative sources of economic and financial support for development. Fourth, maintain a strong anti-Communist stance in regional and global organizations consistent and supportive of the internal objectives of the national security doctrine regime. Finally, support national and regional integration and cooperation through multinational communication and transportation projects.² In sum, if there is one overriding goal of Paraguay's foreign policy that encapsulates the objectives discussed above, it is that Stroessner sought (with considerable success) to obtain the support of anticommunist external actors needed to sustain the stability of the regime.

A significant external-determining factor of Paraguayan foreign policy was the Cold War and Stroessner's relationship with the United States.³ Stroessner seized and internalized the opportunity offered by the Cold War to align his regime and foreign policy closely with the United States. Once again, foreign policy and security is not defined by a set of national interests or priorities, but by the prerogatives and interests of Stroessner and his regime. Stroessner and his close advisors, particularly Foreign Minister Raul Sapena Pastor (1956-1976), understood that Washington's economic and diplomatic support could be counted on if Paraguay became a fearless defender of US containment policy. Upon assuming power, Stroessner's regime immediately identified with the West. It adopted the US National Security Doctrine that emphasized the use of security and armed forces to counter all internal and external 'Communist threats' – the

lever used by many Latin American dictators to suppress all opposition, while ensuring US political and economic support, critical to extending the life of the regime (Yore 1992). Stroessner became a vociferous anti-Communist, following the US position on all matters in return for aid and legitimacy (Estigarribia and Simon 1987: 20; Abente 1988: 82-87). In defining the principal components of Paraguayan foreign policy, Stroessner (1977: 211) stated:

In international policy, in general, the Government of Paraguay gives decided support to the United States of America, as leader of the free world in its fight against international communism, and we share with this great nation the ideals of justice, peace, rights and liberty, in order that the world in which we live can be more secure and have more collective and individual guarantees.

In addition to consistently voting with the US in the United Nations and the Organization of American States, Stroessner offered, as he said during a meeting with President Eisenhower in 1956, 'Paraguayans and land' (Miranda 1987: 45). In 1965 Asunción supported and offered troops to the US intervention in the Dominican Republic, and in 1968 offered to provide the US with troops to fight in Vietnam (Hoyer 1975: 296). In terms of 'land,' in 1955 Defense Minister Herminio Morinigo told State Department officials that the Stroessner government would sign an agreement permitting US to build an air force base in Paraguay for the continent's defense (Miranda 1987: 72).

In return for this almost unconditional support, the US provided exactly what Stroessner had hoped for to strengthen and consolidate his repressive regime: aid and legitimacy (Mora 1998). In addition to public and diplomatic pronouncements of support, which translated into legitimacy, Stroessner wanted the US to express its

appreciation by offering material rewards in the form of economic aid, technical assistance, loans, grants, foreign investments, military security assistance and trade concessions. Economic and financial assistance was needed by Stroessner to prop up his regime; he used this aid to finance infrastructure projects that were used as instruments by which the government procured a degree of legitimacy for itself. Through the use of effective propaganda, US-financed projects were transformed into government-delivered progress. Finally, US aid was used to grease the wheel of the vast network of patronage and corruption by which Stroessner retained the loyalty of the military and Colorado party officials: the pillars of his patrimonial kleptocracy.

In the critical years of the regime's consolidation (1954-1961), the total US aid package plus loans via US-controlled international banking institutions reached \$53.2 million, an average of more than \$6 million a year. This is a considerable amount when one considers that the total Paraguayan state budget for 1959 was \$21 million (Abente 1988: 83). Aid increased even further during the Alliance for Progress, partly as a product of, but also in response to, the activity of small guerrilla groups in the late 1950s and 1960s. The Stroessner regime exaggerated the influence of Communists and Fidel Castro in the financing and organizing of these guerrilla groups in order to raise fears in, and, consequently, funds from the US.

The relationship, as such, continued until 1976 as the US proceeded to provide close to \$200 million in bilateral economic and military aid to Paraguay – with loans, the total amount reaches over \$288 million (Roett and Sacks 1991: 148; Yopo 1991: 63). The expansion and significance of US trade and investments in Paraguay were just as impressive as that of economic and technical aid.⁴ Once again, relations with the US

were important because of its implications for the longevity of the regime. As Andrew Nickson (1993: 607) concludes: “relations between the Stroessner regime and successive US administrations became extremely close and contributed much to the consolidation of the regime” – the key objective of Stroessner’s foreign policy.

Relations were dramatically altered with the change of administration in 1977 and US foreign policy during the presidency of President Jimmy Carter. The pressure placed on the Stroessner regime to respect human rights caught Asuncion by surprise, transforming the US government from an unconditional ally to public enemy number one (Castro, 1979; Mora, 1990: 83-84). Economic and military aid came to a virtual halt and commercial relations declined. In 1978 Congress suspended all military hardware deliveries and the White House pulled its military advisory group (MAAG) from Asuncion to protest human rights violations, child prostitution and drug smuggling (Latin American Bureau, 1980: 44). In 1978 and 1979 the US opposed seven loans from multilateral development banks destined to Paraguay -- an unprecedented development (Schoultz, 1981: 295-297).

Additionally, as of 1975, trade relations and the level of US investments began to decline significantly (Mora 1997). Although much of the reason for this deterioration in commercial and financial ties has to do with the growing penetration of Brazil and the economic and financial advantages accrued from the construction of the Itaipu hydroelectric plant (Rodriguez Silvero, 1987), there is little doubt that Stroessner, in light of the increasing domestic costs of maintaining good relations with the US, utilized his pendular approach to foreign policy as a means of distancing himself from Washington while avoiding the economic or financial costs associated with the loss of its Cold War

benefactor (Birch, 1988). Stroessner condemned the interventionist character of the US, organizing demonstrations outside the US embassy with the theme that “Paraguay would remain anti-Communist with or without the support of the US;” however, he was adroit enough to make some important concessions (Painter, 1983: 22).

This confrontation and Stroessner’s resistance to US pressure demonstrates that although the US possessed leverage over Paraguay, the regime would not accept any US demand that would result in its demise. No matter how much influence and pressure the US exercised, the regime was not about to commit suicide. In other words, the extent of US pressure ended where the issue of the regime’s survival began. Nonetheless, Stroessner could not ignore and felt increasingly besieged and isolated by US demands. He had to submit to involuntary liberalization.

The inauguration of an ideologically conservative Republican administration in Washington in 1981 was enthusiastically received by the Paraguayan regime. The vigor of Ronald Reagan’s Cold War rhetoric made Asuncion hopeful that relations would return to the normalcy of the past; however, some of the Carter administration’s policies proved irreversible. During his first term, the Reagan administration’s policy toward Paraguay was one of “silent diplomacy,” which consisted of private negotiations and the application of mild pressures in attempt to “persuade” the regime to democratize (Yopo, 1986: 458; Masi, 1993: 133). The objective of this policy was to avoid open confrontations and remain neutral as to the regime’s violations of human rights, while eluding the possibility of openly identifying with the regime. Publicly the administration kept up its virulent anticommunist rhetoric. For the US, the policy was once again placing all issues and states within the framework of East-West relations.

Despite some behind the scenes “nudging,” the administration was publicly sending the wrong signals. It not only increased the Cold War rhetoric that Asuncion had always appreciated and knew how to take advantage of, but it also approved more than US\$420 million in multilateral development bank loans to Paraguay and reinstated military training funds (IMET) during the first term (Bouvier, 1988: 55). The Stroessner regime, therefore, did not feel compelled to respond in any way to Washington’s silent persuasions, despite some aggressive pressuring by US Ambassador Arthur Davis (1982-1985).

However, by 1985 the Reagan administration had reached the conclusion that its policy toward Paraguay was not working, and, in fact, was marring its already tenuous relationship with a Democratic Congress. The second Reagan administration gravitated toward a policy of using economic and diplomatic pressure to induce the regime to cede power. Thomas Carothers (1991) has referred to this policy as “democracy by pressure.” It was clear that when President Reagan in 1985 referred to Paraguay “as one of Latin America’s remaining dictatorships,” the policy of silent diplomacy was being abandoned. The Reagan administration, therefore, because of circumstances that diminished the importance of Cold War ideology in US-Paraguayan relations, had no choice but to continue the cause of democracy, human rights, and the “war on drugs” in Paraguay.

It was Ambassador Taylor who led the charge on the ground in Asuncion. Before arriving in Asuncion, Taylor had been Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters. His appointment as ambassador in Asuncion sent a clear signal that Washington was not happy with Paraguay’s continued complicity in the drug trade. The new ambassador immediately began publicly chastising the regime, meeting

with National Accord leaders, and accusing members of the government and military of human rights violations and of protecting and deriving material benefit from the narcotics traffic (Diario de Noticias, 1988; Simon, 1988). By 1988, after Interior Minister Sabino Montanaro had threatened to declare the ambassador “persona non grata,” and after an incident where police, with tear gas, dispersed guests at a reception for Ambassador Taylor, relations had deteriorated to their lowest point ever.

Another critical determining element of Paraguay’s foreign policy between 1954 and 1983 was Asuncion’s ties with its two powerful neighbors who had exercised influence over the nation’s politics and economic development since before Stroessner’s rise to power. Paraguay remained vulnerable to the geopolitical rivalry between Argentina and Brazil (Kelly and Whigham 1990). Since the end of the Triple Alliance War, Argentina and Brazil competed for influence in Paraguay, often supporting one party or politician (or general) in elections, civil conflicts or factional infighting. Politics in Paraguay became almost the responsibility of Argentina and Brazil, who believed that every domestic issue had strategic importance to their respective interests. However, between 1904 and the 1960s, Argentina was the dominant actor, largely because of Asunción’s overwhelming economic dependence on Buenos Aires. In the 1950s, 90 percent of Paraguayan exports were shipped through Buenos Aires and nearly 40 percent of Paraguay’s trade was with Argentina. Moreover, Argentine investors had controlling interests in Paraguay’s key industries, specifically livestock and agriculture (Baer and Birch 1987).

By the time Stroessner assumed power in 1954, some of his predecessors had already initiated a pendular foreign policy where Asunción played one regional hegemon

against the other in order to enhance Paraguay's autonomy while obtaining economic and political support from Buenos Aires and Brasilia (see, Birch 1988; Birch 1992; Lezcano 1990). However, Stroessner moved the pendulum clearly towards Brazil. More than just reducing Argentina's economic stranglehold, Stroessner was concerned with protecting his regime from Argentine political meddling which he believed was the greatest external threat to his plans for complete control of the Paraguayan political system (Seiferheld and De Tone 1988: 65). Broader ties with Brazil would translate into economic advantages for the nation and political support for Stroessner. Brazil was more than willing to take advantage of Stroessner's preferences for closer military and economic ties and non-intervention in domestic affairs. Brazil and Paraguay shared concerns about the communist threat, particularly after the 1964 coup that brought to power in Brazil a national security doctrine regime. Military and security cooperation rapidly became the cornerstone of Brazil-Paraguay relations. Stroessner maintained friendly and cordial relations with Argentina, but Brazil's massive economic expansion and Argentina's political and economic crises of the 1960s made the choice clear; Brazil offered a stable partnership with tremendous economic and political benefits (Abente 1988: 79).

Economically, Brazil provided massive amounts of aid in addition to signing accords that offered trade concessions and financing to build roads, bridges, and port facilities – all mostly completed by the late 1960s. More importantly, duty free port facilities were granted to Paraguay in Paranagua and Concepción and, after years of negotiation and study, began construction on the \$12 billion Itaipu dam that became a great source of wealth to the Paraguayan economy. Finally, changes in trade patterns were also significant. Paraguay's exports to Brazil increased from less than 1 percent in

1965 to 25 percent by 1981. Imports experience a similar trend (Rodriguez Silvero 1987: Franco 1988). Therefore, as Alfredo da Mota Menezes describes, Brazil, principally for geopolitical reasons (though there were some economic gains to be made), was more than happy to provide Paraguay with another “economic lung” that would free it from its historical dependency on Argentina. Stroessner, in turn, much like it did with the US, used Brazilian economic and political support to diminish Argentine dominance and to strengthen his domestic position (da Mota Menezes 1990).

As in the case of the United States, relations with Paraguay’s neighbors deteriorated in the 1980s as significant regional and international shifts began to take shape. In the context of democratization and the waning of the East-West conflict, the Stroessner regime gradually became isolated from the international system. Paraguay could not fend off democratic contagion and the overwhelming pressures emanating from its traditional partners in South America and the United States (Bostrom 1994). Argentine President Raul Alfonsin was particularly vocal and active in his opposition of the Stroessner regime, often supporting its political enemies in Paraguay and working to isolate Paraguay in international fora, like the OAS and sub-regional summit meetings of the Rio Group and Southern Cone. Specifically, President Alfonsin provided support and refuge to democratic opposition members of the National Accord Brazil, which antagonized Stroessner and nearly led to a breaking off of diplomatic relations (Fournier 1999: 58). Brazil became a diplomatic battleground. Asuncion lobbied hard to stay in the good graces of Brasilia while Buenos Aires, Montevideo and the democratic opposition engaged in intense lobbying to convince President Jose Sarney of the need to pressure and isolate the Stroessner regime. Brazil, though maintaining a more friendly and

“opportunistic” posture, eventually, by 1987, began pressuring Asunción to grant some political concessions to demands from Stroessner’s domestic opposition and the international community for liberalization (Fernandez and Simon 1987).⁵ Finally, in international organizations, such as the OAS and the Rio Group, Paraguay found itself isolated and criticized for its human rights violations.

Moreover, cooperation and economic integration between Brazil and Argentina (and after 1987 Uruguay) made Stroessner’s pendulum foreign policy obsolete and ineffective. Paraguay was not just isolated politically, it was also denied membership into an emerging regional economic regime, such as trade integration in the Southern Cone that further damaged and marginalized its already ravaged economy.⁶ Excluded both from the club of democratic nations and from the process of regional economic integration, saddled with an incompetent foreign ministry and an ill and senile caudillo, Paraguay lost the opportunity to have its voice heard in the post-Cold War era of growing Latin American cooperation (Masi 1997: 176). Stroessner’s response to these transformations was to retreat to the bunker of anti-Communist and ideological-praetorian rhetoric and non-interventionism that made no sense in the new emerging regional and international context. It seems that as Paraguay and the international system changed the regime and its foreign policy remained stubbornly stranded in the previous era of the Cold War and national security doctrine regimes. For example, Asunción enhanced its ties with the few remaining anticommunist regimes in Taiwan and South Korea while hosting several meetings in the late 1980s of the World Anti-Communist League (Simon 1990b). In the end, the regime’s Cold War foreign policy was antiquated and inadequate to meet the challenges of the newly emerging regional and global system.

Post-Cold War Foreign Policy Trends

In terms of foreign policy, there has been no significant change and only shifts in emphases. The transition and the new international context of the post-Cold War period dramatically altered the regional and global context of Paraguay's international relations. However, its foreign policy has not been successful in adapting itself to the new context, largely because of the institutional and administrative deficiencies of the new democratic regime. As a result, Paraguay lacks a cohesive, well-defined and articulated foreign policy. Therefore, immobilism and improvisation have characterized Paraguayan foreign policy (Simon 1990d). Two Paraguayan scholars of international relations describe the country's foreign policy as "presidential," – because of the dominance of the executive – and "dragged," with respect to how Paraguay is pulled and pressured into regional political organizations and economic integration arrangements by its neighbors (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) (Masi and Simon 1993; Masi 1991b). The absence of a professional diplomatic service coupled with the level of bureaucratic politicization institutionalized by Paraguayan sectarianism allowed foreign policy to be manipulated by ambitious politicians as in the case of former Foreign Minister Luis Maria Argaña. The incompetence and passivity of the foreign ministry coupled with the tradition of caudillism are the principal reasons why foreign policy was entrusted or delegated to the Palace of Lopez and regional capitals.

From the time General Andres Rodriguez staged his successful coup on 3 February 1989 and was elected president three months later, the most notable feature of his government's foreign policy was the active and personal diplomacy of the executive, characterized by the frequency and intensity of his international contacts (Yopo 1989).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the leadership of Luis Maria Argaña (1989-1990), a long-time Colorado party boss with no experience in international relations, was plagued by the legacy and weight of the previous regime's bureaucratic perversions. Argaña showed little interest in foreign policy matters and spent most of his time engaged in domestic politics, using the ministry as a staging point for his political ambitions.⁷ The ministry was incapable of redefining a modern and coherent national foreign policy, mostly because the ministry itself lacked a modern and professional structure and personnel sufficiently independent of partisan politics.

The foreign ministry continued to operate under the same ideological, anticommunist paradigm of the previous regime until 1991, and only changed course, not because of a process of modernization but by simply being "dragged" along by changes in the international system (i.e. collapse of communism in the USSR and regional political and economic cooperation). Argaña's replacement, Alexis Frutos Vaesken, made an effort at reforming and modernizing the foreign ministry, but it was largely superficial and insufficient to turn the ministry from a passive observer to an active participant of the nation's international relations.

As a result of these limitations, the responsibility of reintegrating Paraguay into the international system, particularly the Rio Group and the regional economic integration process, fell to Paraguay's neighbors (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) who pushed President Rodriguez to take the lead in accelerating Asunción's participation in light of the deficiencies of the foreign ministry (Masi 1991b: 12). For example, Uruguayan President Julio Sanguinetti directly pleaded and convinced President Rodriguez to attend the 1989 inauguration of Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora in

order to end a long-standing bitter relationship and begin the process of regional infrastructure integration. Moreover, upon the insistence of Argentina and Uruguay, Paraguay was invited to join the Rio Group. In 1990 it was President Sanguinetti that initiated the process by which Paraguay was invited to participate in the regional economic integration process that ultimately led to the signing of the Treaty of Asunción (1991) and the creation of the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) (Masi 1993). Despite these cases of successful “pull,” there were many opportunities that were squandered because of the absence of a coherent and functional foreign policy bureaucracy. For example, Paraguay’s role in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Asuncion was minimal at best. The lack of experts of economic integration and negotiations in the foreign ministry resulted in Uruguay taking on the role of Paraguay’s negotiator (Masi, 1990). As can be expected, Uruguay and Paraguay’s interests did not always coincide. Therefore, the failure to respond to new opportunities with regard to neighboring countries revealed the limitations of the Rodriguez policy of presidential diplomacy, the absence of expert advisers on foreign policy formulation and the weakness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when faced with new challenges and opportunities (Simon, 1995a).

The Rodriguez administration (1989-1993) pursued three key foreign policy objectives: (1) end Paraguay’s international isolation from which it suffered during the latter years of the Stroessner era; (2) reactivate a ravaged economy by joining regional economic integration systems and attracting foreign investments and credits; and (3), perhaps the most important objective, overcome his reputation of a corrupt *Stroonista* and seek international support for his government. President Rodriguez considered such

support and the reintegration of Paraguay into the community of democratic nations to be vital to the regime's legitimacy (see, Simon 1989; Salum Flecha 1989; Labra 1990). His government hoped that by demonstrating a commitment to democracy and economic reform, Paraguay would gain access to foreign investments, trade concessions and credit that were needed to reactivate the economy and sustain the process of democratization. In other words, Rodriguez considered international support of his regime and the transition process a critical requirement for domestic legitimacy. Interestingly, the external factor, which had played a secondary role in the demise of the Stroessner regime, acquired new potency and relevance to the strength and legitimacy of the Rodriguez government. The weakness of Paraguay's democracy has made external actors particularly influential in mediating conflict and strengthening institutions (Mora 2000).

Since the president's image and legitimacy was so intricately linked to Paraguay's reintegration into an international system -- one that insisted on democratic rule for participation -- Rodriguez expressed in international fora a strong commitment to the strengthening of democracy in the country. For example, he constantly assured the international community that he would not seek re-election or extend his rule beyond 1993. President Rodriguez immediately ratified the Pact of San Jose (American Convention on Human Rights) and signed other agreements that demonstrated his commitment to democracy and human rights. The president dropped the virulent ideological-praetorian content of the previous regime's foreign policy, and replaced Stroessner's pendulum policy with a more balanced approach in its relations with Argentina and Brazil. President Rodriguez made a concerted effort to mend relations with Argentina. He had four private visits with Argentine President Carlos Menem and

signed a series of agreements on trade, communication, customs, and transportation, and moved toward resolving pending problems concerning the Yacyreta hydroelectric plant and the Rio Pilcomayo ecological dispute (Simon 1991). In terms of Brazil, relations maintained their steady course with respect to trade and investments, while diplomatic contacts and negotiations on Itaipu and foreign debt were emphasized. In the end, as Paraguayan analyst Fernando Masi (1997: 180) asserts, “the Rodriguez government sought to avoid conflict with neighboring countries for fear that it might hinder its overriding diplomatic objective of securing a new democratic image for the country.”

The Rodriguez government also considered improving relations with the United States a key priority of its foreign policy. Again, Asunción understood that US approval of Rodriguez and his government was an essential condition for Paraguay’s reinsertion into the international system, which would translate into certain economic benefits needed to reactivate the economy and consolidate democratic rule. The fact that the US stood as the ‘only superpower’ in the post-Cold War period and as leader of the ‘free and democratic world’ had tremendous symbolic meaning for Paraguayan elites and a regime that desperately sought to translate international support into domestic legitimacy (Mora 1997: 71). United States support not only helped in promoting a new democratic image in the international arena, it also strengthened Rodriguez’s position against the opposition and sectors of the Colorado party that was opposed to the transition. In the end, Paraguayan policy toward the US during the transition did not change much from that of the previous authoritarian regime. Asunción still looked to the US for support, much as Stroessner did during the Cold War. The US continued to play a pivotal role in regime stability and consolidation.

The Bush administration not only conferred recognition and full support for the Rodriguez government; it also restored General System of Preferences (GSP) trade concessions and military assistance and cooperation agreements. Between 1989 and 1992 there were five visits by US political and diplomatic officials, including Vice-President Dan Quayle. During the same period, five visits by high military officials, mostly from US Southern Command, visited Asunción to restore and enhance military and anti-narcotics cooperation and to observe several joint operation exercises. Rodriguez effectively translated the presence and expression of support from US officials into domestic legitimacy by holding up the US stamp of approval as a necessary requirement for legitimacy (abc color 1991).

Since 1993 Paraguay's democracy has been under tremendous stress and pressure from authoritarian enclaves (particularly within the Colorado party and armed forces), socioeconomic deterioration, labor protests, and weak and ineffective institutions, all of which eroded the credibility of the government and regime. As a result, governments and society looked inward concerned with threats to the democratic system while completely disregarding critical foreign policy issues. The government and society, particularly political parties, were too engrossed in domestic political crises to engage in an open and effective debate on foreign policy. The bureaucratic-administrative structures remained highly politicized and corrupt, incapable of meeting the political, economic and international challenges of Paraguay.

The fragility of Paraguay's democracy and political impotence of President Juan Carlos Wasmosy (1993-1998), who was beholden to civil-military interests that had brought him to power, increased the degree to which Paraguay relinquished responsibility

for not only its international relations, but the stability of the transition, to regional neighbors and other external actors, such as the OAS, Mercosur, and the United States. The predominant role played by these external actors in safeguarding democracy from an internal threat in April 1996 confirms the extent to which external actors impact and shape the domestic.⁸ In other words, a weak president (owing his presidency to an alliance of civilian and military nationalists opposed to an active foreign policy agenda for Paraguay) grappling insurmountable domestic challenges, specifically the indefatigable threat from General Lino Oviedo, further crippled public policy making. As a result, a number of important foreign policy matters remained unresolved, such as the Rio Pilcomayo dispute with Argentina, fluctuating relations with the US (drug trafficking and intellectual property), Itaipu renegotiations, Mercosur and a deteriorating international image. In each of these cases, the Wasmosy administration did not fashion a response nor did it formulate a national policy to effectively deal with these issues in favor of Paraguayan interests (Simon 2001). In other words, the need to focus inward diverted attention and the interest away from framing a foreign policy that a complex and challenging international system required.

Although the Rodriguez administration suffered from excessive presidentialism and “drag” in its foreign policy, it was able to design a policy consistent with the stated interest and objectives of the president (i.e. improve his stained reputation and consolidate the democratic regime). However, the weakness and increasing illegitimacy of President Wasmosy created a vacuum that contributed to a foreign policy that can only be characterized as suffering from drift and near total neglect. Initially, President Wasmosy tried to personalize Paraguay’s international relations by taking an inordinate

amount of foreign trips attempting to establish a direct and personal relationship with other presidents. However, Paraguay's incomplete and precarious democracy, exacerbated by a distraught president and a public disinterested in international matters, contributed to disarray and neglect of foreign policy (Rehren 1994). As a result, Paraguay's international image and interests suffered (Simon 1995b: 10).

This situation of foreign policy inaction worsened as Paraguay sunk deeper into political crises after President Wasmosy left office in August 1998. The embattled administrations of President Raul Cubas (1998-1999) and President Luis Gonzalez Macchi (1999 – present) continued to lack the strength, legitimacy and focus to address critical foreign policy issues, such as challenges emanating from disputes within Mercosur. Between January 1998 and August 2001 Paraguay had three presidents and eight foreign ministers. Moreover, during this period, there were several impeachment proceedings held against each president, the assassination of Vice-President Luis Maria Argana, two failed coup attempts, over a dozen labor and peasant strikes and protests (including road blocks), and a quickly deteriorating socioeconomic crisis. The lack of leadership in the executive and the relative disinterest of the legislature and society (deeply preoccupied with the deteriorating domestic situation) in regional and global matters of importance to Paraguay's national interest, contributed to what can best be characterized as a nation without a foreign policy.

Paraguayan Foreign Policy: Levels of Analysis

Any analyst comparing Paraguayan foreign policy before and after the end of the Cold War and the inception of democratization in 1989 would be surprised to discover the degree of consistency in the potency of several of the key variables or levels of

analysis used to explain foreign policy. That is to say, using some of James Rosenau's (1966) sets of explanatory variables of foreign policy – particularly, idiosyncratic (individual), governmental (domestic), and systemic – we find no significant difference in the weight of the variables used to explain the foreign policies of Paraguay's authoritarian and democratic regimes. This is not unique to Paraguay. In fact, it is typical of small (in terms of perception) vulnerable states, like Paraguay, that have a long tradition of isolation, underdevelopment, dependency and patrimonial-authoritarian rule. Paraguay's long tradition of personalism and autocratic rule, since before the patrimonial-authoritarian regime of President Alfredo Stroessner, emphasizes the role of leadership or the executive over the legislature and society in foreign policy decision-making. The important difference, however, between authoritarian and democratic regimes is that under the former, foreign policy was designed solely by and for the interests of the authoritarian ruler, while in the latter, if there is an absence of a decisive and respected executive (in a society accustomed to the centralization of authority and decision making) foreign policy falls into disarray. The importance of idiosyncratic, or voluntarist, factors in the making of foreign policy, therefore, should be underlined.

The importance of political culture in foreign policy has been studied (Ebel, et al 1991). Latin American foreign policy, more so than domestic policy, has traditionally been the preserve of the executive and a narrow elite. In stable monistic regimes, like Paraguay, where there is a high concentration of power and authority in the caudillo, the chief executive enjoys sweeping autonomy in foreign policy (Ferguson 1987: 149). One basic and enduring factor of Paraguayan foreign policy is its geographic and cultural isolation (Gonzalez 1990). Paraguay's vulnerable geographic position as a landlocked,

buffer state between two powerful and menacing neighbors was an overwhelming determinant of Stroessner's foreign policy. In other words, feelings of insecurity and vulnerability caused by geopolitics and defeat in the Triple Alliance War contributed to certain hermetic and nationalist attitudes that shaped its politics (patrimonial-authoritarianism) and foreign policy (chauvinism and low profile) well into the Stroessner period. Therefore, in addition to the tradition of Guarani culture and Spanish social organization, geographic isolation and dependence reinforced and enhanced the authoritarian, paternalistic, and fatalistic political tradition of Paraguay. As Joseph Pincus (1968: 6) notes, Paraguay's traditional culture and vulnerable international situation influenced its domestic political system:

Paraguay's increasing struggle to consolidate its independence, defend its frontiers, and integrate national territory into a defensible political unit has created and perpetuated the tradition of strong personal, authoritarian rule and a highly centralized paternalistic administration of the country.

Few observers would consider Alfredo Stroessner's personalist-patrimonial regime to be an aberration of Paraguayan political history. In fact, the regime was the result and culmination of a long history of authoritarianism, caudillism, corruption, foreign machination, and political party factionalism that plagued Paraguay since independence.⁹ The only difference is that the *Stronato* was a more sophisticated, modern and institutionalized form of autocratic rule consistent with the "neo-sultanistic" type of regime, in which the "binding norms and relations of bureaucratic administration are constantly subverted by personal fiat of the ruler."¹⁰ Therefore, one of the central determining factors of Paraguayan foreign policy was the absolute concentration of

power in the hands of the patrimonial ruler. Paraguay's geopolitical and cultural isolation and the concomitant ideological tradition of national-chauvinism enhanced the position and power of *el actor único* in the decision-making process of foreign policy. As a result of the monopolization and personalization of power, the foreign policy of Paraguay was categorically designed and executed by *el actor único*.¹¹ Stroessner made all the important and minor foreign policy decisions.

As described above, the importance of *el actor unico* in foreign policy decision-making continued during the transition. Foreign policy remained very much within the purview of the executive and his close aides. In fact, President Rodriguez, in relation to Stroessner, who in the last few years of the regime seemed to devolve foreign policy authority to others in the executive branch, enhanced the degree to which the Palacio de Lopez reasserted full control over foreign policy. Distrust between the president and a highly political foreign minister and Rodriguez's desire to clean his reputation and enhance his democratic credentials led to strong presidentialism in Paraguay's foreign policy.

It comes to reason that Paraguay's political culture and deep-seated tradition of executive dominance over public policy issues will contribute to confusion and disarray when presidents in a democratic system are weak, illegitimate and discredited (Abente 1996). This was the case with President Wasmosy who was beholden to authoritarian civil-military interests that brought him to power in less than free and fair party and general elections (Nickson 1997). The political impotence of the president and threats to his government and the democratic regime did not allow for the formulation and implementation of a coherent foreign policy. Important regional and global matters

surfaced that required Asuncion's attention, but the political crises coupled with weakness and disorientation in the executive left issues such as Mercosur, Itaipu and drug trafficking unattended at a tremendous cost to the country. Needless to say, a strategic vision of Paraguayan foreign policy was never formulated in light of the vacuum and disarray at the top. This condition was exacerbated under Presidents Cubas and Gonzalez Macchi who showed no interest or knowledge of foreign policy, and, as a result, Paraguay was unable to confront the challenges and opportunities that regional and global developments had to offer. In short, the absence of a strong and respected executive in a system that required decisive leadership at the top, coupled with the deterioration of Paraguay's democratic institutions, has contributed to uncertainty, paralysis and negligible public policy outcomes.

At the governmental or domestic level, we find no real role, influence or interest in foreign policy matters. The autocratic and patrimonial structure of the Stroessner regime secured a pliant and weak bureaucracy and society that were penetrated and absorbed by the dictatorship. By 1959 Stroessner had skillfully penetrated and seized the state bureaucracy and society, specifically the armed forces and the Colorado party. He purged these institutions, turning them into tools of his power and legitimacy. He used the party effectively to mobilize support and repress opposition. The Colorado party monopolized political power and Stroessner controlled the party. Concurrently, he penetrated and politicized the armed forces by introducing political criteria for promotions and assignment while requiring that all officers be members of the Colorado party. The armed forces were further neutralized and controlled, as was the Colorado party, state bureaucracy and "civil" society, by a system of corruption, graft and privilege

that was dispensed to all loyal government and military officials (Lambert 1997). In the end, all government and societal organizations were stripped of their professionalism and independence by a dictatorship that restricted any discussion of public policy matters not sanctioned by the ruler.

Through an adroit mixture of democratic trappings, repression and co-optation Stroessner was able to successfully demobilize and deactivate society, reducing all possibility for political mobilization and public policy discussion independent of the state (Simon 1990a). Paraguay's authoritarian tradition and the strong intolerance and exclusion for things *different*, particularly those coming from society did not allow for much space or patience for societal participation in public policy matters. The social sciences during the *Stronato* were viewed as subversive and ideological and thus only a few programs and courses were offered. Not until the 1980s were any courses offered on international relations. Social science research remained very much within the closed and isolated walls of a few non-governmental organizations like the *Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociologicos* (CPES) (Simon 2000). The lack of knowledge, a result of the regime's repression and neglect of social science research and education, kept society ignorant and out of the loop of public policy decision-making. In short, it was the penetration or "engulfing" of civil society abetted by Stroessner's control and usurpation of the three mainstays of his regime: a mass-based Colorado party, politicized military, and an expropriated and atomized bureaucracy (the so-called triad) and society— that explains not only the longevity of the regime but the absence of any interest in or knowledge of international relations in Paraguay.

This is not the place to revisit the domestic processes that led to the weakening and collapse of the Stroessner regime in 1989; however, it is important to briefly describe the endogenous factors that contributed to regime breakdown and international isolation. Along with economic recession (after nearly a decade of economic growth and modernization during the late 1970s) and the growth of civil society organizations demanding participation and economic equity, the critical factor that contributed to the exhaustion of the internal model of political-economic domination was a crisis within the regime (Masi 1989). By the mid-1980s the frail *actor único* had grown senile and incapable of keeping close tabs on his system as he had for several decades. Consequently, some of Stroessner's more obstinate and ambitious lieutenants gradually began to take control of government responsibilities and Colorado party activities. This led to intense intra-party fighting and competition among factions seeking to control the party and the succession process.

If there is one distinctive feature of Paraguayan foreign policy during transition it is improvisation and immobilism. One of the limitations of a *transition from above and within* is that there is little change in the structure and elites from the previous authoritarian regime. The structural legacies of the Stroessner regime coexist with democratization and political and civil rights. The motivation behind the putsch against Stroessner in 1989 was not so much democracy as an attempt to restore a much-maligned Colorado party-military alliance. The transition relied on the support of many of the political, economic and military interests associated with the previous regime. Democratization provided the means to an end for an authoritarian elite seeking to manipulate and “control the pace and scope of the transition” in order to retain a “high

degree of political and economic power” (Nickson 1989; Galeano 1989). Therefore, change in this “protected democracy” is occurring in the context of structural continuity and immobility. The anti-democratic political culture and the legacy of patronage, prebendarism and corruption impede consolidation and the modernization and professionalism of the state bureaucracy. If there were ever a case in which the old dictum “the more things change, the more they stay the same” was appropriate, it would be Paraguay.

The foreign ministry, like much of the state bureaucracy, continued to suffer from the same institutional deficiencies and politicization. The foreign ministry under President Rodriguez was largely absent with respect to foreign policy decision-making as the executive, realizing the high degree of politicization and incompetence in the ministry, assumed complete control over public policy. The Wasmosy administration’s three foreign ministers (Diogenes Martinez, Luis Maria Ramirez Boettner, and Ruben Melgarejo Lanzoni) were deficient in their knowledge of international relations and had little interest in modernizing and pushing the ministry into the center of Paraguayan foreign policy decision-making. Ramirez Boettner was an experienced diplomat, but perhaps more than any of his predecessors (and successors) reacted negatively to suggestions that the ministry needed restructuring. Moreover, many of the basic tenets of foreign policy stipulated by Ramirez Boettner reminds one of the guiding principles of 19th Century Paraguayan foreign policy.¹²

In the first six months of the administration, Foreign Minister Martinez assembled a group of journalists, scholars and other experts of international relations to present a plan that would help the ministry design a foreign policy for the Wasmosy administration

(Ultima Hora 1993; abc color 1993).¹³ Several programmatic and strategic plans were presented but were immediately shelved and ignored once Martinez resigned and the government's attention focused on domestic political crises.¹⁴ The absence of any significant role by the foreign ministry actually worsened under the embattled administrations of Cubas and Gonzalez Macchi. Between 1998 and 2001, foreign ministers lasted an average of five months in office, each one removed, not because of incompetence, but for reasons of political expediency.

Finally, there was no attempt by either the Rodriguez or Wasmosy administration to include other key government agencies or the legislature in the process of foreign policy decision-making. For example, Martin Sanneman (1995), former president of the Commission on Foreign Relations of the Chamber of Deputies and member of the opposition, noted with some consternation the absence of the legislature and society in formulating a national foreign policy. For the most part, the absence of the legislature was supported by the institution's lack of interest and expertise on issues related to Paraguay's foreign policy interests. If either chamber focused on an issue, such as Mercosur, foreign debt, and the Pilcomayo dispute with Argentina, it was largely to gain political advantage over a weak executive, especially during the administrations of Presidents Cubas and Gonzalez Maachi.

It is important to note, however, that since the mid-1990s several Paraguayan non-governmental organizations, particularly universities and think tanks have developed programs in international relations and foreign policy. In the early 1990s the *Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociologicos* (CPES) inaugurated a program on international relations, headed by Jose Luis Simon, that published several important studies on

international relations and Paraguayan foreign policy.¹⁵ CPES also published a biannual journal of international relations titled *Perspectiva Internacional Paraguaya*. Due to a lack of resources and interest, CPES closed the section and finished editing the journal after only three years and eight issues. The two largest universities, National University of Asuncion and the Catholic University of Asuncion, expanded their graduate and post-graduate programs in international relations and diplomacy. Student enrollment in these programs is growing but the lack of resources and qualified faculty has placed severe constraints on the curriculum and professionalism of these academic programs (Simon 2000). Recently, the first non-governmental organization strictly devoted to the study and discussion of international relations was created in 1997. The stated goal of the *Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Internacionales* (CEPEI) is to “help Paraguay integrate itself more effectively into the international system with the goal of strengthening its democratic institutions and development.”¹⁶ CEPEI is working closely with the foreign ministry offering technical, administrative and policy advice. Recently, CEPEI published two documents; the first, an analysis of the participation of civil society actors in international relations and foreign policy decision-making (CEPEI 2000) and the second, a report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs outlining the basic elements in the formulation of Paraguayan foreign policy (CEPEI 2001). Despite these important first steps, there is still much to be desired from a disinterested society that lacks the knowledge and experience being an effective actor in Paraguay’s foreign policy process.

The foreign policy objectives of the Stroessner regime were centered on using the systemic, the structure of the international system, to sustain the domestic authoritarian project. During the Cold War, Asuncion understood the domestic political and economic

value of closely aligning its foreign policy with that of Washington's. In the 1980s, however, the internal dynamic of the regime and the systemic forces that had sustained the political order for nearly 30 years began to change in ways that ultimately brought its collapse in February 1989. The coup of 1989 appears as the culmination of a series of internal and external factors that progressively undermined the legitimacy and strength of *Stronismo* during the 1980s. In terms of foreign policy, the decomposition of Stroessner and his regime coupled with significant international changes, such as regional democratization and shift in US foreign policy priorities, undermined the ability of the regime to continue using foreign policy to support domestic legitimacy and stability. All of a sudden there appeared an incompatibility between Asuncion's traditional foreign policy interests and posture and shifts in the international structure, i.e. waning of the Cold War and regional democratization. Increasingly, as Stroessner's grip weakened and Paraguay found itself isolated in a community of democracies, the regime's unwillingness to liberalize and adapt its foreign policy to the new international context, led to an obstinate and highly bunkered approach to its international relations that only accelerated its isolation and downfall (Simon 1988).

The systemic weighed heavily on the foreign policy of President Andres Rodriguez, largely because the consolidation of democracy and the rehabilitation of Rodriguez's negative image and reputation abroad could only be achieved by adopting a foreign policy that accepted emerging international norms, such as democratization and integration. As a result, as described above, Paraguayan foreign policy was often shaped or "pulled" by Asuncion's neighbors as Rodriguez was willing to hand over the nation's foreign policy interests to Argentina, Brazil or Uruguay if it helped Paraguay and the

president end their isolation and dubious international image. The result, as in the case of Mercosur when Uruguay assumed the role of Paraguay's chief negotiator, was that Paraguay's national interests were neglected and sacrificed at the altar of Rodriguez's crusade to be a respected leader.

The abdication of Paraguay's foreign policy continued under President Wasmosy despite early attempts by the president to formulate and assert an independent and coherent policy. The difference with the previous administration was that Paraguay's neighbors were less willing to assume a role in Paraguay's foreign policy as they focused on other more pressing domestic and international concerns. The disinterest of Paraguay's neighbors coupled with the inability of an embattled administration to design a coherent foreign policy contributed to disarray, confusion and muddling through of Paraguay's foreign policy (Simon 2001). This process worsened under the very unstable and illegitimate administrations of Presidents Cubas and Gonzalez Macchi. In the meantime, the pace of regional changes and globalization and the inability of Asuncion to design a coherent foreign policy contributed to the Africanization of Paraguay in the international system. In other words, Paraguay finds itself increasingly isolated and abandoned unable to formulate and implement a coherent, national foreign policy that could help Paraguay confront and benefit from the tremendous challenges and opportunities offered by globalization.

Conclusions

This study of foreign policy during Stroessner's patrimonial or neo-sultanistic regime and that of the democratic transition governments demonstrates the potency of three explanatory variables of Paraguayan foreign policy. The individual or idiosyncratic

level of analysis of foreign policy is particularly significant because of the weight of Paraguay's personalist and authoritarian heritage on politics and foreign policy decision-making. The monopolization of power in the hands of the executive is a function of Paraguay's patrimonial culture, geopolitics, and record of despotic rule. Stroessner was the culmination of this tradition, except that he created a political system that enhanced the degree to which power was vested in the executive. The personalization of foreign policy by *el actor único* allowed Stroessner to design a foreign policy whose objective was to help strengthen and consolidate his regime. In other words, it was Stroessner's foreign policy, not Paraguay's.

The role of the president remained critical in the foreign policy of the democratic transition, particularly under Andres Rodriguez. The absence of a functional and professional Ministry of Foreign Affairs forced the president to assume full responsibility for the country's international relations at a critical time when the regime needed international support to strengthen democratic rule. When the executive neglected or was ineffective in pursuing a "presidential" foreign policy, Paraguayan foreign policy drifted and Paraguay's international image suffered as a result.

In the domestic level of analysis, Paraguay's democracy has not been able to overcome the penetration and personalization of the state bureaucracy and the engulfing and atomization of society by the Stroessner regime. There has been no attempt at reforming and professionalizing the bureaucracy, while the legislature, submerged in political crises, has developed little interest or knowledge of international relations and Paraguayan foreign policy, thus delegating complete authority and responsibility to a weak and disoriented executive. Since the transition began, society has also expressed

little interest in foreign policy matters. Universities, non-governmental organizations and think tanks and the media have been more preoccupied with the problems of governance and socioeconomic decline than with international relations, which is believed to be unimportant and elitist. For the most part, domestic actors in society and military remained largely oblivious to international developments of importance to Paraguay.

The other important explanatory variable of Paraguayan foreign policy was systemic. As noted in the introduction, because of Paraguay's weak political and economic power base and its landlocked position between two regional powers, its foreign policy is vulnerable to external actors and strategic realities. Paraguayan foreign policy under the *Stronato* and democracy is conditioned by the regional or international context of the Cold War and the US, Argentine-Brazil rivalry, or democracy and globalization. In fact, domestic stability, in large part, hinged on the ability of the authoritarian and democratic regimes to use foreign policy for purposes of obtaining much needed political and economic support and legitimacy. Small states like Paraguay, with a long tradition of authoritarianism, economic dependency, and a vulnerable geopolitical position, are bound to have a "presidential and/or dragged" foreign policy regardless of regime type.

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Notes

¹ Research on Paraguayan foreign policy during the Stroessner era include, Hoyer (1975); Estigarribia and Simon (1987); Mora (1988); Simon (1990b); Yopo (1991); and Mora (1993).

² For a discussion of Stroessner's foreign policy objectives, see Yopo, (1985); Mora (1988); Yopo (1991: 31-32); Mora (1993: 89-90); Simon (1993: 47-67).

³ For studies on US-Paraguay relations, see Mora (1995); Mora (1997); Mora (1998).

⁴ The expansion of trade and investments is discussed in, Rodriguez Silvero (1986); Borda and Masi (1994).

⁵ It is important to note that despite diplomatic isolation, Brazil, the European Union, and Japan continued to provide credit and commercial concessions to Paraguay.

⁶ The impact of regional economic integration on Paraguay's economy and international isolation is discussed in Simon (1990c).

⁷ For a scathing criticism of Argaña's poor performance as foreign minister, see a series of six articles authored by Jose Luis Simon in *abc color*, July 1989.

⁸ For an analysis of the role of external factors in Paraguay's democratization, see Valenzuela (1999); Mora (2000).

⁹ For an excellent study of the historical and cultural roots of the Stroessner dictatorship see, Lewis (1980).

¹⁰ Description of a sultanistic regime is offered by Linz (1975). For the application of sultanism to the Stroessner case, see Riquelme (1994).

¹¹ For an analysis of the extraordinary formal and informal powers of Stroessner see, Lewis (1980: 105-123). The legal basis of Stroessner's control of foreign policy was stipulated in the constitution of 1967 in article 180, section 6 which grants the Executive branch complete authority over Paraguay's international relations.

¹² For an analysis of Paraguayan foreign policy during the Wasmosy administration as explained by the foreign minister, see Ramirez Boettner(1995).

¹³ The specialists assembled by Foreign Minister Martinez included, Jeronimo Irala Burgos, Carlos Plate, Ramon Silva Alonso, Jose Luis Simon, Ramon Casco Carreras, Fernando Masi, Hugo Marinoni Rodriguez, Juan Andres Cardozo, and Mauricio Schwartzmann.

¹⁴ One very elaborate and detailed study presented to the foreign ministry included, Masi and Simon (1993).

¹⁵ The most important book-length study published by CPES was Simon (1990a).

¹⁶ See CEPEI website at www.cepei.org.py