Democratization and Strategic Thinking:
What the Militaries in Argentina and Chile Learned in the 1990s

Kristina Mani
Columbia University
km148@columbia.edu

Prepared for delivery at the 2003 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association,
Dallas, Texas, March 27-29, 2003

ABSTRACT

Beginning in the early 1990s, civilian political leaders in Argentina and Chile began to promote internationalist strategies of bilateral cooperation and economic integration. Internationalism called for the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes, which had hindered strategic cooperation between the two countries for over a century, as a prerequisite for economic integration and regional cooperation on political and security issues. Leaders sought to facilitate bilateral cooperation by initiated military restructuring and an unprecedented range of military-to-military confidence building measures.

How have the militaries in Argentina and Chile responded to these changes? This study analyzes the evolution of military views regarding the international security and defense policy-making environments in the 1990s. It examines factors that may facilitate learning – the "how" and "when" of learning – as well as "what" the military has learned. Despite different motivations for learning, the militaries on both sides of the Cordillera learned two broad lessons during the 1990s. Individual officers learned from direct experience that military-to-military cooperation could be extremely advantageous; those who experienced CBMs first hand increasingly came to view former adversaries as allies. Collectively, however, officers in general continue to view civilians as lacking in effective national leadership capabilities and in professional expertise on issues of defense. For regional leaders to maintain the internationalist agenda, they must advance on both fronts – deepening bilateral cooperation *and* developing a broad-based, permanent corps of civilian experts in international security and defense who set defense policy and determine long-term strategies for the nation.

Democratization and Strategic Thinking:
What the Militaries in Argentina and Chile Learned in the 1990s[*]

> “Soldiers want to know they are being commanded well, led well by public officials who are prepared over the long run to deal with emergent issues of defense, and who haven’t arrived at decision making posts in the defense ministry due to circumstance or personal [political] debt. Then they have to learn it all there – and there have been many examples of this in the past.”
>
> – Senior officer in the Argentine army, February 2000[1]

Introduction

In her analysis of regional orders, Etel Solingen identifies two ideal types of coalitions that political entrepreneurs attempt to create, internationalist and statist-nationalist. Internationalist coalitions pursue cooperative regional postures that will free up resources for economic reform at home and enable access to foreign markets, capital and technology. This agenda requires military downsizing as part of the means to generate resources for liberal reforms. By contrast, statist-nationalist coalitions benefit from conflict-prone regional orders that require state-led economic agendas and a powerful, protected military-industrial complex. Thus internationalist orders promote regional or international accommodation and economic integration, and generally favor cooperation; statist-nationalist strategies rely on “go-it-alone” policies that eschew cooperation and often take recourse to the use of force, because they hold accommodation to be unnecessary. Internationalist orders are zones of peace; statist-nationalist orders are zones of war.[2] At the close of the 20th century, countries in the Southern Cone of South America – Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay in particular – have made a remarkable shift, away from the statist-nationalism that characterized the region during much of the century, toward strategies of internationalism.[3]

This paper examines how two of the Southern Cone militaries, those of Argentina and Chile, have responded to this strategic shift initiated in the 1990s by new political leaderships in the region. It is worthwhile to investigate what the militaries may have “learned” in the 1990s because in these countries, as in many others in Latin America, civilian authority over defense policy making remains elusive, and militaries remain important *de facto* policy makers – policy makers not in the sense of setting defense policy *per se*, but in terms of exercising great latitude in its execution, and in terms of remaining an important resource for civilian officials to consult regarding military and defense policy initiatives on issues such as conscription, arms purchases, and the execution of confidence-building measures (CBMs).[4]

---

[*] This study draws on a larger research project that examines how democratization affects relations between historical rivals, and how rivalry strategy in turn affects prospects for consolidation of democracy. Kristina Mani, *Democratization and Defense: Rethinking Rivalry in South America*, doctoral dissertation manuscript, forthcoming.

[1] Interview AREA18020. This and all other translations are my own.

[2] Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century’s Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Solingen identifies ASEAN and the Southern Cone as zones of peace, and the Middle East as a zone of war; other regions, such as the Korean peninsula, contain competing coalitional orders.

[3] See, for example, Monica Hirst, “Security Policies, Democratization and Regional Integration in the Southern Cone,” in Jorge I. Domínguez, ed., *International Security and Democracy: Latin America and the Caribbean in the Post-Cold War Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998); on trends in Latin America in general in the 1990s, see David Mares, “Regional Conflict Management in Latin America: Power Complemented by Diplomacy,” in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, eds., *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Joseph S. Tulchin and Ralph H. Espach, eds., *Latin America in the New International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001).

In this study I investigate contemporary military thinking in Argentina and Chile regarding the international environment and the domestic defense policy-making environment. The first concerns military strategic thinking. I focus especially on the armies and navies of the two countries. *What lessons – if any – did the militaries draw from the shift toward internationalism? What events or conditions were most influential in shaping their current conceptions of the international environment?* I focus on these questions with regard to the relationship between Argentina and Chile in the 1990s. The second concerns civil-military relations. *How have political leaders' internationalist strategies affected military perceptions of civilian political authority in matters of defense and national security?* Considered together, the answers to these questions can aid in evaluating prospects for continued cooperation in the region, and for the consolidation and maintenance of democracy in these states.

Data for the study draw on a variety of sources, including information gathered in more than 70 structured, in-depth interviews with officers in all branches of the services, foreign policy makers, and members of the legislatures involved in issues of defense and military policy.[5] It also includes an analysis of archival material, including government policy declarations, military journals, and media reports. The interviews were conducted in 1999 and 2000, while archival material covers the decade of the 1990s.

The paper is in four parts. The first section briefly reviews significant propositions in theories of learning and suggests working hypotheses for factors that facilitate individual learning. The second section assesses the "when" and "how" of learning, examining variations in the motivation for learning in key services of the military in both countries over the course of the 1980s and 1990s. The third section focuses on the "what" of learning, identifying several themes regarding the international and defense policy-making environments that officers in the two countries most frequently identified in personal interviews as being of primary importance to them. The final section summarizes patterns that emerge from the analysis and critically assesses prospects for continued bilateral cooperation and for consolidation of civilian authority over defense policy and the military.

---

[4] In Argentina, the defense ministry has extensively promoted the idea of forming "volunteers for defense," a means to reinstitute military service based on a plan originally developed and publicly floated by Argentine army chief Ricardo Brinzoni. Ricardo Brinzoni, "Voluntarios para la defensa," *La Nación*, 11 May 2000. In Chile, the hotly-debated decision to purchase new F-16 fighter jets for the Chilean air force (FACh) essentially filled the FACh's request to the letter, and is widely seen as a political statement by President Ricardo Lagos in recognition of military professionalism – in other words civilian authorities authorized a major hardware purchase based on political needs rather than on strategic defense criteria. *La Tercera de la Hora*, December 28, 2000. The militaries in both countries have substantial autonomy in designing confidence-building measures such as joint exercises, training, and education programs that have developed since 1996. All of these examples reflect civilian deference to military expertise.

[5] In Argentina I conducted 6 interviews with army officers, 8 with navy officers, one with an air force officer, 3 with personnel at the defense ministry, 7 at the foreign ministry and 3 with academics; most of the interviews were conducted between November 1999 and March 2000 in Buenos Aires. In Chile I conducted 8 interviews with army officers, 7 with navy officers, and 3 with air force officers, 4 with personnel at the defense ministry, 5 at the foreign ministry, 6 with academics or defense analysts, and 5 with legislators involved in defense issues in the national parliament; the interviews were conducted between April and July 2000 in Santiago and Valparaíso. In addition, there were 4 interviews with embassy officials from two other countries in the hemisphere. Interview subjects' names are not identified in the study to protect confidentiality of the sources.

I. Individual and Collective Learning

This study examines individual learning in the military.[6] No unified theory of learning currently exists, although scholars have adopted models and concepts from the social sciences to analyze how individuals learn (e.g., via cognitive psychology), how bureaucracies and corporations learn (e.g., via organizational theory) and how societies at the mass level learn (e.g., socialization theory).[7] Individual and collective learning are two different things. Individual learning is a change of beliefs, or the development of new beliefs, skills or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience. Organizational learning is the institutionalization of individually learned lessons into organizational routines and procedures.[8] Thus organizations only learn if the individuals in them learn and implement their beliefs in a regularized manner. In this study, I shall focus on individual learning in a cross-section of the militaries in Argentina and Chile, which provides a basis for evaluating trends in what militaries-as-organizations have learned.

A general model of learning, adopted by Robert Jervis and others, posits the following causal path: experience → learning → behavior. However, the model by itself says little about what kinds of experience are likely to promote learning, what kinds of learning occur, and how learning affects behavior. For example, individuals may learn from success as much as from failure; they may learn from singular events as much as through gradual processes; they may not necessarily draw accurate lessons from experiences or historical analogy; and what they learn may not necessarily aid them in achieving their goals. Moreover, learning can result in "new lessons" being learned, but it is also possible that learning reinforces "old lessons" that do not lead to change. Learning can also be fostered by epistemic communities, which function almost as "professional learners" and become a source of policy innovation, channeling and diffusing knowledge that policy makers can adopt and employ.[9] This is particularly relevant for policies, such as defense, that increasingly require technical expertise and introduce technical aspects into policy problems. For example, the adoption of transparency and verification measures devised by international nuclear control regimes and agencies enabled Argentina and Brazil to consolidate their efforts at nuclear confidence-building and achieve full denuclearization in the 1990s.[10] An important caveat, however, is that policy makers be accessible and receptive to experts' input. Such receptivity was important, for instance, in the denuclearization agenda in Argentina and Brazil, as well as in Mikhail Gorbachev's rethinking of Soviet foreign policy.[11] In short, we need closer empirical study of sources and types of learning that occur, and our analyses must take into consideration political and institutional contexts that interact to facilitate or constrain learning processes.[12] This is particularly important to better understand how leaders and powerful organizations, such as the military, develop policies and practices.

---

[6] The military, as understood in this study, constitutes the professional officer corps in the several services of the armed forces. While it is unlikely that there will be consensus in any large organization, even a hierarchical one, it is possible to observe tendencies and patterns in beliefs in the military.

[7] Prominent studies of individual decision-maker learning from history and experience include Ernest May, *"Lessons" of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). Prominent studies of organizational and governmental learning include Lloyd S. Etheredge, *Can Governments Learn?* (New York: Pergamon, 1985); Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Nuclear Learning and U.S.-Soviet Security Regimes," *International Organization* 41 (Summer 1987), pp. 371-402; James D. March, *Decisions and Organizations* (New York: Blackwell, 1988). Studies of social learning have fruitfully linked social and organizational learning; see, for instance, Hugh Heclo, *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Peter A. Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State," *Comparative Politics* 25 (April 1993), pp. 275-296.

[8] The definitions follow Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization* 48:2 (Spring 1994), p. 311.

[9] There is an extensive literature on learning through diffusion of knowledge and ideas in networks, including works by Karl W. Deutsch, et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Ernst B. Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Peter Haas defines epistemic communities as "network[s] of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or

I suggest two general hypotheses, one identifying factors that are likely to promote receptivity to new beliefs and practices, and another identifying how critical thinking can be stimulated. I make no propositions on the content of learning, which will depend on specific issue contexts the actors in question face.

1. **Receptivity to Learning.** Individuals are most receptive to consideration of new beliefs and practices when they have experienced *failure* or when they perceive *new opportunity structures*. In either case, these are conditions in which actors are likely to ask "now what?" questions and begin to critically examine past mistakes or contemporary developments.[13] However, receptivity may be hindered if actors are *extremely confident* in their thinking, or if they consider themselves to be *severely threatened*; either condition encourages "closure" and rigid postures, rather than flexible postures conditioned by uncertainty.[14] In short, receptivity to new thinking requires both an

---

issue-area." Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46:1 (Winter 1992), p. 3.

[10] Full denuclearization required existing, successful formulas promoted by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Thus knowledge-based experience, even vicariously achieved, became a basis – along with political will for change – for new state behavior. John R. Redick, Julio C. Carasales and Paulo S. Wrobel, "Nuclear Rapprochement: Argentina, Brazil and the Nonproliferation Regime," *Washington Quarterly* 18:1 (Winter 1995), pp. 107-122.

[11] Political leaders' will to engage these networks is crucial. For example, Mikhail Gorbachev was the first Soviet leader to draw upon ideas kindled in *existing* networks of Western and Soviet academics and policy scientists where these experts had been critically examining both Soviet and American security concepts since the 1960s. Stein concludes: "These 'policy entrepreneurs' were ready to teach when Gorbachev, anxious to learn, gave them a 'policy window.'" Janice Gross Stein, "Political Learning by Doing: Gorbachev as Uncommitted Thinker and Motivated Learner," *International Organization* 48:2 (Spring 1994), p. 178.

[12] For an excellent overview of research on learning, see Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield."

[13] For example, in analyzing how Mikhail Gorbachev's thinking evolved in the 1980s, Stein argues that the former Soviet leader was an "uncommitted thinker" and therefore more open to new ideas. While this notion is unlikely to capture military officers' thinking – their primary purpose is to *commit* their institution to clear concepts and practices – it nonetheless is helpful in that it indicates that individuals may know "what they do not want" but remain in search of "what they do want." In other words, they are not likely to discard old concepts and practices completely until they find viable, successful alternatives. Janice Gross Stein, "Political Learning by Doing: Gorbachev as Uncommitted Thinker and Motivated Learner."

[14] Adler and Haas argue that uncertainty contributes to a search for new ideas. Emanuel Adler and Ernst Haas, "Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program," *International Organization* 46:1 (Winter 1992), pp. 367-390.

identifiable reason to consider new ideas, as well as a certain degree of analytical flexibility.

2. **Stimulation of Learning.** Individuals are likely to be encouraged to adopt new ideas and practices if they receive *stimulation from a broader community of experts* outside the immediate organization.[15] Individuals actively engaged in a network of technical experts who critically analyze prevailing concepts and practices are likely to consider a wider range of alternative options; the more diverse the network (e.g., including experts from a range of specializations and experiences), the more vigorous the debate is likely to be, and the more carefully "lessons" are likely to be considered. In addition, when actors have broad-based discussions and consider their options carefully, they are more likely to learn accurate lessons. When ideas and practices result in *success*, actors are likely to repeat and develop them further, an essential step toward institutionalization of learning.

These criteria suggest the following typology of learning incentives, based on variables of receptivity and engagement in expert networks:

Table 1: Motivational Factors in Learning

Receptivity	Engagement in Diverse Network of Experts	
	Significant	Insignificant
High	**Open to Learning** **Wide-ranging Analysis of Options** Learning and Lessons Likely →Learning Accuracy: High → Lessons Durable ARGENTINE ARMY LATE 1990s ARGENTINE NAVY LATE 1990s CHILEAN NAVY 1990s **I**	**Open to Learning** **Narrow Analysis of Options** Learning and Lessons Likely →Learning Accuracy: Low/Moderate → Lessons May/May Not be Durable ARGENTINE ARMY EARLY 1990s **II**
Low	**Closed to Learning** **Limited Analysis** Learning and Lessons Unlikely ARGENTINE NAVY EARLY 1990s (ARGENTINE NAVY 1980s) (CHILEAN NAVY 1980s) **III**	**Closed to Learning** **Extremely Limited Analysis** Learning and Lessons Very Unlikely CHILEAN ARMY 1990s (ARGENTINE ARMY 1980s) (CHILEAN ARMY 1980s) **IV**

---

[15] This analysis draws on the concept of transnational epistemic communities, introduced above.

Table 1 ranks four types of learning from I to IV, with type I learning the most broadly motivated, potentially accurate and durable, while the other extreme is type IV where learning is least likely to take place. Accordingly, officers in type I situations should be the most receptive to incorporating new thinking, while those in type IV situations should be least receptive to it and are likely to maintain existing belief structures and practices. In the next section, I discuss how Argentina and Chile fit into the typology.

II. Motivations for Learning: The Militaries in the 1980s and 1990s

Table 1 presents ideal types of motivating factors for learning. The major military services in Argentina and Chile exhibit strong features that allow them to be typed into this framework, which shows how their learning incentives developed from the 1980s through the 1990s. It suggests that three of the four services examined here, the Chilean navy and the Argentine army and navy, should be increasingly prone to learning over the course of the 1990s, while the Chilean army should be far less motivated through the end of the decade.

CHILEAN MILITARY

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Chilean army remained minimally receptive to learning. Prior strategic success, lingering territorial disputes, as well as General Augusto Pinochet's continued leadership of the army all fed resilience of existing beliefs and practices in the service. Moreover, the army had limited engagement with defense experts outside the army itself, though it was interested in generating civilian, societal interest in defense issues. Both factors substantially limited incentives for new learning through the end of the decade. By contrast, the navy was more receptive to considering new ideas, particularly as a result of the resolution of maritime disputes with Argentina and the transition to democracy which enabled the navy to take a more prominent position independent of Pinochet's line. Equally important was the navy's growing relationship to professionals outside the navy concerned with defense and international security, so that the navy was becoming increasingly networked, both domestically and internationally. By the early 1990s the Chilean navy was poised to reconsider the new global environment that was beginning to emerge at the end of the Cold War.

CHILEAN ARMY

RECEPTIVITY. Four factors contributed to low receptivity to learning in the army: strategic success, renewed mistrust of Argentina, the institutionalization of defensive strategy, and continuity in the leadership through the 1980s and most of the 1990s.

1. Strategic Success. Chile's strategic success in deterring belligerent neighbors in the 1970s encouraged continuity of thinking. The Chilean army had long maintained defensive doctrines and conflict scenarios for wars with all three of its neighbors and historical rivals, Argentina, Bolivia and Peru. Successful deterrence of Peru throughout the 1970s[16] and of Argentina[17] in the

---

[16] Peru initiated an arms race in 1974, shortly after the military had taken over in Chile. Relations with Peru (historically charged since Chile's victory over Peru and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific in the 1880s) deteriorated significantly in the 1970s into war scares, military mobilization, and continued tension for several years Emilio Meneses, "Percepciones de amenazas militares y agenda para la política de defensa," in Rigoberto Cruz

1978 crisis over the Beagle Channel islands reaffirmed the validity of the army's existing strategic concepts. The Beagle dispute was particularly important, as it brought Argentina and Chile to the brink of war and was the most significant international conflict Chile faced in the 20th century. At stake in the dispute was Chile's strategic extension into the Atlantic, which a 1977 international arbitration decision encouraged by determining Chilean possession of the Beagle Channel islands. Ultimately, in 1984 the governments of Pinochet and newly elected Argentine President Raúl Alfonsín signed a treaty that was a compromise generally favorable to Chile – Chile got the islands, but the treaty respected the long-established bi-oceanic principle of "Argentina in the Atlantic, Chile in the Pacific," and therefore secured the strategic status quo. In short, the Beagle outcome demonstrated to the army that maintaining defensive resolve in 1978, rather than conceding and negotiating, could lead to a desired outcome on security issues, evident in the 1984 settlement.

2. Mistrust of Argentina. A second factor inhibiting openness to learning was the mistrust the military leaders of the Argentine *Proceso* regime of the 1976-1983 period bred in Chile's army. Mistrust has made it more difficult for the army to accept cooperation with Argentina. In interviews with army officers in 2000, many emphasized the aggressiveness of the Argentine military, both in the Beagle and in the war with Great Britain over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands in 1982. Without the Beagle conflict, Chile would have been less likely to support the British during the Malvinas War. According to a high ranking army officer:

> "Chile supported, in my opinion, the British during the Falkland War because Argentina had been a threat. If Argentina had not been a threat [to us] we would have been closer to the Argentines than to the English."[18]

Although a primary source of tension between the countries had been eliminated with the Beagle agreement, other territorial disputes of concern to the army remained. The inability of political leaders in Argentina and Chile to resolve the remaining territorial issues until 1999 was important in maintaining grounds for mistrust of Argentina and inhibiting participation in army-to-army confidence building measures until after the remaining disputes were resolved.

Johnson and Augusto Varas Fernandez, eds., *Percepciones de amenaza y politicas de defensa en América Latina* (Santiago: FLACSO/CEEA, 1993), especially p. 395.

[17] If Argentina had attacked, Chile was unlikely to prevail, despite a defensive advantage, given Argentina's superior resources and larger fighting force. Mares estimates that Chile had a significant defender's advantage, given the professional quality of Chilean troops and well-developed supply and communications lines. Argentina's economy, troop strength, and air and naval power all exceeded Chile's. However, Argentina's economy was more than twice the size of Chile's, and it fielded 137,000 troops to Chile's 83,000. There was also the possibility that Peru would ally in attacking Chile from the north. Thus Argentina's last-minute choice of negotiation over war indicates Chile's success at deterring a significantly more powerful adversary. Mares, p. 142; Augusto Varas, *Militarization and the International Arms Race in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview, 1985), p. 55.

[18] Interview with Chilean army officer, CHEA30050, Santiago, May 30, 2000. In addition, in 1987 information on the extent of the offensive operation Argentina had planned in 1978, including a ground offensive and bombardment of Chilean cities, was published in Argentina and hardly served to reassure Chileans. The report first appeared in the Argentine magazine *Somos* and was reprinted in Chile's *Ercilla* 2694, March 18-24, 1987. Cited in Santiago Benadava, Recuerdos de la mediación pontifica (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1999) pp. 44-46.

3. Institutionalization of Strategy. As a result of tensions with neighbors during the conflict-prone 1970s and early 1980s, the Chilean army refined existing strategic concepts and eventually formulated a plan to restructure the army's forces. Though wars were avoided, the threats from Argentina and Peru encouraged the army to address more effectively its major defense disadvantage: lack of strategic depth. Thus in the early 1980s it looked to Israel for a model of army organization that would best advance defensive capabilities by restructuring forces into smaller, more mobile units instead of traditional divisions. The resulting plan, Alcazar, envisions three military zones in Chile, with the bulk of forces concentrated in the north to protect against Peru, and reinforces the center and south against Argentina. The plan is being implemented in stages, and the first began in 1994. Thus Alcazar, based on threat scenarios of the past, is one of the most durable "lessons" of the past. Even with the resolution of all remaining territorial disputes with Argentina, the restructuring agenda remained on track and structurally reinforces a conflict-based mindset in the army.

4. Leadership Continuity. Finally, continuity in the army's institutional leadership served to inhibit learning receptivity. General Augusto Pinochet remained commander of the army until 1998. Pinochet's motivations, both as a committed geopolitical thinker and as a former national leader who sought to maintain the army's political stature in the new regime, where unlikely to encourage experimentation with new ideas in the 1990s. In addition, Pinochet's arrest in London later in 1998, and his subsequent prosecution in Chile in 2000-2001, were a considerable distraction that suddenly shifted the army from a position of confidence to one of threat. Although Pinochet's successor, Ricardo Izurieta, declared his intention to pursue the modernization and rationalization of the army (based on the Alcazar model), the army's focus on Pinochet through most of Izurieta's tenure (1998-2002) was often primary and inhibited implementation of new strategic initiatives.

NETWORK. The other factor, engagement in a broad-based professional community of experts, remained limited for the army, although the service is keen to "integrate" the public into a discourse on defense issues.

Domestic Networking. Like most armies in the region in the era of statist-nationalist and geopolitical doctrines, the Chilean army was minimally networked into regional or international defense communities until the 1990s.[19] These conditions contributed to low levels of receptivity to learning and to limited engagement with defense experts beyond the army itself. Yet the army *was* deeply interested generating civilian interest in issues of defense, an effort that became increasingly important to the army as the transition to democracy came underway in 1988-1989. According to a civilian academic with close advisory ties to the military chiefs, by the late 1980s the army considered it essential to construct a civilian-military dialogue within Chile over issues of defense, and held that academic circles in the Universidad de Chile and elsewhere were the best forums for such dialogue, as they would be less politicized.[20]

---

[19] Contact between militaries existed, for instance through the Inter-American Defense Board, but a network of defense experts in the hemisphere was non-existent before the 1990s. In the case of Chile's army, historical mythologies ("jamás vencido") and strict hierarchical unity under Pinochet further promoted conceptual seclusion. On the development of geopolitical thinking in the region, see César N. Caviedes, "The Emergence and Development of Geopolitical Doctrines in the Southern Cone Countries," in Philip Kelly and Jack Child, eds., *Geopolitics of the Southern Cone and Antarctica* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1988).

Thus initial efforts came from the army, beginning formally with a seminar in 1991 at the Academia de Guerra (War College) including civilian and military participants. Such ties, both formal and informal, made civilian elite who were involved in the process clearly aware that the military intended to remain an integral actor in the state for a long time to come.[21] In interviews, army officers frequently emphasized the problem of needing civilians interested and educated in issues of defense, of the need "to prepare civilians in issues of defense" as much as construct not merely *dialogue* but *consensus* within a national "defense community" in Chile.[22] Thus while dialogue has developed over the course of the 1990s, from the army's perspective the primary onus is upon civilians to "learn defense."

For the army, such "networking" remains focused within Chile, rather than at a regional or international level. Still, the army has begun to participate in combined peacekeeping exercises such with other Southern Cone countries and the United States since 1998, and in 1999 it accepted formal educational contacts between the Argentine and Chilean war colleges, reflecting a positive effect of the resolution of territorial issues. Yet it was not until 2002 that Argentine and Chilean armies conducted their first joint exercises: Araucania, a computerized simulation exercise of cooperation for disaster relief, though this format did little to facilitate personal contacts between Argentine and Chilean officers. As one Chilean officer was clear to note, army-to-army ties depend on the will of the two general staffs, rather than on political directives. "The governments and defense ministries seek the best possible line of contact, but each service contributes what it can realistically achieve in its separate areas."[23] These developments suggest that the Chilean military is participating in two separate dialogues, a domestic one with civilians, and a newer bilateral one with other militaries, and that it sees these as two very separate domains of engagement.

CHILEAN NAVY

RECEPTIVITY. Resolution of the Beagle dispute was an important starting point for the rethinking of strategy in the Chilean navy in the 1990s. The Beagle outcome affected navy thinking in two important ways: it was perceived at first as a strategic loss, but it also eliminated the main grounds for conflict with Argentina.

1. Beagle Outcome as a Loss. The outcome of the Beagle dispute encouraged the navy to strike a more independent institutional and strategic stand within the armed forces. The Chilean navy had maintained strategic concepts similar to the army's (e.g., defensive doctrines, conflict

---

[20] Interview with civilian academic, CHCPP24050, Santiago, May 24, 2000; interview with senior Chilean army officer, CHEOE06060, Santiago, June 6, 2000.

[21] Guillermo Holzman, "La política de defensa de la administración de Frei," presented at a seminar on the armed forces sponsored by SER en el 2000, Buenos Aires, June 7, 1994.

[22] See, for instance, the introductory statement in Chile's Defense White Book, published in 1998, which emphasizes as its primary purpose as "advance the development of citizens' consciousness of the value of defense as a project for all" Chileans, and subsequently emphasizes the importance of "creating a dynamic National Defense Community." *Libro de la Defensa Nacional de Chile* (Santiago: Ministerio de Defensa, 1998), pp. 17, 19.

[23] CHEA30050.

scenarios with Peru and Argentina) and similarly viewed the 1978 outcome as vindication of these. However, while the final settlement of the Beagle in 1984 ended the century-old dispute, it did so unfavorably in the opinion of navy leaders who considered the settlement a betrayal by Pinochet, surrendering Chile's right, accorded in the 1977 arbitration, to project itself into the Atlantic. From the navy commander at the time, Admiral Merino, to the contemporary high command, this sentiment remains strong, even in 2000:

> "The treaty, in my opinion, was a loss…. We surrendered much territory to Argentina, especially maritime territory…obviously we were not going to take it all [the Atlantic passages], but [the treaty] went beyond what was necessary.[24]

As a result, the navy began to take a more independent stand, particularly vis-à-vis the army. As a senior navy officer indicated in 2000, the navy and army have fundamentally different strategic visions:

> "Perhaps the [Chilean] air force and navy do not have completely similar visions, but they are quite similar.… There is no vision of "the armed forces" because we have not considered the issues together. If we were to sit down together and study the issues together, obviously there would be three visions – army, navy and air force – and we could formulate a joint vision, but we are not interested in doing this…. In a crisis situation, very often the navy plays an independent role, its own role [in resolving the crisis], which must respond to directives made by the *political* leadership."[25]

Already in 1990, Merino's successor, Admiral Jorge Martínez Bush, outlined a new naval doctrine, Mar Presencial. This called for new efforts at naval projection into the Pacific so that Chile could exert greater control over maritime resources in the region. It also expressed the necessity for Chile to economically develop its maritime territory.[26] Martínez's successor, Admiral Jorge Arancibia Reyes, would expand this thinking into a clear strategic vision compatible with Chile's participation in the global economy. Essentially, Arancibia developed a heavily territorial and geopolitical vision into one that placed greater emphasis on the navy's role in facilitating and protecting Chile's export-dependent economy and required "international collaboration" in a "new world order" characterized by "transnational economies."[27] By 1999, Arancibia had further developed the vision emphasizing the importance of international cooperation, particularly among small states like Chile confronted with a conflict-prone, unipolar world.[28] Elsewhere, he emphasized the navy's role in achieving national goals of international cooperation and characterized regional relations in the following way:

> "We and our neighbors possess the means and capacity to cause ourselves political, economic or military harm; but indications are that we do not have the intention to do this. On the contrary,

---

[24] Interview with Chilean navy officer, CHAX23050, Santiago, May 25, 2000.

[25] Interview with senior Chilean navy officer, CHAE12060, Valparaíso, June 12, 2000.

[26] Jorge Martínez Bush, "El Mar Presencial: actualidad, desafíos y futuro," *Revista de Marina* 3 (1991).

[27] Arancibia presented his vision, while he was still Chief of Staff of the General Staff, in a speech in the United States at a symposium at the National Defense University in February 1994. Reprinted as "Cambios globales y política de defensa," *Revista de Marina* 3 (1994).

[28] Arancibia's 1999 Mes del Mar speech, reprinted as "Vision de la Armada frente a los scenarios politico-estratégicos del futuro," *Revista de Marina* 3 (1999).

> we have recognized – explicitly through our actions – that the chosen path of our relations is of cooperation and complementation and not of confrontation."[29]

In short, navy leaders' strategic visions developed significantly, toward a more internationalist thinking, over the course of the 1990s.

2. Beagle as End of Strategic Conflict with Argentina. The second profound effect of the Beagle settlement was that it resolved the most significant strategic dispute of concern for the navy, and thus required both sides to reconsider the nature of their relationship. As one senior navy officer remarked, the reduced basis for conflicts with Argentina as well as increased economic interdependence between them has facilitated a complete transformation of their relationship into a *partnership*:

> "For 100 years, the interest in territorial defense overshadowed the possibility of protecting the country's commercial interests…because conflict with neighbors was probable and Chile's international trade was limited. In the 1990s, the possibility for wars with neighbors has declined and commerce has increased significantly. In the navy we have left behind conflicts with neighbors and, looking at global interests, realized that the situation allows us to look at Argentina not as an adversary but as a partner, because we realize that their international trade is our international trade."[30]

The statement clearly reflects Arancibia's internationalist vision, which personal interviews showed to be widely held throughout the navy by the end of the 1990s.

NETWORK. The other main factor providing incentives for rethinking has been the navy's engagement in defense community networks, both domestic and international.

1. International Networking. Given its global (rather than national-territorial) range of operation, navy officers were by the 1990s relatively "globalized" – exposed to foreign contexts and other navies in ways that could facilitate networking. It is worth noting that all of the navy officers I interviewed had extensive foreign experience, either through training at foreign naval academies in Europe or the United States or through several extensive tours abroad. Arancibia himself had direct, close experience with Argentina in the earliest opportunities of rapprochement, as naval attaché in Buenos Aires, and his personal contacts facilitated the initial reciprocal visits with Argentine officers at the naval academies.[31] As a result, the navy began to participate in a number of combined exercises with other navies in the region after 1994, and starting in 1998 initiated bi-national exercises with the Argentine navy.

2. Domestic Networking. A major innovation was the creation in 1991 of the Centro de Estudios Estratégicos de la Armada (CEEA), a navy think tank intended to provide broad-based analysis to senior navy officers, grounded in a range of disciplines beyond naval strategy to include international relations, economics and international law. It is significant that CEEA is directly responsible to the chief of the navy, as this enables it provides a direct channel to diffuse thinking within the top levels of the officer corps. At the same time, CEEA has the explicit

---

[29] "Debemos alcanzar un nuevo rol estratégico," Armada de Chile supplement, *El Mercurio*, May 21, 2000.

[30] Interview with senior Chilean navy officer, CHAE12060, Valparaíso, June 12, 2000.

[31] Interview with senior Chilean navy officer, CHAP13060, Valparaíso June 13, 2000.

purpose of facilitating communication with experts in similarly-oriented domestic and international think tanks.[32] In addition, the navy subsequently established underwrote a masters program at the Universidad Marítima, run by civilians "to give civilians the opportunity to immerse themselves in the agenda of the navy." It also created a special masters program in political science at the Academia de Guerra Naval (Naval War College) that seeks to graduate a diverse cohort of professional civilians and officers from Chile and neighboring countries (including Argentina and Peru) and regularly invites career diplomats, politicians and academics of all political colors to participate in roundtables or give talks.[33] In short, the navy has taken significant, conscious steps to advance a new strategic vision and establish durable realms of dialogue with a diverse range of professionals involved in issues of national strategy and defense. Chile's navy has arguably come farthest in stimulating critical learning and institutionalizing new ideas through educational and operational/navy-to-navy ties.

ARGENTINE MILITARY

If the Chilean army and navy have had sharply different learning incentives in the 1990s, the experiences in the Argentine military are more alike. The failures of the *Proceso* regime and the advent of democracy placed the military on the defensive through the 1980s, and economic constraints in the 1990s further challenged the military's ability to innovate on questions of force restructuring. However, the military did come to accept the limitation to a purely defensive role assigned to it by political authorities in the 1980s. This is arguably the most profound lesson the military has learned during the 1990s. In the 1990s, increased networking – particularly through participation in international peacekeeping (PK) missions which have been especially relevant for the army, and through increased foreign contacts and CBMs involving the navy – made both services significantly more receptive to internationalist policies pursued by President Carlos Menem. By the end of the decade, comments on the international environment and contemporary threats had greater coherence and clarity than they had earlier in the decade, though no clear strategic vision is evident in either of the services.

ARGENTINE ARMY

RECEPTIVITY. For the Argentine army, two factors have been prominent in shaping receptivity to learning: attention to domestic events blocked receptivity in the 1980s, while opportunities for new international missions in peacekeeping have increased receptivity in the 1990s.

1. Focus on Domestic "Threats" to the Institution. The army's focus on its political environment effectively blocked possibilities to consider new ideas during the 1980s. During the *Proceso*, the armed forces had failed on multiple fronts, as political leaders and as professionals defeated in the Malvinas War of 1982. Only the air force could claim to have performed effectively.[34] We

---

[32] "Centro de Estudios Estratégicos de la Armada de Chile," *Revista de Marina* 4 (1991). The agenda of networking is clear: research is intended "for intra-institutional use and for encouraging consolidation of interdisciplinary ties, in order to provide its associated researchers with informative resources that are commonly available in other similar research institutions, both domestic and foreign." The statement closely approximates the epistemic communities envisioned by Peter Haas and others.

[33] Interview CHAP13060.

[34] Frederick C. Turner, "The Aftermath of Defeat in Argentina," *Current History* 82 (February 1983), p. 60.

should expect substantial strategic rethinking to result from a dramatic military defeat – occurring in the only war Argentina fought in the 20th century. In particular, the Rattenbach Commission, investigating the military's failures in the Malvinas campaign, identified the lack of unified, coordinated action among the services as the greatest flaw and area requiring attention.[35] However, no strategic rethinking or restructuring resulted. Instead, the army was focused on the policies of the new regime and the threat they posed to institutional interests. In particular, the issues of budget cuts and human rights prosecutions focused army attention on domestic and military politics in the first years after the political transition, from 1983-1990. The army also became increasingly divided in this period, evident in the diminishing support for movements in the institution that organized rebellions between 1987 and 1990.[36] The focus on domestic-political and army-institutional issues framed military concerns through the decade and into the 1990s, and effectively "stopped the clock" on doctrinal innovation. This is evident in a survey of the army flagship journal, *Revista Militar*, which shows that military thinking remained heavily infused with concepts appropriate to the 1970s and early 1980s – counter-insurgency war, recapturing the Malvinas, and threats from Argentina's neighbors.[37]

By the early 1990s, however, this focus was evolving, shifting attention to the emerging "new world order" and to consideration of new missions such as international peacekeeping. This development is most persuasively ascribed to changes in the political leadership and a new military policy: Menem sought to assert civilian control by diffusing military grievances, evident in his blanket pardons of military mutineers as well as to officers implicated in human rights abuses under the *Proceso*. He thereby substantially reduced official political pressure on the military. Menem also appointed defense ministers viewed favorably within the military.[38] The result was that military officers came to see Menem's policies with significantly more favor

---

[35] Rattenbach Commission, *Informe Rattenbach: El drama de Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Espartaco, 1988).

[36] On the evolution of army rebellions and the civilian responses, see Carlos H. Acuña and Catalina Smulovitz, "Militares en la transición argentina: del gobiemo a la subordinación constitucional," in Carlos H. Acuña ed., *La nueva matriz política argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Vision, 1995); Deborah Norden, *Military Rebellion in Argentina: Between Coups and Consolidation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

[37] Evolution of core issues of interest in the Argentine army, 1980-1999:

	ISSUES 1987-1988[a]	**ISSUES 1992**[b]	**ISSUES 1995**[c]
Regional Security	Importance of maintaining conflict scenarios; win back Malvinas and national sovereignty; possible Chilean-British collusion	Region still plagued by Chilean expansionism	Concept of "cooperative security"
Hot Issue	Counterinsurgency wars; articles are historical and contemporary (Central America)	Participate in peacekeeping and new world order; the "perfect" US Gulf War campaign	Need for a national defense strategy to meet new international threats
Military Role	*Should* have role in defense planning; but currently is fall guy	→ worsened to state of indefense and institutional breakdown	→
Argentina's Role	Argentina as equal player in regional politics	United States as dominant power (US role/success in Gulf War and globally)	→

Sources: [a] Revista Militar #717-722; [b]Revista Militar #725-726; [c]Revista Militar #732.

[38] In particular, Italo Luder and Humberto Romero. David Pion-Berlin, *Through Corridors of Power: Institutions and Civil-Military Relations in Argentina* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 109.

than they had seen Alfonsín's policies.[39] In short, reducing military perceptions of political threats to the institution became a first step in "opening" the military to consideration of new ideas.

2. Internationalism Via Peacekeeping Missions. The second component of making the army receptive to new thinking was to create new opportunities, by redefining its role but more importantly by creating new missions. Legislation in 1988 had formally limited the military's role to providing defense against external threats and had made a clear separation between national defense and domestic (internal) security.[40] However, it was Menem's new internationalist strategy – of "reinserting" Argentina as a reliable actor in the international arena – that created an opportunity for the military to participate actively in this new national project. The Menem government began to implement the internationalist agenda rapidly, in the 1990-1991 period, on a range of issues including improved relations with Britain, Chile, and the US; elimination of the Condor II missile program; and participation in the Gulf War.[41] In 1992, Menem followed initial Argentine assistance in the Gulf War coalition (a navy effort) with army participation in the UNPROFOR peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Since then, over 12,000 officers, most from the army, have participated in international PK missions, reflecting participation by more than 40% of the army's permanent personnel.

Yet what is most remarkable is the perception military officers expressed *already in 1992* – 81% of officers consulted by Fitch saw PK missions as a primary mission of the military, second only to national defense, which 93% of officers surveyed saw as a primary mission.[42] What is most significant about this finding is not the shift in attention to PK, but the *rapidity* of shift and the general *confluence* of officers' perceptions of their role with the strategy defined by the national political leadership. What the military was learning was not a new strategic vision but rather the lesson that it had to play by rules of the game defined by civilian leaders and international powers. Army officers' comments in 1992 indicate the lessons learned:

> "The world is different [now]; the international context includes democracy in all countries of the world….To break the rules of the world game that is consolidating itself, was an act of desperation….Swimming against the current of the world is irrational."
>
> "The problem of Argentina is that we have always been estranged from the world. We believed that there is no international order, that there are no actors with the power to police that order. We found out differently in the Malvinas."[43]

This thinking was also evident in officers' statements at the end of the decade. A senior army officer interviewed in 2000 best summarizes current learning:

---

[39] According to Fitch's study, which consulted officers mostly from the army and navy, 88% of officers viewed Alfonsín's military policies negatively, while only 4% viewed Menem's negatively. J. Samuel Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 79.

[40] *Ley de Defensa Nacional*, 23.554.

[41] Andrés Fontana, "La seguridad internacional y la Argentina en los años 90," in Andrés Cisneros, ed., *Política exterior Argentina 1989-1999: historia de un éxito* (Buenos Aires CEPE/CARI, 1998), p. 286.

[42] Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy*, p. 120. In 1985, only 3% of respondents identified PK as a primary mission of the military. The most notable drop in his 1985 and 1992 studies is in identification of internal security as a mission – from 71% to 51%.

[43] Quoted in Fitch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy*, pp. 86-87.

> "There hasn't been a 'change in thinking.' The armed forces have to accompany legally the thinking [of civilian leaders.]"[44]

In short, the first and most important lesson the army learned at the beginning of the 1990s involved not a coherent reconceptualization of their roles, missions or the nature of the international environment, but rather the recognition of the new "rules of the world game."

NETWORK. Peacekeeping created a springboard for army contacts, both abroad and at home. By the mid 1990s the army was developing ties, mainly to other militaries but increasingly also to civilians in the foreign policy establishment, through its peacekeeping "link" to the international environment.

1. Networking Abroad through Peacekeeping. In 1995, the Argentine government established the Centro Argentino de Entreamiento Conjuto para Operaciones de Paz (CAECOPAZ), what remains the only school in Latin America for PK training. Originally fielding Argentine PK forces, the Center has become a key institution in the region for training foreign officers as well. More recently, in 1998, Argentina became one of a handful of countries, all European, fielding troops for the United Nations' Rapid Deployment Brigade, which constitute the UN's "standby forces" for PK missions. Both CAECOPAZ and formal participation in the UN's PK establishment function as important ways to institutionalize the army's participation in what are essentially humanitarian missions abroad. Peacekeeping missions have had important socialization effects. In addition to the economic benefits (i.e., more than doubled pay) that participating officers accrue, there is a significant confidence-building effect, as army officers work in concert "inter-operably" with highly professional foreign troops, including service under foreign commanders. In Cyprus, for instance, Argentine PK forces served under British command with great success.[45]

There is also an important material aspect to the army's PK missions. Argentina's extensive participation in PK missions was one of the main reasons the US designated the country a major non-NATO ally which allows Argentina to receive free used military equipment, as well as defense loan guarantees important for future force planning.[46] Thus a material incentive assures continuity of the army's participation in PK missions. Importantly, however, the US, as Argentina's main patron for military equipment, has also been interested in encouraging Argentine PK activities as a model for military role development in Latin America and therefore has supported the missions even when Argentine budget constraints might limit future participation.[47]

2. Networking at Home through Peacekeeping. A second but equally important effect of PK participation has been to both redefine the army's image at home and to create new linkages with domestic foreign policy experts, in government and in think tanks. Participation in PK has been

---

[44] Interview with senior Argentine army officer, ARECM07030, Buenos Aires, March 7, 2000.

[45] Anthony L. Palá, "Peacekeeping and Its Effects on Civil-Military Relations: The Argentine Experience," in Domínguez, *International Security and Democracy*.

[46] "Argentinians Request Closer US Ties, Arms," *Defense News*, January 27-February 2, 1997.

[47] "Argentina Seeks Peacekeeping Aid," *Defense News*, April 5, 1999.

the primary vehicle for improving public perceptions of the army, projecting the image of a useful institution that can build peace in the world.[48] Peacekeeping has also fostered new institutional ties to civilian policy makers. In particular, PK missions have transformed the military into an important component of Argentina's foreign policy, and as a result foreign ministry officials have developed formal ties, through inter-ministerial working groups, with the defense ministry and with military officers in charge of planning operations. In this framework, the foreign ministry, historically far more developed and professionally institutionalized than the defense ministry, has been able to assert an important leadership role coordinating military PK missions. As a result, as civilian-military integration has deepened and civilians have been able to assert authority over the military, civil-military understanding has improved.[49]

Yet while peacekeeping has become a core permanent mission of the army along with national defense,[50] the domain of PK is narrow.[51] There are important limitations to the type of networks the army has developed. The army primarily interacts in a "PK-only" domain, also in combined or joint exercises with the US and other countries in the region. However, since 2001, due to budget cuts, the army has had to restrict some of these activities as well.[52] Ultimately, neither PK nor combined exercises is a formula for addressing still-pending questions of national military reorganization, which remain dependent on political will and national budget allocations. Ultimately, discussion of the two – missions of international cooperation and military reorganization – remain distinct and divorced domains.

ARGENTINE NAVY

RECEPTIVITY. The discussion above concerning experiences of the army in the 1980s and 1990s is applicable to the navy – navy officers remained concerned with domestic political developments in the 1980s, and were given no clear mission until the 1990s. Where the navy differs is on the nature of the mission it assumed beginning in the 1990s: it has been significantly involved in regional confidence-building measures, as well as in international PK missions.

Internationalism Via Confidence-Building Measures. Menem's commitment of two ships to participate in the US-led coalition in the 1991 Persian Gulf was the navy's first experience participating in the president's internationalist agenda. Soon after followed navy participation in international PK missions, the largest of which deployed over 800 navy forces to UNPROFOR in Bosnia. For the navy, PK is most important for its practical, operational utility. The navy generally considers PK missions as a good way to maintain operational and training standards in the face of budget cutbacks.[53] In personal interviews in 2000, navy officers did not focus on peacekeeping as a major issue of their concern or activity. By contrast, what seems to have had far greater effect on military thinking is the resolution of conflicts with Chile, as well as the reduction of tensions with Britain – disputes with both countries had been major strategic concerns for the navy in the 1970s and 1980s. Resolution of the Beagle dispute (even with some vocal navy opposition to the accord in 1984), as well as the prohibition in the new national constitution, adopted in 1994, on the use of force to resolve the Malvinas issue, were powerful incentives for the navy to eliminate these as strategic priorities and also abandon military planning and conflict scenarios regarding these territories.[54] Thus, as was the case for the Chilean navy, major historical sources of conflict were eliminated from the navy's perspective, clearing the agenda for new cooperative action. Even so, however, a change in thinking that would filter down from the top navy ranks required political intervention by the president: in 1996 Menem retired the navy's chief, Admiral Enrique Molina Pico, following several remarks he made calling for the maintenance of conflict scenarios with Chile. Molina Pico's successor was a younger and more internationalist-minded figure who remained politically loyal and promoted CBMs with Chile.[55]

---

[48] Deborah L. Norden, "Keeping the Peace, Outside and In: Argentina's UN Mission," *International Peacekeeping* 2:3 (Autumn 1995).

[49] Rut Diamint, *Democracia y Seguridad en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Nuevohacer-GEL, 2001).

[50] For an updated overview of army PK missions, see the army's website, http://www.ejercito.mil.ar.

[51] "Country Briefing: Argentina. Peacekeeping is the Key to Higher Profile," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, May 21, 1997.

[52] See, for example, "Rebajas y dudas en el presupuesto," *La Nación*, August 23, 2001.

[53] "Argentine Navy Shifts Role: Uses Peacekeeping to Maintain Force Capability," *Defense News*, March 25-31, 1996.

NETWORK. If PK missions were one of Menem's most important tools for reinserting Argentina as a constructive member of the international system, then CBMs with Chile, along with increased participation in combined and joint exercises with other navies in the region, were one of Argentina's key efforts to build trust on security issues in the Southern Cone.

Networking Abroad Via CBMs. Once the political leadership in Argentina and Chile had defined criteria for joint confidence building measures in 1995, and a permanent, bilateral committee on security issues began meeting in 1996 (the Comité Permanente de Seguridad, COMPERSEG, comprised of officials from the defense and foreign ministries and the military general staffs), the navies began considering forms of bilateral cooperation; these were realized in the field for the first time in 1998, in joint search-and-rescue and environmental disaster containment exercises, and have become an annual feature of bilateral CBMs between the navies. In addition, joint training and education programs initiated in the late 1990s appear to have had a deep impact on individual officers' thinking, as I show in the next section.

Two features of these developments should be highlighted. First, it is significant that while the navies themselves formulated the specific agenda of joint CBMs, the Argentine navy on its own took no initiatives without a mandate from the political leadership that set general criteria for joint activities; this is in sharp contrast to Chile's navy which has taken initiatives in formulating doctrine and ties from as early as 1990, and reflects that the Chilean forces retain *and act with* significantly more autonomy than do their Argentine counterparts. Second, the focus of Argentine networking is predominantly oriented toward the exterior – toward a foreign audience and toward other militaries. This again contrasts with networking in Chile where both the army and navy have focused on the importance of "domestic networks" – toward political elites and the general public as the core audiences they wish to engage.

---

[54] Rosendo Fraga, "El concepto de las hipótesis de conflicto," in Cisneros, ed., *Política exterior Argentina,* pp. 258-259, 270.

[55] Molina Pico's successor, Admiral Carlos Marrón, advocated a clearly internationalist-Menemist vision, similar to that already promoted by the army's chief, General Martín Balza. On Menem's cleaning out of the military leadership, "Historia secreta de los relevos militares," *La Nación*, October 12, 1996.

SUMMARY

This section, which surveyed motivations in the militaries for learning in the 1990s, suggests that the Chilean army would be least likely to adopt new thinking, the Chilean navy would be most likely to do so, and Argentine forces would fall in the middle. Only the Argentine forces took their cues for new missions from the political leadership; therefore much depended on ability of Argentine leaders to formulate a coherent strategic vision in the 1990s. In Chile the navy's agenda has been substantially compatible with internationalist strategies promoted by the governments of the 1990s, but it has not taken cues regarding the reformulation of its strategic doctrine from political leaders. While Pinochet remained in command, the army tenaciously held onto a defensive, nationalist strategic vision, but by the end of the decade several of the factors hindering receptivity to new thinking were eroding. This raises an important point: openness (receptivity) and the ability to analyze options broadly (network) are interrelated – one is likely to encourage the other, and it is worth considering to what extent sequencing might matter.[56] The next section summarizes key concerns voiced most frequently by officers in both countries at the end of the 1990s.

III. What Military Officers Think: Prominent Themes in 2000

By the end of the 1990s, several themes appeared prominently in interviews with officers from on both sides of the Cordillera. The following discussion summarizes these themes, which center on the nature of cooperation in the new international environment and on the quality of leadership in defense policy making in Argentina and Chile during the 1990s.

Theme #1: CBMs and Improved Perceptions of the Other Side

Interviews showed clearly that officers who had participated in CBMs had a significantly more favorable perception of "the other side" than those who had not. This was particularly evident in my interviews with navy officers who had all had some form of CBM contact with their opposite numbers, while army officers on both sides who had not had such experiences tended to speak much more pessimistically about prospects for improved army-to-army relations.

The most common remarks in interviews with both Argentine and Chilean officers who had participated in CBMs was that the experience had significantly improved their understanding of the other side. In particular, greater understanding almost without exception was perceived as having *eroded mistrust and fostered assurance* – precisely what CBMs are intended to do. However, there was variation in the degree of assurance. The more personal and prolonged the contact, the deeper the affinity that developed. An Argentine navy officer who participated in a week-long joint exercise found it was useful in generating "a real sense that [Chileans] want better ties,"[57] but another officer who had spend several months studying at the Naval War

---

[56] For instance, receptivity→networking may lead to a broader array of contacts being forged, giving actors more flexibility as well as control in establishing new networks of contacts, while the reverse process of networking→receptivity may lead to a narrower, but more focused openness to learning on issue areas defined by the types of actors already participating in the policy community that has been established. The Chilean navy approximates the first path, while the Argentine army approximates the second, and the Argentine navy seems to have developed on both fronts more gradually.

[57] Interview with Argentine navy officer, ARAR24020, Buenos Aires, February 24, 2000.

College had a more specific insight, finding that "it is easier for me to *work with and plan with* the Chilean navy than with the Argentine army."[58]

Another officer, from the Argentine air force who served on the Joint Staff in early CBM efforts with Chile's Joint Staff expressed similar profound learning, although in this case the revelation was about differences rather than similarities. His comments suggested that his understanding had come only with difficulty, but eventually passing the hurdle brought a much better understanding of "the other side." His comment was about the way he came to understand cultural differences with Chileans, reflected the more systematic, cautious functioning of the Chilean military's institutional structures. Noting that the Argentines wanted to move much faster while the Chileans were not ready for this yet, he stated:

> "For us, as we are not afraid of them, we don't see any problems. For us everything has a[n immediate] solution." Noting that the Argentines on the Joint Staff had been briefed and given a policy mandate to act by their foreign and defense ministries, he came to see that this was not the case on the Chilean side, where the Joint Staff is subordinate to the military chiefs. As a result, everyone had to wait "to request authorization…from the very top. This was something very difficult for us to understand, and for them to change."[59]

The officer who learned to "work and plan" with the Chileans also achieved better understanding of Chilean thinking during the Malvinas War when Chile assisted the British side:

> "I have learned quite a few things here at the academy. I saw many things differently before, but now I understand [Chileans'] reasoning. For example, in the Malvinas conflict, I didn't understand well what had been the Chilean perspective for the conflict. Now I understand it much better, I understand how they saw the conflict, how they understood it and I see quite a lot of reason in what they saw."[60]

Virtually without exception,[61] the Argentine and Chilean navy officers I interviewed expressed the view that they understood the navy officers in the other country. Many also said they all shared a common interest – protecting the southern Atlantic. All generally acknowledged that past history had been important and severe tensions had existed, so comments about "shared interests" tended to reflect a explicit recognition of the extent to which the contemporary relationship had changed for the better. An interesting theme throughout many navy interviews was – as mentioned in the quote above – that the navies find greater affinity with each other than with their army counterparts. This further underscores the importance of CBM-style combined work, which might also benefit the services within the armed forces – yet the elusive "jointness" to which officers on both sides sometimes alluded, seemed to raise little interest, particularly without a clear defense policy in place.

Interestingly, there was little variation in receptivity based on generational factors – older officers with established enemy images (i.e., those who served at the time of the near-war of

---

[58] Interview with Argentine navy officer, ARAPP13060, Valparaíso, June 13, 2000. Emphasis added.

[59] Interview with Argentine air force officer, ARFAP14020, Buenos Aires, February 14, 2000.

[60] Interview ARAPP13060.

[61] The only exception was a retired navy officer who had not participated in CBMs or other forms of substantial contact with peers in the other country.

1978) were no less inclined to identify common understandings than were younger officers whose professional experience began in the 1980s of 1990s. However, older officers were more impressed by and aware of their recognition, as was the case for the officer on the Argentine Joint Staff, quoted above.

Theme #2: The Call for Leadership

The most common theme to which military officers in both countries across the services drew attention was the need for political leadership on regional relations and particularly on defense issues. Across the board, officers seek creation of coherent, consistent national policies and development of civilian expertise on defense issues.

1. The Absence of Coherent, Consistent National Policy. With regard to political leaders' ability to define viable national agenda, Chilean army officers were particularly vigorous in their criticisms, while navy officers were remarkably more sanguine. By contrast, Argentine officers in both the army and navy seemed relatively resigned to contemporary inconsistencies (i.e., in 2000 under Fernando De la Rúa). Positive comments, across the board, went to presidents who had shown both "vision" as well as to those leaders who exhibited recognition (rather than fear or distain) of the use of political and state power and respect for the military as an institution. Thus "leadership" constitutes more than *conducción*, and becomes conflated with civilian concessions, the most important of which was limiting human rights prosecutions of the military.

In Chile, officers emphasized improvement in the policies pursued by Chile's second post-transition president, Eduardo Frei, beginning in 1994, while Argentine officers saw improvement with the Menem administration after 1990. Both Frei and Menem were presidents who exhibited "vision" as well as adopted a less confrontational military policy – Menem granted extensive pardons to junta leaders and to military and guerrilla rebels in 1990-1991, while Frei made concessions in 1995 to the army on salary increases and on limitations of future human rights trials of military officers.[62] Yet it would be simplistic to understand the leadership question exclusively through the lens of military policy and human rights prosecutions. The issue has several important angles.

For officers in the Chilean army, for instance, the leadership question became salient on outstanding territorial disputes. In the opinion of one senior army officer, Chilean president Patricio Aylwin bore the stigma of "all civilian presidents" – that they do not understand the strategic importance of territory – when he negotiated a political solution to one major territorial dispute (Hielos Continentales) in 1991 and accepted an unfavorable arbitration solution on the other major dispute (Laguna de Desierto).[63] Officers in Chile's navy had no similar concerns, but instead were concerned that Chile's global interests (i.e., international commerce and openness of foreign markets) be protected. On this front, there has been little the military might critique since 1990.

---

[62] Frei's concessions were part of a bargain with the army to accept the conviction of General Manuel Contreras for the assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier and his assistant in Washington, DC. On Frei's concessions, see Wendy Hunter, "Civil-Military Relations in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile: Present Trends, Future Prospects," in Felipe Agüero and Jeffrey Stark, eds., *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America* (Miami: North-South Center Press, 1998), p. 315.

[63] Interview CHEA30050.

Perhaps the most remarkable finding, given the military's coup in 1973 against the government of Socialist president Salvador Allende, is that officers from all services (including many, though not all, officers) see the Socialists as the political party most skilled at leading Chile on issues of national defense, and as most skilled at moving Chile forward with a comprehensive national strategy. As an air force officer commented:

> "The only ones who have seriously concerned themselves with studying national defense and Chile's international security concerns have been the Socialists. The Right used the military as a domestic political tool…but didn't concern themselves that the military might have to fight a war from one day to the next."[64]

A navy officer noted:

> "The Left deals with politics, the Right with economics, and the Christian Democrats are bureaucrats."[65]

Even the conservative army officer so critical of Aylwin, above, compared Chile's current Socialist president, Ricardo Lagos, not unfavorably to Pinochet's rule, with respect to projecting a national strategy:

> "The two prior governments of the *Concertación* were not able to achieve a new, qualitative leap for Chile – Chile stagnated, and Lagos recognized this. He sees a historic opportunity for Chile to take another qualitative leap, the second leap in my opinion – the first was under the military government with the economic transformation…. He sees that he can make Chile into a leader in Latin America, because Chile is the most stable [country in the region]."[66]

In short, for Chilean officers across the services, but particularly in the army, favorable views of political leadership accrue to leaders who avoid "quick fix" solutions and take a long-term view of the country's strategic interests.

If for Chilean officers the greatest leadership deceptions have come in the form of "quick fix" territorial give-aways (e.g., the Beagle for the navy; Hielos or Laguna for the army), the greatest deception for the Argentine military has been political leaders' failure to keep budgetary promises after making due with substantial cuts in the 1990s. Despite the respect officers of all political stripes expressed in the interviews for Menem's visionary internationalist "reinsertion" agenda, they associate him and national legislators with having made empty promises to restructure the forces through annual budgetary increases legislated only in 1998, just as the recession was taking hold.[67] The budget crisis has been significant; along with lack of sustained political leadership to define the military's purpose, it is one of the most important factors that has hindered military reorganization since downsizing in the mid 1990s. Several officers, in both the army and navy, emphasized the connection between lack of political leaders' concept that the military is a tool of the state, in the service of society, and adequate funding for defense.[68]

---

[64] Interview with Chilean air force officer, CHFAWW12050, Santiago, May 12, 2000.

[65] Interview with Chilean navy officer, CHAEFT13060, Valparaíso, June 13, 2000.

[66] Interview CHEA30050.

[67] "Brinzoni: No estuvimos en la fiesta," *Clarín*, 21 July 2001.

The greatest lesson the Argentine military has learned is its duty to abide direction by the political leadership. Yet now that the military has finally come to the recognition that it is part of the state and not above it, they see themselves in a Catch-22 situation – stripped of resources, and unable to initiate restructuring, much less strategic conceptual innovation. There are numerous examples throughout the 1990s of military planning framed by economic strictures, rather than by national defense priorities.[69] The lack of conceptual innovation, which requires actual implementation of new concepts, is evident. For example, when asked whether strategic and doctrinal crises from the 1980s have been resolved, one officer, in active service as an instructor at one of the army's flagship colleges, could only answer vaguely, indicating that "external factors" such as coming to terms with society and with economic cuts, along with the military's own institutional defects, have prevented resolution of these conceptual and practical crises.[70] In short, no one – certainly no one in the political leadership – has pressured or encouraged the military-as-institution to actively rethink old strategic concepts. Rather, the expectation has been that old concepts will wither away in the face of new missions. They have, but have not been replaced by a credible and coherent alternative.

2. The Need for Civilian Defense Expertise. The second aspect of the theme – the lack of civilian defense expertise – is closely related. The problem is based on a historical absence of civilian participation in defense matters. In both Argentina and Chile, military rule and civilian apathy contributed to the dilemma, which became a problem civilians needed to overcome with the return of democracy in the 1980s. On this front, both countries have made substantial improvements, particularly in training cadres of experts on defense and international security to populate newly-empowered ministries of defense. However, these cadres remain small and to date military officers remain doubtful of a turnaround.

Chilean officers have become fairly optimistic, though without exception when asked about a "national defense policy" officers describe it as a *tema pendiente.* Still, most officers see a significant change on the part of civilians becoming interested in defense beginning in the 1980s, and especially in the 1990s. This, they hold, is the payoff from efforts to engage civilians on issues of defense. By 2000 army officers lauded civilian efforts to build expertise in defense matters, but the debate is not among equals. Comments by army officer along the following lines are representative: "[civilians] are learning, I believe they are willing."[71] Another sees that civilian interest in defense in the 1990s has grown "despite the fact that there is little [civilian] expertise."[72]

---

[68] Interviews with army officers, ARERE17119 and AREEI18020, Buenos Aires, November 17, 1999 and February 18, 2000.

[69] See, for example, statements in Pion-Berlin's study such as Brinzoni's comment in 1993: "We began to sift through the nation's economic possibilities, but always taking defensive needs into mind. And we said, for those needs given these possibilities, what can we do?" Pion-Berlin, *Through Corridors of Power,* p. 171. The statements are remarkably similar to ones officers made in 2000.

[70] Interview AREA18020.

[71] Interview CHEA30050.

[72] Interview CHEOE06060.

Though remaining a *tema pendiente*, the issue of constructing a national defense policy is not only for discussion between civilians and the military – it is also an issue within the military establishment. As one senior navy officer indicated, the issue must be subject to a national debate, as it is a topic for civilians as well as the military all together. Coming on the heels of a remark about distinct visions within the military, the comment was a clear allusion to a perspective common in the navy, that it does not want to be dominated by the army.[73] Thus internal debate within the military goes a long way in suggesting another angle to why constructing a "national consensus" on defense remains an apparent obsession within the military: consensus is part of *national* cohesion as much as it is part of internal, *military* cohesion.

In Argentina, the debate over civilian expertise has taken a different course. Here the military did not have an advantage in "setting the agenda" to its concerns, though significant elements in the army attempted and failed to do so in the rebellions of the late 1980s. As a result, in Argentina officers across the services have become increasingly cynical. They are cynical not about the ability of the defense cadre that has emerged since the 1990s – a cadre that also includes career diplomats from the foreign ministry who have specialized in matters of international security, although these diplomats actually compete with defense ministry civilians within the political establishment.[74] Rather, they are cynical about political leaders' commitment to national defense, and are resigned to public disregard for the issue. Their concern is far from misplaced. Recently, interim president Eduardo Duhalde declared:

> "Our armed forces exist, but we don't know for what purpose – this is one of the outstanding issues of the Argentine democracy."[75]

Duhalde went on, in a confusing ramble, to allude to the necessity of eliminating the separation of internal and external defense that has successfully guided national military policy since 1988. Such statements are likely to do little to encourage military officers in Argentina that political leaders have given much thought to national defense issues. One officer, who lobbies congress on army interests, describes the problem as one remaining from the past: civilians still live with a "phantom of the past" and see defense as simply "the armed forces." As a result, they believe that developing a defense agenda hurts democracy; this is incorrect, he argues, and calls for a "comprehensive conceptualization of issues of national defense."[76]

In short, concerns with political leadership and policy expertise remain important unresolved issues for broad sections of the militaries in Argentina and Chile. Militaries in both Argentina and Chile have either deferred to political guidance (in Argentina) or have sought to actively engage and sway the civilian public (in Chile) during the 1990s. The unsurprising paradox is that civilian leaders' concern for defense is greater in Chile, where civilians still struggle to assert their authority relative to the laxity with which Argentine leaders treat the subject. Yet the risk – which the Chilean military wishes to avoid and to which the Argentine military has already grown resigned – is that defense and security, and ultimately civil-military relations, remains a political issue rather than one of national policy.

---

[73] Interview CHAE12060. For the preceding remark, see fn. 25.

[74] This is my personal view, based on interviews with officials in both ministries.

[75] "Quiere redefinir el papel de las Fuerzas Armadas," *La Nación*, 13 January 2002.

[76] Interview with army officer, AREARN02030, Buenos Aires March 3, 2000.

Conclusion

Consideration of factors that contribute to intellectual openness (receptivity) and to a dynamic analysis of options (network) can provide insight into learning processes. In this paper, I have focused on conditions that have hindered and facilitated opportunities for learning in various sectors of the militaries in Argentina and Chile. Yet while receptivity and engagement in policy networks may have reinforce each other, these are basically conditions that *facilitate* learning; do not necessarily lead actors to clear "lessons learned."

In the Chilean army, these processes are only beginning to develop, while the navy has taken substantial "learning initiatives" on its own. In neither case, however, does the input of civilians in charge of the government guide military thinking – it may challenge (the case of the army) or coincide (the case of the navy) with military thinking, but the learning dynamics largely remain in the hands of military actors themselves.

In Argentina, defeat in the 1980s, but also civilian-inspired opportunities in the 1990s, have opened new doors for military missions in the army and navy. Yet here, again, neither branch of the military is networked in a common cause with civilians to restructure the forces and design a military appropriate to Argentina's national needs, because political leaders have yet to define these needs. Since the 1990s, the deepening economic crisis has placed the issue indefinitely on hold. While the military has accepted civilian control, this is not the same thing as civilian authority. Civilian authority requires not only control over the military institution but also development and control of a defense policy agenda – in short, an understanding of national defense as a public policy domain. While Argentine leaders may possess control over the military institution, they do not have control over defense policy making. In Chile, civilian control, much less civilian authority on these fronts, remains elusive. In neither country are conditions really auspicious, although in terms of achieving an awareness of the importance of defense as a national, public policy concern Chile's gradual evolution is more promising than Argentina's stagnation.

In both Argentina and Chile, the treatment of matters of defense mirrors broader patterns in the countries' political histories. In Argentina, the issue of "what to do with the military" became negligible as more immediate political, social and economic crises loomed large, particularly since the late 1990s; therefore political leaders can afford to profess their apathy and postpone military and defense policy reform. In Chile, by contrast, the issue of altering military institutional power, which is more substantial now than at any time prior to the 1973 coup, looms large, but few sectors of the political spectrum are engaged in the issues. Given the stakes – no less than constitutional reform that would reduce military prerogatives and reform the military budget process – it is unlikely the military will cede the issue unless it sees substantially more "defense learning" by civilians.

The two most significant lessons the militaries learned during the shift toward internationalism concern relations with former foreign adversaries and with domestic political leaders. The first lesson is that interaction with former adversaries, through military-to-military cooperation, could be advantageous. Such contacts increased mutual understanding and generated awareness of institutional affinities and common national interests. Officers' recognition of these shared interests may provide an important buffer against a rise in tensions on other possible, non-military issues such as protection of the environment or commerce. It is in this military-to-military domain that officers' learning has been most profound. The second lesson officers learned is that the political leadership remains deficient on the issues most important to the military – national defense and maintenance of the military. Finally, the lesson specific to the Argentines is military acceptance of civilian control. However, such control is by no means fixed and maintaining and deepening it requires additional attention that currently does not exist in the Argentine political leadership.

What should political leaders and civil society in general do to improve the situation? First, and most importantly, they must recognize the "learning window of opportunity" in the military that was created by favorable conditions in the 1990s. Most of the military services – and increasingly also the lone hold-out, the army in Chile – are receptive to new ideas and seek ties to civilians that will generate serious consideration of defense and international security issues. If civilians wait too long, the window may close. In a worst-case scenario, militaries may come to learn lessons that challenge principles and practices of a citizen-based democracy. The fact that Southern Cone countries have to date weathered their political transitions well, relative to other countries in South America, should not foster complacency anywhere in the hemisphere. The new global war on terrorism raises debate over the potential for instability and erosion of liberal protections in mature democracies. New democracies face a similar international context and similar pressures to confront new threats, yet they are more vulnerable to processes of destabilization and erosion of liberal democratic principles.

Second, civilian actors must take advantage of current opportunities to engage in the civilian-military networks of communication that have been forged in the 1990s and build them out further. This involves increased attention to bilateral and regional cooperation, including the complete overhaul of existing, outdated regional security structures. Regional leaders must revisit the idea of creating a "collective security community" in the region and must pick up the momentum that began in the mid 1990s through defense ministerials, initiatives to reform multilateral institutions, and efforts to link economic communities with security communities. States must also continue and increase commitment to the creation of a broad-based, permanent corps of civilian experts on defense and international security. Finally, the effort should include continued expansion of bilateral CBMs in the region; this is an important component of keeping the proverbial learning window open in the military, and employing the military favorably in the effort.

Ultimately, what is at stake are the prospects for continued regional cooperation and the maintenance of democracy. These will hinge not only on what the militaries have learned, but also on how well political leaders learn their own lessons from the past.