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Democratization and the politics of national security in Argentina

McSherry, Joan Patrice, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1994

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DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN ARGENTINA

by

JOAN PATRICE MCSHERRY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1994

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Executive Officer

Irving Leonard Markovitz

Ronald Hellman

Howard Lentner

Peter Ranis

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN ARGENTINA

by

Joan Patrice McSherry

Adviser: Professor Kenneth P. Erickson

In many countries emerging from military rule, a central task of democratization is to confine the power of the armed forces within constitutional bounds. This is especially the case in Latin America, where a particular version of national-security doctrine was pervasive after the 1950s. The national-security doctrine became essentially the theoretical justification for a militarized state antithetical to a democratic model. This study examines the impact of enduring national-security ideology, structures, "dirty war" methods and military political intervention after the 1983 transition to civilian government in Argentina.

The armed forces suffered a defeat in the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war, opening the way for the election of Raúl Alfonsín in 1983. This study explores the political dynamics and tensions of the next years, as democratizing forces clashed with conservative military and civilian sectors attempting to preserve the political capacities and prerogatives of the armed forces. The central hypothesis of the study is that Argentina's armed forces retained a core of counterinsurgency structures and politicized ideology from the national-security states, based on an expansive vision of national security. These embedded structures and ideology shaped the democratization process, affecting political participation, policy formulation, and relevant political actors.

The study finds that over time, the armed forces regained substantial power in Argentina. Given the impracticality of a traditional coup, politicized sectors of the armed forces sought to pressure and condition the civilian government by degrees. While opposing the methods of the

insurrectionist sector, the "loyalists" often acted to support its *goals*. These goals were political and not solely institutional: to reverse policies of the civilian government, narrow the political opening, and channel the democratization process so that military concerns and criteria would be incorporated within democratic institutions and legislation. These concerns included vindication of the national-security state and the dirty war, acceptance of the armed forces as a factor of political power, and preservation of a military internal security function. Gradually, elements of a guardian system were implanted, in which military tutelage and national-security norms, values and structures were legalized and institutionalized within the framework of democracy.

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Numerous people were generous and helpful to me during my times in Argentina, many of whom are listed in the Appendix. I wish to thank first all those Argentine respondents and friends who talked with me during interviews and discussions, including those who asked to remain anonymous. Because they shared with me their experiences, knowledge and analyses, I understand better the riveting history of Argentina, a country to which I feel a special attachment. Many also shared important documents, books and articles with me, introduced me to other useful contacts, or invited me to important conferences or seminars. Some of those I spoke with may find that they disagree with some of my interpretations or conclusions; I look forward to continuing discussions and debates with them.

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JPM, New York
January 1994

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CONCEPTS, AIMS AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

"Thousands of persons were illegally deprived of their liberty, tortured and killed as a result of the application of these methods of battle inspired by the totalitarian Doctrine of National Security."

From Decree 158, ordering trials for nine former junta members, issued by President Raúl Alfonsín in his first days in office, December 1983

In many developing countries, authoritarian armed forces and military dictators have long dominated politics. In Latin America, a series of coups in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a new form of military rule in many countries--national-security states--in which the armed forces ruled as an institution and sought to drastically transform state and society in line with an apocalyptic vision of national security. Commonly called "the national-security doctrine" in the region, this vision was both a military project with strategic, political and economic components, and an ideology, in which politics was seen as an extension of (or one front in) a permanent "war against subversion." Building on older military ideas such as the concept of the armed forces as the organic essence of the nation, the doctrine emphasized "hypotheses of conflict" based on perceived internal subversion in all sectors of the population.[1]

A number of scholars noted the phenomenon of military role expansion in the region--or

---

[1] The genesis and development of the national-security ideology are elaborated fully in the text, especially Chapter 2. An abundant literature exists on the national security ideology and these new state types. See, for example, José Comblin, *The Church and the National Security State* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979); Simón Lázara, *Poder militar: origen, apogeo y transición* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1988); Ernesto López, *Seguridad Nacional y Sedición Militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1987); Guillermo O'Donnell, "Modernización y golpes militares: Teoría, comparaciones y el caso argentino," in *Desarrollo Económico*, October-December 1972; David Pion-Berlin, "Latin American National Security Doctrines: Hard- and Softline Themes," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 15 No. 3, Spring 1989, 411-429; Alfred Stepan, "The New Military Professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion," in *Authoritarian Brazil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) 47-65; Jorge Tapia Valdés, "La Doctrina de la Seguridad Nacional y el Rol Político de las Fuerzas Armadas," in Juan Carlos Rubenstein, editor, *El Estado Periférico Latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1988) 237-262.

what Alfred Stepan called "the new military professionalism"--a process whereby military functions and interests enlarged to encompass formerly civilian realms and internal security functions. This development led the armed forces directly into a *political* role. The process was encouraged by a number of developments including U.S. training and influence under the auspices of the Cold War. Several scholars warned that such role expansion could be a prelude to coups (Corbett 1972, Stepan 1973, Welch 1976). The armed forces in many Latin American states eventually determined that they were better suited to embody the national interest and protect the national security than what they saw as government by incompetent and naive civilians, whose beliefs in liberalism and democracy opened the state to communist infiltration.[2]

Scholars were intrigued when, in the 1980s, a number of these national-security states moved toward democratization, or opening, processes. A debate ensued as to the determinants of these openings, ranging from international to military-institutional explanations. International-level explanations pointed to the changing world capitalist system, the impact of the debt crisis or the changing strategies and interests of the hegemonic power, the United States. National-level analyses stressed the upsurge in popular resistance or loss of social supports, and institutional-level analyses emphasized the internal splits and tensions within the military apparatuses themselves. As transitions to democracy advanced in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and Central American countries, competing theories arose regarding the nature of democratic transition and consolidation. Some of these focused on the distinction between *regime change* and *state or societal*

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[2] These beliefs were openly stated by military officers in public declarations and military journals, documented in the main text. Moreover, such views were encouraged by U.S. national-security doctrine. For example, U.S. Director of State Department Policy Planning, George Kennan, previewed U.S. Cold War policy when he said in 1950: "...we should not hesitate before police repression by the local government. This is not shameful since the Communists are essentially traitors...It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists." See "Second Regional Conference of U.S. Chiefs of Mission, Rio...1950," Inter-American Economic Affairs Committee, 1945-1950, Box 5, National Archives, Record Group 353, cited in Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, second ed., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993) 109.

change (Varas 1989, Rouquié 1987, Petras 1990, Pinheiro 1991, Cotler 1979, Cardoso 1979, and others), cautioning that the passage to civilian government did not necessarily signify democratization of political power. Others highlighted electoral processes and elite pacts (Schmitter and O'Donnell 1986, Karl and Schmitter 1991, Huntington 1984), minimizing the significance of militarized structures and persisting military power.

In 1983, after the disastrous Falklands/Malvinas war, Argentina's military junta relinquished power to civilians. The newly elected administration of Raúl Alfonsín was confronted with a politicized military institution (including an intelligence apparatus that penetrated every area of society), a legacy of state terror and human rights abuses, a severe economic crisis and foreign debt, with attendant social costs, and long-repressed demands from subordinated social sectors excluded from politics by the armed forces. My theoretical concern in this study is to assess the political significance of enduring structures and ideology of the national-security state after democratizing civilian governments replace military rule.

Aims of this Study

A crucial theoretical issue is to understand more precisely the process of transformation of militarized systems with the advent of civilian government, and how (or if) political power is democratized. What are elements of continuity and what are elements of change in these states? How does the balance of power between two sectors of the state--the elected government and the coercive apparatus that has recently relinquished government--change over time, and what are the implications for democratization? To paraphrase Alain Rouquié (Rouquié 1987) the civilianization of the military state is not the same as the demilitarization and democratization of power. Put another way, an incoming democratic civilian government does not necessarily alter the authoritarian character of permanent structures of the state or expand the political power of the majority. The

armed forces, as the most powerful permanent apparatus of the state, remain a real or potential challenge to newly democratizing societies.

An assumption underlying this study is that the reestablishment of civilian government, democratic institutions, and regularized elections is only the first step toward democratic consolidation; in fact, in worst-case scenarios, such changes may mask continuing domination by powerful and undemocratic actors. The armed forces may be able to impose significant limits and controls upon the civilian regime which reflect military interests, prerogatives and concepts. Particularly in transitional periods, when new civilian governments are succeeding national-security states--organized by the armed forces on the basis of an ideologically-charged vision of national security--large segments of the armed forces may still hold anti-democratic and authoritarian beliefs. A heated clash between opposing views of state and society is inevitable. In most newly democratizing states, the armed forces continue to be a powerful political actor, with a vested interest in perpetuating their version of state and society and protecting their power and interests. The confinement of such military political power within constitutional bounds is a central task for democratizing forces.

This is obviously the case in Guatemala, where a dominant military has ruled behind the scenes during a series of civilian governments.[3] In Chile, the Pinochet government structured a number of national-security laws into the legal system before the democratic transition, and the 1980 "national-security" constitution continues to serve as the foundation for the civilian regime. In Brazil, six active-duty officers retained important ministry positions in the civilian government after

---

[3] After an aborted coup attempt in May 1993 which was massively opposed by the population, a human rights advocate became president in Guatemala. However, the military still wields preponderant power. For a background article on Guatemala and the impact of the national-security doctrine, see J. Patrice McSherry, "The Evolution of the National Security State: The Case of Guatemala," *Socialism and Democracy* 10 (Spring/Summer 1990), 121-153, and with co-author Raúl Molina Mejía, "Confronting the Question of Justice in Guatemala," *Social Justice*, Vol 19 No. 3 (Issue 49, Fall 1992), 1-28.

the transition, with important policy functions; the armed forces are still, by law, "guardians of law and order."[4] In Uruguay and most other countries, the self-amnesties imposed by the outgoing militaries--absolving themselves of responsibility for large-scale human rights violations and ratifying their traditional impunity--were accepted by the incoming civilian governments.[5]

This study examines the impact upon Argentina's democratization process of enduring structural remnants of the militarized national-security state. The national-security state is defined as one organized and run by the armed forces as an institution, based on expansive and politicized conceptions of national security which justify military domination of key aspects of national life. In Argentina, the military regime named *El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* by the armed forces (The Process of National Reorganization; referred to as the *Proceso* in this study) dominated national life from 1976 to 1983, and became known for its "dirty war"[6] and the disappearance of thousands of citizens. The massive intelligence apparatuses and special counterinsurgency forces of the three military branches and the federal police (and to a somewhat lesser extent the provincial police, the *Prefectura* and the *Gendarmería*[7]) were central institutions or *structures* of the national-security state. The *grupos de tarea*, "task forces" or terror squads made up of officers, police and right-wing civilians, were under military direction as well (see Chapter 4). During the 1980s, the structural

---

[4] See Jorge Zaverucha, "The Degree of Military Political Autonomy during the Spanish, Argentine and Brazilian Transitions," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 25 (May 1993) 283-299, for a recent article on the persistence of military prerogatives in Brazil.

[5] See J. Patrice McSherry, "Military Power, Impunity, and State-Society Change in Latin America," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXV:3 (September 1992), 463-488, for a discussion of similarities in various Latin American countries.

[6] As Alejandro Garro and Henry Dahl have noted, the term "dirty war" is actually a misnomer. First, "dirty" grossly minimizes the atrocities systematically carried out. "War" is also inaccurate, since most of the dead were victims of human rights violations in the clandestine centers of the armed forces, not killed in battle. See Garro and Dahl, "Legal Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Argentina: One Step Forward, and Two Steps Backward," *Human Rights Law Journal*, Vol. 8, Nos. 2-4 (1987) 291, n.25.

[7] The *Prefectura* is a coast guard, with responsibility for security in port areas; the *Gendarmería* a militarized internal security and border control force.

remnants of the national-security state--enduring counterinsurgency organizations, national-security bodies, entrenched military prerogatives and laws, and ideologies--profoundly influenced the democratization process. Former operatives, enduring intelligence bodies and counterinsurgency *comando* units[6] formed the epicenter of resistance to civilian control, supported by other sectors of the armed forces and civilian allies. This resistance included four insurrections against the civilian authorities by elements of the military-security forces. Moreover, these elements perpetuated the anti-democratic, messianic and *golpista* (coup-prone or coup-promoting) ideology that had characterized previous military attitudes.

This study focuses upon the dynamics and tensions in Argentina during the Alfonsín administration (1983-1989), as democratizing forces clashed with conservative sectors attempting to preserve the political capacities of the armed forces. While the Alfonsín administration did retire most of the generals who had led the military regimes from 1976-1983, and took various other important measures, its failure a) to implement a thoroughgoing reform of the armed forces, transforming their mission, organization and doctrine; b) to retire the lower-ranking officers known to be involved in human rights abuses; and c) to transform the intelligence apparatuses, resulted in serious problems. The politicized elements of the armed forces centered in the above-cited national-security apparatuses adopted a strategy of pressuring and conditioning the civilian government--often tacitly or explicitly supported by the high command--by stages and degrees to backtrack on some policies and accept a military voice in others. Increasingly, the government adopted military criteria for a range of policies related to justice, defense, and security, broadly defined.

This process of role-reexpansion and growing influence upon political decision-making was in the interest of the high command and "loyalist" sectors of the armed forces as well as the

---

[6] *Comandos* are elite special forces made up of professional troops (not conscripts), specializing in high-risk and covert operations.

insurrectionist sectors, despite the professed commitment of the former to constitutional rule. In a complex series of interactions among the rebellious forces, the loyalist commanders, and the civilian government, both rebellious and loyalist sectors of the armed forces sought some common political goals, despite differences in tactics. The most important were first, vindication of the dirty war, or "war against subversion" that occurred during the *Proceso;* second, an end to the trials and accountability to civilian justice; and third, preservation of the internal security functions of the armed forces. These elements were of utmost importance because they revealed the persistence of a politicized conception of the role of the armed forces, justifying military tutelage of civilian politics and a rejection of constitutional law. Moreover, these demands of the armed forces manifested the desire for the continuation of the core structures of the national-security state.

Methodology

Thus the question of the continuity of national-security structures, ideology and political influence, and their impact upon the process of democratization, are the central problems explored in this study. The continuity formulation does not imply that *no* changes took place after the Argentine transition to civilian government in 1983. There were clearly major and important changes. Rather, the emphasis is placed upon the conflicts and clashes among sectors striving to transform Argentina's militarized system, and those struggling to maintain an interventionist capacity for the armed forces. Neither does this analysis imply that *all* military actions were motivated solely by the desire for *political* gains, in the sense of seeking to affect the distribution of power in state and society. On the other hand, the case of Argentina demonstrates that military *institutional* interests became inextricably intertwined with military *political prerogatives* and interests in Argentina; some conflicts simultaneously embodied both.

The fundamental hypothesis that guided this study is that Argentina's armed forces (like

those in other Latin American countries) retained a core of counterinsurgency structures and ideology enduring from the national-security state, based on an expansive vision of national security which encompassed domestic politics. These embedded structures and ideology shaped the democratization process, affecting political participation, policy formulation, and relevant political actors. This, in turn, conditioned the form of democracy that evolved.

A corollary hypothesis is that a significant determinant of the volatile civil-military conflicts of the 1980s in Argentina was the effort by politicized elements of the military-security apparatus (indirectly supported by the rest of the armed forces) to include key military prerogatives and national-security values within the developing democratization process. This suggests that these conflicts were fundamentally political in nature; key segments of the armed forces sought to obtain certain political objectives (documented in the study). The complex process of confrontation, bargaining and pressure increased military power in important policy-making areas *within* the constitutional system and reinstituted a co-governing role for the armed forces.

These hypotheses generate four expectations regarding the degree of continuity of military national-security ideology, structures, and "dirty war" methods[9] after the democratic transition, and the level of military political intervention. The expectations are:

> *Ideology:* National-security values and ideology would persist, reflected in military statements, doctrines and "hypotheses of conflict" after the transition (e.g., the "ideological war" view, and hypotheses of conflict with "subversion" or the *internal* enemy).
>
> *Structures:* Military counterrevolutionary/repressive structures and organizations would persist within the state (e.g., politicized intelligence and internal security apparatuses penetrating civilian realms, ensuring a tutelary role in politics); the armed forces would resist civilian control and dismantling of these.
>
> *Dirty War Methods*: Practices demonstrating similar counterinsurgency-based methods, including politically-motivated attacks and acts of terrorism, by remnants of the national-

[9] In Argentina, the word "methodology" to describe such dirty war methods has passed into general usage. This study does not make use of this term because of first, its lack of precision and second, its euphemistic quality.

security state and/or politicized sectors of the military-security forces would continue.

Political intervention: The armed forces or sectors would attempt to pressure civilian government through means of open, extra-legal and coercive mechanisms in order to retain or expand their political influence and control.

a. The interests and demands of the armed forces would be reflected in public policy (beyond strictly military realms);
b. The armed forces' involvement would continue in civilian functions.

Part II of this study assesses data from the post-1983 period, organized and evaluated in light of these four expectations, in order to test the key hypotheses. In each area, the implications for democratic consolidation are analyzed.

Part I of this study provides a background on the politicization of the military in Argentina, documenting the development of the military as a political actor within a schematic historical context. Chapter 2 particularly highlights the emergence of the national-security doctrine in the context of the Cold War, and shows how it formed the basis for the national-security state. Chapter 3 examines the first Argentine national-security state (1966-1973). Chapter 3 also documents the gradual rise of social resistance and guerrilla organizations in opposition to this military state, culminating in the return of Juan Perón. Chapter 4 discusses the military's imposition of a more drastic national-security state (1976-1983), and the consolidation of national-security ideology, structures, and dirty war methods in this era. This chapter also shows that military planners were designing a transition to a guardian system in which civilians would take office, but norms, values and structures of the national-security state would continue, perpetuating military tutelage of politics.

In Part II, Chapter 5 examines the continuity of military national-security ideology, norms and concepts after the 1983 transition to civilian government. Chapter 6 analyzes the significance of the embedded remnants of the national-security state after the transition. Chapter 7 examines the persistence of dirty war methods after 1983, and Chapter 8 explores the particular mechanisms by which the armed forces increased their political power over time, through confrontations and bargaining with the Alfonsín administration. Chapter 9 provides a summary of the first years of the

Menem administration, assessing the degree of continuity of these trends. Chapter 10 assesses the findings of the study and draws some conclusions. The logic of the argument is that to the degree the above expectations are fulfilled, the hypotheses of the study are substantiated. That is, in transitions from highly repressive and ideological military states, the continued power and centrality of the armed forces, and persisting national-security structures and ideology, are major factors in shaping the democratization process.

This study employs a historical-structural analysis, defined by Cardoso and Faletto in 1979 as an approach that recognizes not just the structural conditions that constrain and shape political action and social life, but also the historical transformations of such structures through social movements and class conflicts.[10] The study highlights the ideological concepts and beliefs which were both a product of, and an influence upon, those structures and events. This method, inspired by the work of Robert Cox,[11] allows the analyst to reveal the dynamic, dialectical and intertwined relationship among ideas, structures and human action.

The Case of Argentina

Argentina provides an excellent test case for assessing the continuing power of the military and the institutionalization of national-security ideologies and structures after a transition to civilian government. First, Argentina's armed forces have a long and well-documented history of political involvement. In 1930, a faction of the army led by General José F. Uriburu, inspired by fascist and

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[10] Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) x.

[11] Cox, who uses Gramscian ideas on the level of the international system, shows how political ideas and ideologies can become material forces in themselves in the world political economy. See Robert Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), and Robert Cox, *Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

corporatist models of state and society, overthrew President Hipólito Yrigoyen in Argentina's first coup of the 20th century. Five more major coups followed over the next 46 years.[12] The Argentine armed forces became accustomed to governing; they considered themselves the supreme guardians of the nation, embodying the national essence, with a mission to guide an unruly civilian population along the path of order, security and development. These beliefs were fortified and deepened by the national-security doctrines of the 1950s and 1960s. Second, Argentina is a good test case because its "opening" process was accelerated after the armed forces lost a war with a foreign power (the 1982 Falklands-Malvinas war), a unique event in Latin America. Presumably, defeat in a war poses a situation of maximum advantage for democratizing forces. Two questions can be examined in such a situation: will a weakened military regain power after the transition, and how deeply are military ideologies and structures entrenched in the state?

It is important to note at the outset that the armed forces are not monolithic in Argentina.[13] Not every officer of the Argentine armed forces is authoritarian or anti-democratic. Indeed, many officers preferred Alfonsín in 1983, and others sought to leave military interference in politics behind. However, persisting remnants of the national-security apparatus not dismantled by the new civilian government served as mechanisms perpetuating the capacities and propensities of the armed forces to intervene in political life. Similarly, these structures tended to perpetuate the *golpista* strains in the political culture of the armed forces, reproducing the attitudes and values most adverse

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[12] There were also numerous "palace" or internal coups in which military leaders were replaced by others (as in 1944, 1945, 1955, 1970, 1971, and 1981).

[13] Part I demonstrates that for at least 60 years, the armed forces have been internally divided and at times in open conflict with one another. In the 1950s the armed forces were deeply divided on the question of President Juan Perón's leadership; the navy was instrumental in the coup of 1955 which overthrew Perón, along with factions of the army and the air force. In 1962 a major ideological divide linked to Peronism ultimately resulted in armed conflict between factions of the army. See Chapter 3. In the 1980s, internal conflicts in the armed forces regarding their mission and relation to civilian power, particularly within the army, were a central factor in the three *carapintada* uprisings against the *Estado Mayor Conjunto*--equivalent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff--and the Alfonsín government.

to democratization and civilian control.[14]

The armed forces in Argentina, as in most of Latin America, are a closed, insulated and secretive institution. In Argentina, the military "family" is enormous, including active and retired officers and their extended families. This military family holds values and culture distinct from those of the civilian world; it lives within its own political culture in an almost clannish manner.[15] The effect is as though two parallel worlds, civilian and military, uneasily co-inhabit the same country.[16] The armed forces have their own educational systems, legislation, hospital and health care systems, justice and court systems. They have their own view of the history of the nation, in which the armed forces have played the dominant part. Since the 1930 coup that ended 70 years of civilian rule, the Argentine officer corps has been deeply involved in the political process: coup plotting, insurrections, or actual military rule have conditioned the views of every generation of Argentine officers since. In Argentina, given the intense politicization of the armed forces, the three branches have often been compared to three political parties.[17]

While political influence by the armed forces after the transition in December 1983 never really ceased, the armed forces had largely disengaged from government by then, and had dismantled many structures of the dirty war. Further, the most vocal military demands upon the incoming

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[14] An irony noted by Argentine analysts is that while the most extreme and *golpista* sectors of the armed forces have usually been the ones to organize coups and coup attempts, the liberal sector has most benefited, positioned in the most important functions and politically dominant after military takeovers.

[15] These ideas are explored more fully in the main text.

[16] One navy officer inadvertently gave an example of this phenomenon when he said that selected young officers now attend civilian universities in order to get acquainted with "the external world." Interview with navy officer conducted by author, September 22, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[17] Within the armed forces themselves there is a saying: "The navy is a clan, the air force is a tribe, and the army is a confederation of tribes--and one or two are always thinking of leaving." Interview with army officer conducted by author, May 14, 1992, Buenos Aires. I interpret this rueful statement to mean that the navy is internally coherent and unified, the air force is united by its fundamentalist (often absolutist-Catholic) views, and the army is a conglomeration of internally competing and sometimes hostile sub-groups.

government were publicly rejected by the Alfonsín administration at first. In short, a semi-public "pacted transition"[18] apparently did not occur in Argentina, due to the state of crisis within the armed forces and public discredit after the humiliating 1982 defeat in the Malvinas. However, there is substantial evidence that a continual process of "conversations" between the armed forces and the incoming government did occur.

The internal military crisis, significantly, had a powerful impact on the military's national-security doctrine itself, because 1) the classic East versus West, subversion versus democracy core of the doctrine was thrown into question as the armed forces met defeat at the hands of a Western democratic country, 2) the United States, Rio Pact ally and former ideological partner against subversion, took a pro-British position, and 3) the combat performance of most of the Argentine forces was poor, raising institutional questions about the mission and doctrine centered on internal security (these themes are fully discussed later in the study). Given the collapse of the will to govern by the military, and civilian rejection, the armed forces sought a strategic withdrawal, to rebuild their forces and analyze the lessons of defeat. However, almost immediately in the first year of civilian government, sectors of the armed forces began a process of pressuring the new regime through political-psychological and at times violent means in order to achieve their objectives. In time, the armed forces began a slow-motion process of trying to regain the power and prestige lost at the end of their last regime, a process which was simultaneously an internal struggle for power among different factions of the armed forces, especially in the army.

In sum, in Argentina the armed forces were less able to structure and control the transition

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[18] This term has been used by Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, and Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe Schmitter, to describe transitions where the armed forces negotiated political agreements, explicit or implicit, with incoming civilians. See Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), and Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," UNESCO, *International Social Science Journal* 128 (May 1991), 269-285.

than the militaries in other Latin American countries in the 1980s. They were not able to install a hybrid regime, for example, in which military officers would continue to hold ministries and other positions, or choose civilian allies for such posts (the original plan). The war had obliterated whatever vestiges of support remained for the dictatorship from all social sectors; many elements of the population were openly bitter and angry. Internally, the regime was racked by strife; the navy and air force left the *junta* and all three forces engaged in hostile mutual recriminations.

Perhaps even more important, the international community, led by the Argentine *junta's* former ally, the Reagan administration, imposed a virtual quarantine upon Argentina, cutting off aid and trade (see Chapter 4). While the majority of the officer corps did *not* want to return to direct control of the state in the 1980s--and moreover, given United States opposition, probably could not do so[19]--all sectors of the armed forces shared the objective of achieving as much power as was possible *as a co-governing force* or factor of state power *within* the constitutional system. In other words, given the impracticality of another coup, military sectors adopted a strategy of pressuring and conditioning the civilian government by stages and degrees. This meant that on several levels, various elements of the national-security apparatus and the armed forces implemented tactics and strategies to pressure the civilian government and democratizing sectors in civil society to accept the legitimacy of a political or tutelary role for the military. This interpretation, examined further in the study, contrasts with those positing that military conflicts in the 1980s were not political, but were rather mainly internal or professional in nature (David Pion-Berlin and Ernesto López 1992, and Pion-Berlin 1992).[20]

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[19] Several military sources told me this quite openly in interviews in Buenos Aires in 1992.

[20] For example, Pion-Berlin and López argue that the military uprisings during the Alfonsín administration were "not motivated by a desire to undermine the constitutional order" but rather were aimed to change certain policies and resolve "professional crises." See David Pion-Berlin and Ernesto López, "A House Divided: Crisis, Cleavage, and Conflict in the Argentine Army," in Edward C. Epstein, ed., *The New Argentine Democracy: The Search for a Successful Formula* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1992) 64, 74. Pion-Berlin

Enduring National-Security Ideology and Structures

A significant part of this civil-military struggle in the 1980s was carried on at the *political* level, in the realm of ideology, in a virtual battle over which version of Argentina's shared historical memory would predominate. Important sectors of the armed forces (documented in the text) openly spoke and wrote of this struggle as a Gramscian-style ideological war.[21] The armed forces believed that the political-ideological realm--utilizing Antonio Gramsci's theories--was the current battlefield in the "war against subversion." Despite winning the military battle in the dirty war, they saw the armed forces as now losing the political-ideological war between the armed forces and the forces of subversion, represented by elements of the Alfonsín government and forces within civil society. This struggle was crystallized in the battle over language, specifically how to characterize the military repression of the mid- to late 1970s. Was it state terror, utilizing savage, calculated human rights violations, as portrayed by the presidentially-appointed *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (CONADEP), or a noble "war against subversion" with some understandable excesses, a front in the Third World War, fought--and won--by the armed forces? Thus, sharply conflicting visions of Argentine history, state and society held by the government, civil society, and various segments of the armed forces manifested themselves in the explosive tensions and conflicts prevalent in the 1980s in Argentina.

In terms of enduring *structures* of the national-security state, this study particularly examines elements linked to the military intelligence apparatus (see Chapter 6). Even before the *Proceso*, an expansive military intelligence system had penetrated every aspect of Argentine life. After the 1976

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makes a similar argument in "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*, (October 1992), 83-102.

[21] The armed forces took Italian communist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) very seriously and studied his work as part of counterinsurgency instruction. Throughout the 1980s, in military journals and statements, officers repeatedly referred to Gramsci's emphasis upon the political and ideological realm in the class struggle.

coup that installed the *Proceso*, these bodies acquired a virtually omnipotent role in Argentine society. *Secretaría de Informaciones del Estado*, or SIDE, the ostensibly civilian central intelligence agency, employed thousands of persons, many military officers. Each force also had its own intelligence apparatus: Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, and Air Force Intelligence; each military governor and corps commander also created his own intelligence bodies. The federal police force had its own intelligence apparatus, as did the federal penitentiary system and the provincial police forces. The *Gendarmería*, a paramilitary force with a broad mission encompassing both police and military aspects, had its own intelligence body, as did another quasi-military force in Argentina, the *Prefectura*, a coast guard linked to the navy. With the 1976 coup, the armed forces assumed centralized control of all these security and intelligence forces and incorporated them into the repressive apparatus.

Further, death squad organizations had arisen in Argentina in the early 1970s, born of right-wing Peronist elements within the state, military intelligence officers, and police, and carried out hundreds of assassinations and terrorist bombings between 1973 and 1976. The dreaded Triple A (the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance) was believed to be organized and headed by right-wing Peronist José López Rega, a former policeman obsessed with the occult, who was Perón's long-time secretary and who later became Isabel Perón's powerful Social Welfare Minister. In short, even before the 1976 coup, a massive infrastructure of repression was in place, sponsored by the state.

After the 1976 coup, intelligence officers and teams conducted surveillance in all state enterprises, many private businesses, university departments, political parties and other organizations, and monitored the telephone calls and mail of thousands of persons. Doormen, building supervisors, taxi drivers and repair men served as parts of an extensive informant network, creating an atmosphere of fear and suspicion among neighbors. The vast terror apparatus included

some 340 clandestine detention centers[22] and numerous commando squads that disappeared, tortured and assassinated individuals,[23] backed by all the resources of the state. The intelligence apparatuses dominated by the armed forces became all-powerful in Argentina, subject to no oversight and accountable only to themselves.

After the transition to civilian government in 1983, the Alfonsín administration was unable to crack the power of these entrenched intelligence institutions nor bring them under civilian control, despite its initial attempts. Alfonsín himself said in 1986 that the intelligence organizations had proven to be "impenetrable."[24] As a Radical Congressional aide put it, "In the 1980s army intelligence was a fundamental political actor in Argentine politics."[25] There was substantial evidence, discussed below, of intelligence involvement among the *golpista* forces that challenged civilian control, using both violent and non-violent politico-psychological tactics, during the 1980s.

It was very difficult to determine whether these campaigns were part of an institutional reaction by the armed forces against civilian government or were actions implemented by autonomous groups within these institutions; as Alfred Stepan notes, the intelligence apparatuses are the most difficult to control, even by their military superiors. In *Rethinking Military Politics*[26] and other work, Stepan stresses the significance of the autonomy of the intelligence bodies. He argues that in Brazil, the desire of the military high command itself to bring them under control was one of the determinants of the liberalization process. My findings in Argentina did not lead me to the

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[22] Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (CONADEP), *Nunca Más* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1985) 479. These were dismantled before the transition in 1983 by the armed forces; some buildings were literally destroyed.

[23] CONADEP documented nearly 9000 cases; however, most sources estimate the real numbers to be two or three times that high. Figures from 15,000 to 30,000 are cited by Argentine human rights organizations.

[24] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 12, 1986.

[25] Interview with José Manuel Ugarte conducted by author, Buenos Aires, October 29, 1992.

[26] Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

definite conclusion that these bodies were "out of control." Rather, in Argentina the intelligence bodies and para-intelligence bodies seemed to require at least the tolerance of the armed forces in order to operate, indicating that their actions--while not necessarily an institutional response by the armed forces--were useful to the high command in achieving common ends. Moreover, the insistence of the armed forces high command upon retaining their dominant role in intelligence and internal security during the 1980s and early 1990s was another of the core civil-military conflicts, along with the struggle for vindication of the dirty war and renewed military prestige.

These disputes, encapsulating the two elements of persisting national-security *structures* and *ideology*, indicated the continuation of politicized views within the armed forces. An expansive definition of the subversive threat, still held by important sectors of the armed forces in the 1980s, continued to justify military intervention in key aspects--political, social, and cultural--of the nation's life, and the prolongation of hypotheses of conflict based on internal enemies. The persistence of these national-security norms, values and ideology meant that military loyalty to civilian control was conditional; the armed forces still believed in their right to supervise and judge civilian politics autonomously and possibly replace civilian governments in the higher interest of the nation (in their terms).

Another structural phenomenon during the 1980s, with important implications for democratization, was the parallel evolution of two contradictory sets of law and legal precedent regarding the internal security role of the armed forces. These two bodies of law were progressively established by the executive branch and by the legislature through two means of law-making, beginning in 1984 and continuing into the 1990s. While Congress was debating and finally passing historic new laws restricting the role of the armed forces to external defense (the Defense Law and Internal Security Law), a series of executive decrees and policies (some secret) authorizing an internal security role were promulgated by Alfonsín and later Menem, *counteracting* the work of the

legislature. Many studies rightly emphasize the achievement represented by the passage of the Defense Law and the Internal Security Law, and posit this as proof that the armed forces are removed today from a role in internal security. Unfortunately, the situation seems to me considerably more complex: first, two antithetical conceptions of the role of the armed forces persist in Argentina, both with at least some basis in the legal arena, and second, the establishment of legal norms does not necessarily mean they are obeyed or enforced (especially if the enforcers disagree with them). Military sources in 1992 claimed that Alfonsín's decrees fulfilled the main demands of the armed forces for an internal security role, which Congressional laws denied them.[27] Furthermore, the passage of these decrees perpetuated and justified the national-security values and ideology of the armed forces, which in turn affected the consolidation of democracy in Argentina, in ways which are detailed later in this study.

Other Sociopolitical Factors Affecting the Transition to Democracy

Clearly, the problems of authoritarianism and blockages to democratization in Argentina go much deeper than the political role of the military, requiring a caveat to the above analysis. These problems are deeply entrenched in the nature of society itself. There are features of a sort of militarized political culture; Guillermo O'Donnell refers to "micro-despotisms" reproduced on every level of society.[28] The political culture is hierarchical, status- and rank-oriented, and authoritarian at various levels of social interaction throughout society, reinforced and perpetuated by other

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[27] Interviews with army sources conducted by author, August 30, 1992 and September 24, 1992, Buenos Aires. See also Rosendo Fraga, *La Cuestión Militar, 1987-1989* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría, 1989) 96.

[28] Guillermo O'Donnell, "Democracia en la Argentina *Micro* y *Macro*," in Oscar Oszlak, ed., *'Proceso,' crisis y transición democrática/Parte 1* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1984) 13-30. See this book, especially the insightful discussion by O'Donnell, for an examination of the authoritarian aspects of Argentine society and the effects of the *Proceso* in terms of militarizing society.

institutions such as the Church, the judiciary and legal system, the educational system and the family. The heritage of the Spanish absolutist state is recognizable in many state structures, where individual rights are not the highest value.[29]

While the authoritarian aspects of the political culture certainly have to do with the legacy of repeated military coups and military regimes since 1930, they are also evidence of the strength of the *corporate interests* in Argentine society. In Argentina, the term "corporate interests" refers to functional groups with a strong sense of self-identity and shared sectoral interests.[30] Argentina's corporate groups have historically taken a role in policy-making via direct intervention with the executive. The corporate "factors of power" in Argentina were identified by José Luis de Imaz in his classic 1964 study *Los Que Mandan*[31] as the armed forces, industrialists and land owners, union bureaucrats, and the Catholic Church--and this typology is still widely accepted in Argentina.[32] These corporate factors of power have been sufficiently powerful in Argentina to bypass or control weak democratic institutions and the citizenry; they have marginalized the political parties historically and sought to control the government directly.[33]

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[29] For example, the state registry forbids parents to give babies certain names or names spelled in certain ways. The judiciary system exhibits authoritarian traits: judges wield great power, with sole decision-making powers over the accused, who are not allowed counsel or other rights in the initial stages of trials.

[30] The term "corporate interests" is used in this study in this Argentine sense, to refer to these social groups, as distinct from the general U.S. usage of the term, referring to business enterprises.

[31] José Luis de Imaz, *Los Que Mandan*, translated and with an introduction by Carlos A. Astiz, with Mary F. McCarthy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970, originally published 1964, Buenos Aires). See Table of Contents and individual chapters on each social grouping.

[32] See, for example, Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 149; Edward C. Epstein, "Democracy in Argentina," in Edward C. Epstein, ed., *The New Argentine Democracy: The Search for a Successful Formula* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1992) 14-15.

[33] Given this, Argentina cannot be easily described as a "corporatist" system, as the term is generally used in the literature. Most political scientists define corporatism as a set of institutional arrangements by which the state integrates, structures and controls the political participation of interest groups and social sectors, thus constraining their autonomy. In Argentina, the corporate factors of power have rather retained their autonomy and wielded powerful influence upon the government. For a discussion of corporatism, see Kenneth P.

Perón originally incorporated labor and national business into the state, in "normal" corporatist fashion, by means of the Peronist Party (created in 1946), state-controlled unionism,[34] and the *Confederación General Económica*. He incorporated women through the *Partido Peronista Femenino* and the Eva Perón Foundation. His power base was among these sectors and the army. This system, imposed after years of military and authoritarian rule, solidified the *anti-liberal* nature of Argentina's state and society (while paradoxically broadening the participation of the working classes). However, over time labor in particular gained so much power within state and society that it was able to checkmate government (especially Radical government) policies[35] and challenge business interests. In other words, labor as a corporate power was able to overpower weak civilian governments, as were the armed forces and business sectors.

Kalman Silvert argued that Argentina's state and society resembled pre-national, traditional-medieval forms. Weak governments were manipulated by "institutionalized power centers [which] extend their heads directly into the executive. The country's basic decisions are made *in camera*, the result of deliberations among the heads of the organized power groups."[36] The groups he names are the same corporate interests named above, although Silvert does not use this term.

Erickson, "Brazil: Corporative Authoritarianism, Democratization and Dependency" in Howard Wiarda and Harvey Kline, *Latin American Politics and Development*, second ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985) 162-164, 180; Philippe Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" in Frederick P. Pike and Thomas Stritch, eds., *The New Corporatism: Social-Political Structures in the Iberian World* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1974); Alfred Stepan, *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Kenneth P. Erickson, *The Brazilian Corporative State and Working-Class Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

[34] Perón utilized the Law of Professional Associations in 1945 and his new constitution of 1949 as instruments to incorporate labor. For a discussion of this, see David Rock, *Argentina 1516-1987* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 284-289.

[35] For a good analysis of this phenomenon, see Benjamin A. Most, *Changing Authoritarian Rule and Public Policy in Argentina, 1930-1970* (Boulder: Lynn Rienner Publishers, GSIS Monograph Series in World Affairs, University of Denver, 1991).

[36] Kalman Silvert, "The Costs of Anti-Nationalism: Argentina," in Kalman Silvert, ed., *Expectant Peoples, Nationalism and Development* (New York: Random House, 1963) 358.

Rather, he calls this form of social organization *syndicalist*: "an idea of hierarchical order of medieval society"[37] with religious and anti-pluralist overtones.[38]

In the 1980s, the corporate actors--the armed forces; Peronist union leaders, allied with the official governing bloc of the Peronists; the Church; the dominant economic elites (landed elements and those linked to transnational capital)--remained the most powerful forces in Argentina, most with extremely conservative views. Some or all of the above non-military actors, often allied with sectors of the armed forces, attempted to block many efforts by the Alfonsín administration to democratize the system and change the status quo.[39] The role and interests of the hegemonic power in the hemisphere--the United States government--were also of fundamental importance, as will be demonstrated. Alfonsín's attempts to reduce the power of Argentina's corporate interests were largely unsuccessful. Then, the Menem administration sought to reconstruct the classical Peronist alliance with the armed forces, despite Menem's neoliberal restructuring of the state.

In sum, while this study focuses on civil-military relations, it is insufficient to look *solely* at the role of the military, ignoring other sociopolitical actors, to fully comprehend the difficult and complex process of transformation and continuity in a society long marked by authoritarianism, military rule, and unstable democracy. In the case of Argentina, the role of President Alfonsín himself was contradictory and complex. Alfonsín's decree of trials for the *juntas* was unprecedented

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[37] Ibid., 359.

[38] Silvert uses the concept of "anti-nationalism" to argue that these elites in Argentina have decided who constitutes "the nation" and have excluded whole segments of Argentine society from the nation. A good example of this would be the virulent anti-Semitism of the factors of power in Argentina; Jews have not been considered true Argentines by sectors of the right and the armed forces. During the *Proceso*, Jewish prisoners were treated more severely by military-security forces and anti-Jewish violence escalated after the 1976 coup. See Leo Senkman, *Antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1989); Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds., *The Argentine Right* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1993).

[39] For example, Alfonsín's education reform was blocked by the Church and conservative allies; his union reform was blocked by the Peronist unions and their allies.

in Latin America and sent a strong signal to military forces throughout the region. Often civilian elites have conspired with and defended the armed forces in order to maintain a protective front against the discontent of subordinate classes. The trials and eventual imprisonment of formerly all-powerful military commanders was a sharp break with the past, which sent shock waves through the armed forces and challenged their traditional impunity.

Yet Alfonsín's posture had a dual character. From the beginning of his administration, Alfonsín also sought to restrict the trials of accused human rights violators both numerically and substantively. For example, he sought to exclude lower-ranking officers who were "following orders," despite longstanding international conventions unequivocally declaring this justification legally invalid. He also attempted to limit the duration of the judicial process with various measures including the *Punto Final* law. The *Ley de Obediencia Debida* (Due Obedience Law) was essentially a disguised amnesty law for lower-ranking military officers, issued after an insurrection by a hard-line faction of the armed forces. These measures involved clear examples of executive interference in the judicial process, which had undemocratic "snowball" effects.

While part of the reason for Alfonsín's attempts to restrict the impact of the trials was the result of increasing pressure from right-wing sectors of the armed forces, backed by "loyalist" sectors, they also derived from other factors. First, sectors of the Radical Party had often sought alliances with the armed forces in Argentina's history. Alfonsín himself sought to establish working relations with the military from the outset. After the 1983 election, the more conservative voices in the party--including those who had participated in negotiations with the *Proceso* juntas about a planned "military-civilian convergence"--wielded growing influence in the administration. Second, the economic crisis and the debt burden confronting the civilian government increasingly narrowed Alfonsín's options. Third, Alfonsín was faced with opposition from *all* of the traditional corporate factors of power in Argentina, which allied at times with the armed forces. As a result of these

factors, the president increasingly sought to placate the armed forces as an institution while denouncing the "excesses" of the military repression.

The government argued passionately that its conciliatory measures toward the armed forces and increasing acceptance of military standards in key policy areas were necessary to preserve the democratic system. However, many Argentines bitterly questioned this argument. In fact, the evidence seems to suggest that Alfonsín's policy of concessions encouraged rather than appeased the most undemocratic sectors of the military. In short, the situation is complex; Argentina, like all countries, defies unidimensional explanations. The problem cannot be reduced to a narrow view of the armed forces as the sole significant actor or the sole obstacle to democratization; there were social sectors and politically powerful actors who continued to see their interests served by preventing or limiting reform of the armed forces.[40]

Review of the Theoretical Literature

This study aims to shed light on several theoretical debates in the discipline, concerning the following issues: 1) the determinants of the rise of military states in the 1960s-1980s; 2) the origins and processes of democratization; 3) the relation of the military as a political actor to other social forces (or, the "autonomy" of the military); and 4) democratization of the state as well as the government.

1. Determinants of the Rise of National-Security States

As mentioned above, the national-security doctrine and ideology of the armed forces became the theoretical justification for a form of militarized state antithetical to democracy. That is, the

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[40] Clearly there are macro-level influences upon Latin America's democratization processes as well, including the socioeconomic crisis affecting large sectors of the population within the region, the widespread problem of political corruption, the growing penetration of drug-trafficking, and growing popular disillusionment with politicians. For a good overview, see Richard L. Millett, "Is Latin American Democracy Sustainable?" *North-South Issues*, Vol. II, No. 3, University of Miami, 1993.

doctrine served as the organizational and philosophical foundation for a new form of state, the national-security state. This conception of the national-security state differs from Guillermo O'Donnell's original construct of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state[41] and Karen Remmer's construct of the exclusionary-authoritarian state,[42] because I place greater emphasis than they do upon the *ideological and organizational centrality of the national-security doctrine* as the foundation for this type of state.[43]

In other words, my concept of the national-security state, like Remmer's concept of the exclusionary-authoritarian state, emphasizes *political* and *ideological* variables. This view, while accepting certain elements of O'Donnell's classic theory of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state, contrasts with his original view that these regimes in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay were the product of a particular stage of development (the exhaustion of the "easy" stage of import-substitution industrialization) in dependent capitalist Southern Cone countries.

According to O'Donnell's thesis on bureaucratic-authoritarianism (BA), the 1966 coup in Argentina occurred because foreign capital, the upper classes, and the military perceived that labor and populist politicians posed a threat to the basic capitalist parameters of society. The economic elites, military officers and technocratic sectors who formed the coup coalition considered labor demands, strikes and general political influence to be incompatible with further capitalist

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[41] Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*, op.cit. In later work, O'Donnell places more emphasis on the "threat from below." See *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[42] Karen Remmer, *Military Rule in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) 7.

[43] It should be noted that Guillermo Monkman's dissertation--which came to my attention after I wrote this study--parallels my analysis regarding the centrality of the national-security doctrine in Latin America (and particularly Argentina). In this sense, each study provides confirmation of the other by making a similar analysis and interpretation of the evidence. His dissertation, however, focuses on the impact of the national-security doctrine on the foreign policy of the *Proceso* military, particularly its hegemonic aspirations and interventionist activities in Bolivia and in Central America. See Guillermo Alberto Monkman, "The Institutionalization of the Doctrine of National Security in Argentina: The Military and Foreign Policy," Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1992.

development, especially new investment by foreign corporations, in the context of the globalization of production taking place in the 1960s. O'Donnell argues that the ISI model was exhausted; realizing this, the new dominant coalition established a new state based on the political and economic exclusion of the working class and the embrace of foreign capital as a means to "deepen" the productive structure of the country and pull it out of crisis.

O'Donnell's model has been criticized by a number of analysts over the years.[44] Albert O. Hirschman rejects theories of economic causation, e.g. that the BA state was "necessary" at a certain stage of economic development. He argues that O'Donnell downplays political factors such as the fear of ruling groups of the Cuban revolution and its ramifications.[45] José Serra, similarly, says O'Donnell pays insufficient attention to political determinants, and asserts that the military regimes had no such notion of deepening and in fact did not take measures to facilitate this.[46] Both Julio Cotler and Fernando H. Cardoso question O'Donnell's use of the concept of "BA state," arguing that there is insufficient distinction and even confusion between the concepts of *state* and *regime*. Both note that a similar state (e.g., capitalist and dependent) can coexist with various forms of political regime (authoritarian, fascist, corporatist or democratic).[47] Benjamin Most[48] challenges O'Donnell's stress on the significance of changing dominant coalitions. He questions the capacity of new governing elites or political coalitions to effect great policy changes, arguing that

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[44] See, for example, David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Most, *Changing Authoritarian Rule...*, op.cit.

[45] Albert O. Hirschman, "The Turn to Authoritarianism in Latin America and the Search for Its Economic Determinants," 71, in Collier, ibid.

[46] José Serra, "Three Mistaken Theses Regarding the Connection between Industrialization and Authoritarian Regimes," 99-164, in Collier, ibid.

[47] See below for my discussion of state, regime and government. Julio Cotler, "State and Regime: Comparative Notes on the Southern Cone and the 'Enclave' Societies," 255; and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "On the Characterization of Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America," 38-39, in Collier, op.cit.

[48] Benjamin Most, *Changing Authoritarian Rule...*, op.cit. This entire book is a response to O'Donnell.

the Argentine case demonstrates the power of permanent bureaucracies to block new policies over time. That is, these bureaucracies, rather than changing governing elites, wield decisive weight in terms of actual implementation of policy; changes of the governing coalition matter less than the continuity of powerful bureaucracies.

O'Donnell's conception, in my view, still has great value: its insight and grasp of the complex array of socioeconomic and political events giving rise to new types of military rule are still compelling. However, the concept of BA needs to be reviewed. First, very similar forms of the national-security state were imposed across a wide range of countries from less developed (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Bolivia) to more highly developed (Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil), and all within the same time period (1960s-1980s). This suggests strongly that *stage of development* is not the key variable.[49] Second, the name "bureaucratic-authoritarian" itself leaves unclear the preponderance of military power in these states and their fundamental *organizational and ideological basis in the national-security doctrine*. For example, several authors in the Collier book use Mexico--a bureaucratic and authoritarian state, but one *without* a ruling military--as an example of a BA state. This sort of conceptual confusion would not occur if the national-security state definition were applied. Third, the original model (O'Donnell 1973) does stress economic determinants, specifically the pressures resulting from late industrialization in a dependent-capitalist state, more than military and elite perceptions of the threat from below and military national-security interests, values and concepts.

As extensively documented in Chapter 2, the politico-ideological context of the Cold War and international actors had a powerful influence upon these values and concepts. First, key U.S. policy-makers envisioned the Third World (including Latin America) as a battleground between capitalism and communism, liberal democracy and one-party-systems. The expansion of U.S.

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[49] Remmer makes a similar point. See Remmer, op.cit., 7-8.

corporations into new areas throughout the world, resulting in an increasingly globalized capitalist world economy, added further justification for a global definition of U.S. interests. French and American counterrevolutionary and counterinsurgency doctrines emerging from anti-colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria were important influences upon the Argentine (and other Latin American) armed forces. The inter-American system led by the United States was also central in fostering the Latin American national-security doctrine. Especially after the Cuban revolution, U.S. national-security officials saw U.S. political, economic and security interests to be best served in the "U.S. backyard" by "strong" anticommunist governments, and were often willing to accept military rule. That is, the perceived national-security interests of the United States in Latin America often served to legitimate militaries-in-government.[30] In the Latin American militaries, new Cold War and anticommunist justifications blended with older military concepts of their privileged national role to form the new national-security doctrine.

The state type imposed by the militaries across the region--the national-security state--was thus a product of international, national and military-institutional interests. The coercive power of the state was utilized to forcibly exclude large sectors of the popular classes, the left, political parties, intellectuals, labor--all considered national-security threats--from politics. Violent repression, justified on national security grounds, and the targeting of citizens as potential or actual enemies of the state, were central traits of the national-security states.

O'Donnell never ignores these elements, contrary to some criticisms, especially in his later work. In 1979 he wrote the role of these military states was "guarantor and organizer of the

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[30] For critical discussions of this history, see Kevin J. Middlebrook and Carlos Rico, eds., *The United States and Latin America in the 1980s* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, second printing, 1988), especially Sérgio Bitar, "Economics and Security: Contradictions in U.S.-Latin American Relations" and Cole Blasier, "Security: The Extracontinental Dimension;" and Evelyne Huber Stephens, "Democracy in Latin America: Recent Developments in Comparative Historical Perspective," *Latin American Research Review* (Spring 1990) 163.

domination exercised through a class structure subordinated to the upper fractions of a highly oligopolized and transnationalized bourgeoisie...in which the specialists in coercion have decisive weight."[51] As he points out, the coup coalitions that formed the basis of support for the Argentine national-security states (1966-1973 and 1976-1983) expressed the *confluence of interests* among the armed forces and their allies among corporate and financial interests, both foreign and national;[52] technocrats; and elements of the right-wing Peronist unions, with the "green light" from the U.S. executive branch.

This form of state had a clear class bias; its economic policy generally benefited certain socioeconomic elites. This bias can be discerned on several levels: 1) the "threat from below"--including those who peacefully called for social change or reform--was considered to be the main enemy of the state; 2) the national-security states tended to impose forms of political economy favorable to internationally-linked sectors of capital, at the expense of national capital and subordinate classes; 3) these states implemented various policies prohibiting the right to strike and union organizing, while giving incentives to capital. In Argentina, the economy ministers of military regimes have almost always been members of the Argentine Rural Society, the organization of the land-owning elites.

Analysts such as Hector Schamis, David Rock, and Juan Corradi[53] have shown that the

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[51] O'Donnell, "Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy," in Collier, op.cit., 292-293.

[52] In Argentina, the 1966 coup was backed by big capital, organized in *El Instituto para el Desarrollo de Ejecutivos de la Argentina* (IDEA). This group was founded by big business groups in 1960 and administered by a council including representatives of Fabricaciones Militares, Dupont Chemical, General Electric, IBM, Shell, First National City Bank, Esso, and Bunge & Born. IDEA also received assistance from U.S. AID. See Chapter 3. The 1976 coup also had the backing of powerful business sectors as well as the Church and some union leaders.

[53] Hector Schamis, "Reconceptualizing Latin American Authoritarianism in the 1970s: From Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism to Neoconservatism," *Comparative Politics* V. 23, No. 2 (January 1991); David Rock, *Argentina...*, op.cit, 368-370; Juan Corradi, *The Fitful Republic: Economics, Politics and Society in*

military in Argentina's 1976 national-security state, in alliance with sectors of the internationalized elites, sought: a) to totally transform the populist, interventionist state of the *Peronistas*, b) to reassert the hegemony of transnational elites, and c) to reintegrate Argentina into the rapidly changing world economy. Neoconservative (or neoliberal; the words, paradoxically, are used interchangeably in the literature) policies were implemented by the military regime after 1976 to restructure the economy and respond to both a crisis of capital accumulation and the perceived need of dominant elites to radically change the clientelistic welfare role of the state. The regime took steps to "shrink" the role of state (to a certain point) as a mechanism for redistribution of wealth and a site of political bargaining, while expanding its repressive and intelligence apparatuses. Schamis[54] demonstrates that the "Keynesian consensus" operative since the 1930s collapsed in the early 1970s in Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America, especially in the Southern Cone; the economic elites were no longer willing to accept the class consensus represented by the redistributive state. The central issue was *who would pay the costs* of the developmental crisis in these countries.

In short, powerful economic interests, allied with the armed forces, sought to terminate the populist state so that allocation of resources would be determined by market mechanisms rather than political negotiation. Labor--considered too powerful--was to be excluded as a political participant in policy-making and forced to bear the brunt of the crisis. Thus, Corradi, Pion-Berlin and Lopez, Rock[55] and others argue that the repression during the *Proceso* was a necessary complement to the

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Argentina (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), especially Ch. 9, and "Military Government and State Terrorism in Argentina," in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., eds., *The Politics of AntiPolitics*, second ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) 335-344.

[54] Hector Schamis, "Conservative Political Economy and Privatization: Comparative Reflections on Chile and Great Britain," Conference Paper 33, Columbia University Institute of Latin American and Iberian Studies, 1990.

[55] Corradi, ibid.; Rock, op.cit.; David Pion-Berlin and George Lopez, "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979," in *International Studies Quarterly* 25, (1991).

marketization of the economy and the transformation of the populist state.[56] As structures which gave a dominant voice to domestic capital and workers were forcibly dismantled, repression eliminated any opposition or potential opposition. The "threat from below" represented by the left was also, clearly, a key target of state repression, justified by the national-security doctrine.

To summarize this section, my concept of *national-security state* is utilized here as a means to capture and highlight the political and ideological determinants of the emergence of these states. The term has greater descriptive and analytical power than the others cited above, in my view. This is because these states represented a particular organization of power in which the armed forces (with the support of powerful non-military actors) deliberately and radically reconstructed state and society on the basis of the national-security doctrine. That is, the doctrine was not solely a military creation, but a project with significant support from sectors of national and transnational capital and international actors.

2. *The Determinants and Processes of Democratization*

"Democracy" is a concept often used, but often left undefined; or, "democracy" is assumed to mean a liberal system like that of the Western countries. In fact, different theories of democracy posit radically different sets of power relations between state and citizens and between sectors of the citizenry. The first step in discussing democratization must be to clarify the meaning of the term.

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[56] There are more recent examples of this perceived affinity between repression and economic modernization. As one example, after the March 1991 coup in Thailand, the portfolio manager of the Thai fund for Morgan Stanley & Co. said, "The coup is bullish. A developing country that is bootstrapping itself has a lot of tough decisions to make, and the democratic process may not be the best way to do it." From Jonathan Fuerbringer, *World Markets* column, "Thai Stocks: Unharmed by a Coup," *New York Times*, March 3, 1991. Corporate instigation of and involvement in coups has been documented in other cases; probably the most well-known are the role of ITT in Chile, 1973, and the United Fruit Co. in Guatemala, 1954. In 1980, a U.S. investor in Guatemala said, "Why should we be worried about the death squads? They're bumping off the commies, our enemies...I'm all for it." In the first half of 1980, six union organizers in his factory were assassinated. September 1980 interview with Fred Sherwood cited in Washington Office on Latin America, "Guatemala: The Roots of Revolution," (October 1982), 7.

Borrowing from, and expanding upon, a typology offered by Cardoso,[57] I group major theories of democracy into three categories:

1. Hobbesian/guardian: This model is based upon a notion of guardianship, with power residing in the executive branch. Political order is a key value, in the service of the "public good" as determined by the state. Political power is concentrated in bureaucratic state elites. The security apparatus "protects" the nation; civilians are controlled and led by an enlightened bureaucracy. While citizens are theoretically acknowledged as individuals with rights (an assumption of democratic theory), those rights are circumscribed by the interests of security. The predominant values in this model are order and security. Untrammelled democratic freedoms and popular participation are considered dangerous and are monitored and controlled. Certain channels of representation may exist (parties, assemblies), but ultimate decision-making authority rests with the guardians of order. These bureaucratic elites assume the right to judge and supervise the political process.

The guardian model corresponds to the national-security vision of the armed forces in Latin America, and is posited in this study as the preferred type of former military rulers after transitions from military rule. Frequently in the region, as we have seen, the armed forces have acted to restrict participation, demobilize popular sectors, and contain politics within the confines of "national security." In other words, the political and coercive power of the military has often been used to steer politics toward a guardian model. The armed forces in Latin America (and elsewhere) prefer guardian systems because they best preserve the interests, power, political function and prerogatives of the military elite. Such a system has benefited other elites as well, as implied by the model. In carrying out this demobilizing and repressive function, the armed forces have usually acted as part of a constellation of elites concerned with preserving specific configurations of political power,

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[57] Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "Associated-Dependent Development and Democratic Theory," in Alfred Stepan, ed., *Democratizing Brazil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 313-314.

property relations, and social structure.

Guardian systems are distinguished from national-security states in important ways. The latter are authoritarian and undemocratic states in which military power is absolute, political and civil rights are abolished, violence is used to quell political opposition, and iron control is imposed. In guardian systems, civilians take over formal governance and the procedures and institutions of constitutional rule and democracy are restored. But many of the norms, values and structures of the national-security state continue, permitting military tutelage of politics. Because these systems include some of the features of liberal democracy, many observers and scholars categorize them as political democracies, a view which neglects the guardian features of the system.[58] One of the aims of this study is to demonstrate the political impact of persisting militarized structures and military political power, and offer an alternative conceptualization. While guardian models are not national-security states, and thus represent an opening of the political system, in many cases it is highly questionable whether they qualify as political democracies. Serious restrictions upon democratic freedoms persist; military power, to a greater or lesser degree, still circumscribes civilian power, and hangs like a sword of Damocles above society. (Of course, different political systems approximate guardian models to a greater or lesser extent depending on the balance of power between democratizing and authoritarian forces.)

2. *Lockian/liberal:* This view of democracy is centered on the individual and is based upon the predominance of civil and political rights, particularly the concept of political equality before the law. Implicit to this model is the liberal fear of the power of the state, which must be limited, but also fear of the masses. (The Hobbesian model posits the opposite relationship between the

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[58] In 1991 Juan Rial pointed out that Rouquié's "doubts about the possibility of demilitarizing power effectively, even if the military were no longer in...government...[is a] subject...not taken up in the general run of transition studies." Juan Rial, "Transitions in Latin America on the Threshold of the 1990s," *International Social Science Journal*, No. 128 (May 1991), 298, n.31.

individual and the state: the individual must serve the state and not vice versa.) Key elements are universal suffrage and elections which express the general consent of the people for their government and individual governors. This form of democracy entails competitive regimes, representative government, and civilian control of the military. The people's consent is mediated through intervening mechanisms (such as parties and representatives in Congress). Extreme social and economic inequalities are generally viewed as irrelevant and/or acceptable to this form of democracy. (Indeed, in 1965 Almond and Verba[59] pointed to another striking contradiction in modern liberal democracy: at times effective elite governance required low participation and citizen passivity.)

This model is liberal in the sense that the power of the state is restricted and civil and political liberties of citizens are upheld. However, Locke never meant for this model to apply to all sectors of society. He, like other liberal theorists, envisioned democracy only for property-owning elites, not the mass. As Macpherson[60] notes, democracy in a mass sense was considered a bad thing from the days of Plato and Aristotle; only in the last one hundred years or so has it been seen as a positive value. This is because democracy was always envisioned in strictly class terms: it was rule by the mass, a dangerous model for many political theorists. Today, the participatory model is often seen in these terms.

3. Rousseaulan/participatory: In this model, popular sectors are involved in participation directly; the state carries out the decisions of the citizens and responds to their interests. The well-being of deprived peoples without mediation is a key value; the population is organized into living communities which make the decisions that affect their lives. I would add to Cardoso's formulation that this model also implies social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights,

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[59] Gabriel A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 343.

[60] C.B. Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) 5.

that is, the five categories of human rights as visualized as in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 22 to 28 outline economic, social and cultural rights). This model highlights the interdependent nature of all classes of rights. As Rousseau argued:

> "Do you want to give constancy to the State? Bring the extremes as close together as possible. Tolerate neither rich men nor beggars. These two estates, which are naturally inseparable, are equally fatal to the common good...A high degree of equality in ranks and fortunes [is necessary], without which equality in rights and authority cannot subsist for long."[61]

This model of democracy signifies popular *control* rather than the popular *consent* of the liberal model; the interests of the majority are supreme. It is the closest to the classical meaning of democracy as popular sovereignty and rule by the people.

This typology does not claim to be exhaustive in terms of all possible conceptualizations of democracy. Nevertheless, it is useful for several reasons. First, each model proposes a different relationship between state and society, and each implies a different configuration of power in its social, political and economic dimensions. Only the participatory model assumes that democracy must extend to the socioeconomic realm. Second, these models clearly reflect not just description, but *prescription*; they embody different *interests* and different *ideologies*, as Cardoso notes. There are normative elements in all three. A key point is that *the armed forces tend to prefer the guardian model*, and in Argentina sought to steer the democratization process in that direction, through use of political power and their monopoly on coercion.

After the 1983 transition, the Argentine armed forces and certain right-wing sectors sought to implant a guardian-type system where the military's traditional role as guarantor of elite interests would be maintained. During the *Proceso* (1976-1983), explicit plans had been prepared to this

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[61] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "On the Social Contract, " in *The Basic Political Writings*, translated and edited by Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1987) 170, n.12 and 180.

end.[62] Simultaneously, other social sectors attempted to influence the Argentine democratization process in other directions, corresponding to the other two models. New social movements such as the human rights movement, and rebellious sectors of labor, youth, intellectuals and political activists sought a greater voice in public policy and greater participation after years of severe repression; they sought a more participatory model. Alfonsín and his *Unión Cívica Radical* (Radical Party, or UCR) generally sought to establish a liberal democracy. The Peronists were divided; some tried to reestablish a corporatist model while others supported the government's attempts to install a liberal democracy.

In short, while there is no doubt that a process of democratization did occur in Argentina after 1983, this process involved a struggle over *which form* of democracy would emerge (especially the proper role for the armed forces) and the old question of who would pay the costs of the economic crisis. Evelyne Huber Stephens pinpoints the central underlying issue of *power* in an insightful article: "At the center of the struggle over democracy lies the question of power--of access to state power and the consequences of access to state power for control over economic resources. Some groups or classes stand to gain from democratization and others, to lose."[63]

Why is this analysis of three models of democracy important for the purposes of this study? My findings suggest that persisting apparatuses of the national-security state--based upon a model of the state opposed to democracy--provided the machinery necessary to implant a guardian system controlled by elites. That is, to the extent that structural remnants of the national-security state endure, democracy--either *liberal* or *participatory*--is limited and restricted. Even after transitions from military rule, the military, as guardian and judge of civilian politics and power, retains the

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[62] Even during the *Proceso*, the armed forces claimed to be preparing the ground for democracy; they had in mind, however, a Hobbesian guardian type.

[63] Evelyne Huber Stephens, "Democracy in Latin America...", op.cit., 168.

ability and the propensity to control and limit an expansion of the rights of the majority, because democracy is still seen as threatening. The case of Argentina provides evidence that both the liberal and the participatory models of democracy were still considered revolutionary and subversive to some in Argentina (and elsewhere) in the 1980s. We will return to this assessment of democratization as measured by the degree of power held by the armed forces *vis-à-vis* the citizenry. Now, we examine recent theories of democratization and their usefulness in terms of interpreting the case of Argentina.

The Current Debate: Structural versus Pact-Making Routes to Democracy

This section evaluates current theories of democratization in terms of their ability to explain the significance of persisting remnants of the national-security state. The recent democratization literature falls into two broad categories, which I have called "pact theories" and "structuralist theories." These two currents posit contending arguments and explanations regarding the emergence of democracy. I argue that "pact theories," which stress agreements among elite actors, including the military, do not sufficiently weight and analyze the limits to democratization imposed by enduring military power and national-security structures and ideology. That is, they do not grapple with the core problems explored in this study. On the other hand, "structural" analyses shed more light upon the ways in which popular sectors demanding political rights force open and democratize closed systems. If democratization is the product of forces from below demanding entry into the political system, then the significance of enduring values and structures of the national-security state becomes clear. The national-security state is modeled on the central tenet that threats from below must be contained or destroyed and the structure of power maintained. Therefore, the military adhering to a national-security doctrine acts to prevent social change or a transformation in power relations. The pact theories neglect the question of continuing military influence on policy-making

and the penetration of the values and structures of the national-security state within emerging democracies; or, they accept it as the price of a political democracy. Yet if the national-security state is antithetical to liberal or participatory democracy, as I have argued, then elite pacts will make the attainment of these forms of democracy difficult.

The "pact theory" current has argued that stable democracies emerge from situations in which elites negotiate the transition by means of pacts, strategies and procedures. Pacts among elites--primarily the military, politicians, the powerful business sector and wealthy individuals--represent the most auspicious means to ensure a successful transition from military rule to stable democracy. This current posits that elite interests must be guaranteed in any transition in order to avoid another military coup and prevent democratic breakdown. These authors, some of whom are examined below, tend to stress decisions by policy-makers and electoral mechanisms as the key elements of democratization rather than mass movements or struggles from below. In the tradition of Weber and Popper, they argue that incremental change is normatively and practically the best path to democracy.

The structuralist current, in the tradition of Barrington Moore, stresses social-structural aspects and historical processes involved in the formation of democracy. These theorists argue that democracy must be understood as the struggle of classes or social groups without a political voice demanding entry into the political system and responses to their needs. Unlike the pact theories, this current posits that democracy has never been granted voluntarily to subordinate sectors by elites; it has always resulted from a struggle in which the lower sectors managed to organize themselves into a significant political force. Elite pacts, according to this view, reflect elite interests, precisely preservation of their privileges. For an expansion of democratic rights of the majority, the majority must have sufficient capability to force elites to respond to their interests.

Several analysts have noted the debate between these two currents. Charles Tilly categorizes

recent theories of democracy as "top-down and instrumentalist" with their assumptions that leaders can engineer democratization. He contrasts them to "structuralist" theories.[64] Herbert Kitschelt calls the two currents "structural-oriented" versus "process-oriented," the latter referring to the sequence of events and the strategic moves of the actors.[65] The findings in this study, demonstrating the limiting effect upon democratization produced by enduring apparatuses of the national-security state, pose a challenge to pact theories. National-security states were constructed to severely limit and control democratic freedoms and participation, and violently repress dissent. The armed forces organized state and society in order to curb both civil and political rights (the rights to assembly, participation, freedom of speech and the press, the rights to life and to due process, freedom from torture and so on) as well as broader economic and social rights (the rights to organize and strike, the right to a decent salary and so on). Pacts among elites which solidify and perpetuate such restrictions are inherently antithetical to the emergence of either the liberal or the participatory models of democracy; only the guardian-type could emerge.

The First Current: Elites as Key Actors

Samuel Huntington presents an ideal characterization of the first current:

> "It is often assumed that since democracy, to a greater degree than other forms of government, involves rule by the people, the people therefore play a greater role in bringing it into existence than they do with other forms of government. In fact, however, democratic regimes that last have seldom, if ever, been instituted by mass popular action. Almost always, democracy has come as much from the top down as from the bottom up; it is as likely to be the product of oligarchy as of protest against oligarchy. The passionate dissidents from authoritarian rule and the crusaders for democratic principles, the Tom Paines of this world, do not create democratic institutions; that requires James Madisons. Those institutions come into existence through negotiations and compromises among political

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[64] Charles Tilly, "Of Oilfields, Lakes, and Democracy," New York: New School for Social Research, Center for Studies of Social Change, The Working Paper Series, Working Paper 152, (November 1992).

[65] Herbert Kitschelt, "Political Regime Change: Structure and Process-Driven Explanations?" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86 No. 4 (December 1992), 1028.

elites calculating their own interests and desires."[66]

One may take issue with several of Huntington's assumptions here. First, this view is ahistorical. The American struggle for independence, for example, was a struggle for democracy as well as independence from England by masses of people, and did result in a democratic advance. The American revolution established the right of a people to rebel against tyranny and a conception of human rights as universal and self-evident, important concepts which would be used in the future by other excluded sectors (including blacks and women in the United States) to expand their democratic freedoms. The French revolution, while more problematic given the subsequent relapse into dictatorship, moved French society forward by ending aristocratic privilege, breaking the grip of the landed class on politics, legislating an end to the feudal system, and establishing the rights of citizens and equality before the law. The decolonization struggles of the 1960s in Africa and Asia threw off formal-legal foreign tutelage and resulted in independence in many countries. Indeed, democratization in the world seems to be a cumulative process, a historical development of greater expansion of rights and decision-making to larger and larger sectors of the world's populations, carried out by social struggles and the mobilization of masses of people.

Huntington himself notes that in 1948 a popular struggle in Costa Rica resulted in a democratic regime, but concedes no others. His article was written before the peaceful revolts in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall, but the above cases and others falsify his statement that democracy is unlikely to come from the bottom up.

Perhaps the problem is that Huntington's language introduces a subtle semantic confusion. He denies that the Tom Paines of the world--those who struggle and agitate against authoritarianism--construct democracy; the James Madisons of the world do that. However, before new institutions

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[66] Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* (1984) 212. Given Huntington's longstanding fear of social mobilization, his dismissal of a role for masses of people in democratization is consistent.

can be constructed the old, authoritarian institutions must be swept away; masses of people have always been instrumental in doing this, so that new ones could be built. In short, Huntington's version of democratization ignores the history of conflict and war that has often *preceded* stable democracy. His model fails to deal with the question of *why* political elites consent to open the system and construct new democratic institutions in the first place. Why should they voluntarily reduce their own power and transform the power relations of the political system in which they dominate? Power, as the old saying goes, concedes nothing without a demand.

Huntington argues that since World War II, democratic regimes have been introduced through one or some combination of two processes: replacement and transformation.[67] Replacement may involve "a series of carefully negotiated pacts among the relevant groups" covering economic policy, institutions and the question of treatment of former leaders. Transformation means the rulers of the authoritarian state themselves initiate and facilitate the evolution to a democratic regime, through reform rather than rupture. This second process too "requires skilled leadership from and agreement among the elites who are part of that regime."[68] Either way, for Huntington, requires elite negotiations and/or political leadership. He also adds, "The probability of stable democracy emerging will be enhanced to the extent that the transition can be a gradual one..."[69] Thus, Huntington places himself solidly within the first camp, emphasizing *elite actors* and *incrementalism*.

Huntington's prescription fails to consider the long-term impact on democratization posed by such pacts among elite actors, including the military. In Argentina, for example, the *Proceso juntas* intended to guide the transition to democracy gradually and non-disruptively, as Huntington

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[67] Ibid., 212-213.

[68] Ibid., 213.

[69] Ibid., 214.

advises. However, the *Proceso* planners consciously sought this route to a controlled system precisely to maintain the continuity of national-security values, projects and policies and the institutionalization of military political tutelage. Huntington's model leads easily to a guardian system, where democratic rights are circumscribed by enduring military power. In Argentina, the military's original model could not be implemented, as we have seen (Chapter 4 documents this era). But during the 1980s, the armed forces continually sought to confine the power of the civilian authorities and mobilized sectors of civil society, which sought a more open democratic system consistent with the other models of democracy discussed.

In other words, in the context of militarized systems, Huntington's prescription would tend to entrench military power and interests in the state and foreclose badly needed democratic reform. The evidence in this study suggests that elite pacts which leave institutionalized military political power in place are *detrimental*, not conducive, to the development of liberal or participatory democracy.

Other Pact Theories

Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, referring to democratization processes in Latin America, provide a model of democratic transition which is incremental and cautious. They say explicitly that achieving political democracy, a value in itself, may entail foregoing social justice in Latin America.[70] To secure political democracy, the rights and prerogatives of the military and the bourgeoisie must be guaranteed, despite "trade-offs [implied]...regarding foregone or deferred opportunities for greater social justice and economic equality."[71] They seem to mean that the

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[70] Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead, eds. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) 69.

[71] Ibid., 3.

restoration of a liberal-democratic system, the second model, requires the abandonment of the participatory model, which entails the expansion of all other classes of rights for the majority. Yet again, this conceptualization of democracy, particularly in former national-security states of Latin America, represents a paradox. If militaries continue to wield extraordinary political power outside constitutional norms and civilian control, it is doubtful that civilian supremacy, participation and the rule of law--constants of democratic theory--can be reestablished. If citizens are denied rights and protections in the face of acute socioeconomic inequality and crisis, it is doubtful that their interests are being democratically represented. Again, O'Donnell and Schmitter's concept rather seems to fit Rouquié's concept of a "civilianized military state."

Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter[72] offer a thoughtful analysis of a range of countries in the process of democratization in Europe, Latin America and the former Soviet Union. These authors elaborate four methods of transition: by pact, by imposition, by reform or by revolution. While they accept the importance of social structure in acknowledgement of Barrington Moore, they stress "contingent choices" of elites in transitions as key elements, rather than "objective conditions." "Transitions are 'produced' by actors who choose strategies that lead to change from one kind of regime to another."[73] Schmitter and Karl call for abandoning grand theory about democratization processes, arguing that no one precondition or set of conditions applies to all cases. Yet, like Huntington, they frontally challenge Moore's generalization that revolutions may be needed to sweep away old autocratic systems,[74] and argue that transitions by pact or imposition are the most successful:

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[72] Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal* 128 (May 1991) 269-285.

[73] Ibid., 274.

[74] Ibid., 280.

> "The modes that have most often resulted in the implantation of some type of political democracy are 'transitions from above.' In these cases, traditional rulers remain in control, even if pressured from below, and successfully use strategies of either compromise or force, or some mix of the two, to retain at least part of their power."[75]

Thus, Schmitter and Karl conclude that 1) contrary to Moore's thesis, their sample "strongly suggests...that where authoritarian incumbents have been removed by force and replaced by a new elite representing mass constituencies, the subsequent emergence of political democracy is unlikely,"[76] 2) "Where democracies appear to have endured...is in the cell defined by relatively strong elite actors who engage in strategies of compromise",[77] and 3) "We have concluded that 'transitions by pact' are the most likely to lead to political democracy, followed by 'transitions by imposition.'"[78] Yet they acknowledge that these emerging systems are likely to be restricted democracies, a conclusion supported by this study.

In my view, this analysis too suffers from several problems. For example, the authors list Turkey, Brazil and Ecuador as successful transitions to democracy. Yet in all of these cases, institutionalized military power has retained an autonomous weight, limiting civilian authority even in non-military realms and serving to restrict political liberties and brake demands from the majority for an expansion of rights. To call such guardian systems "political democracies" avoids thorny issues concerning the impact of anti-democratic actors and structures within democratization processes. These are the issues wrestled with in this study: the ways in which pacts or impositions institutionalizing military power constrain democratization.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., 280. They qualify this assertion, however, by saying the current processes in the Soviet Union, Nicaragua and Mexico may be challenging their thesis.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 282.

The authors argue that Chile and Peru[79] are difficult to classify, combining elements of all four modes of transition; yet both could be classified, in terms of my analysis, as military-controlled transitions in which entrenched structures of the previous national-security state endured and limited democratization processes. They also have trouble fitting Argentina into a category. My findings demonstrate that a slow-motion pact or imposition process orchestrated by the military and its civilian allies took place during the 1980s, curtailing the democratization process. If this is correct, then again the evidence in this study challenges Schmitter and Karl's conclusion that political democracies result from such "transitions from above." While *stability* (in the short-term) may result, the question of whether democracy results--either the liberal or participatory model--is highly debatable.

In another article, Karl also suggests that pacted transitions are most successful.[80] Yet her analysis contains a paradox. Citing the case of Argentina, she notes that the absence of pacts after the Malvinas war, and the *presence* of high level of social mobilization, "while perhaps holding out the greatest hope for political democracy and economic equity, may render a consistent strategy of any type ineffectual and thus lead to the repetition of Argentina's persistent failure to consolidate any type of regime."[81] Note that while her article with Schmitter expresses doubt that mass-based governments can lead to political democracy, the quote on Argentina indicates that a strong popular

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[79] They also put Greece in this category. Interestingly, the United States committed military aid and advisers on the side of the Greek monarchy during the civil war in that country in the late 1940s, in order to defeat a leftist and nationalist movement. A 1955 agreement between the Greek military and the CIA established a vast counterguerrilla network and contingency plans in case of a communist resurgence. In short, it seems that a similar type of Cold War, national-security ideology influenced the military coups and military state in Greece. See Norman A. Graebner, ed., *The National Security: Its Theory and Practice 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 17-19; Saul Landau, *The Dangerous Doctrine: National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 36-37, 48, 51, 179; and *New York Times*, "Greece to Investigate Plan for Guerrilla War," November 21, 1990.

[80] Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," in Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth P. Erickson, eds., *Comparative Political Dynamics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991) 163-191.

[81] Ibid., 179.

voice and absence of pacts may be the *most* favorable to democratization. While Karl's concern regarding consistency is warranted, the contradiction between her two observations is provocative. The *absence* of elite pacts and high levels of participation seem to augur most strongly for democratization--while also admittedly risking a counter-reaction by the armed forces and elite allies. Perhaps in contrast to the conclusion that *elite pacts* are most viable (for such a view fails to examine the serious restrictions upon democracy--both liberal and participatory models--engendered by such methods), another view is possible. An alternative conclusion would seem to be that a different sort of social coalition, or pacts between middle and popular majority sectors, and perhaps international actors, might provide the necessary countervailing power to the military and allied anti-democratic elites. (Certainly in Latin America, the position taken by the U.S. government remains crucial.)

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, in their book on democratic breakdown,[82] also focus on political strategies and elite decisions as the key elements in stable democracies. They suggest a model for analyzing the breakdown of democratic regimes and the installation of authoritarianism, isolating political variables as key determinants. They argue: "We shall focus on those more strictly political variables that tend to be neglected in many other approaches to the problem of stable democracy, because in our view political processes actually precipitate the ultimate breakdown..."[83] Linz and Stepan point to a regime's legitimacy, efficacy and effectiveness as the crucial determinants of the stability or breakdown of democracy. Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour M. Lipset[84] stress elite strategies, political leadership and political choices as key factors in democratization processes. Like the other analysts in this current, these authors consciously downplay socioeconomic

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[82] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

[83] Ibid., 5.

[84] Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz & Seymour Martin Lipset, *Democracy in Developing Countries*, four volumes (Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1988).

factors and the role of social forces.

Analysts such as Peter H. Smith, Jorge Nef, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and Charles Tilly have critiqued the concept of democracy as the product of elite pact-making, as posited by these and other authors such as DiPalma and Whitehead, Drake and Silva, and DiPalma.[85] In their pieces, Smith[86] and Nef[87] criticize this view both for its normative bias in favor of "restricted democracy" (or in our typology, a guardian model) and for its overly narrow focus; Smith elaborates a fuller conception of democratization and its stages. Huber Stephens argues that while the role of elites is undoubtedly important, narrow conceptions of democratization as based on elite pacts ignore the fact that "pressures from below have been crucial in advancing the process."[88] Historically, socioeconomic elites have preferred restricted democracies, and have turned against democracy when the voice of subordinate classes became too dominant.[89] She adds that simple actor-centered approaches, centered on perceptual, behavioral qualities, fail to note that attitudes change according to the structural and institutional context.[90] Tilly calls the new democracy theories "remarkably elitis[t]" due to their assumption that the masses of people are not involved in creating democracy.[91] Tilly concludes that in most successful democracies, "contrary to recent theorizing, bottom-up action,

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[85] Giuseppe DiPalma and Lawrence Whitehead, *The Central American Impasse* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); Paul Drake and Eduardo Silva, *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980-1985* (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, Institute of the Americas, University of California at San Diego, 1986); Giuseppe DiPalma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[86] Peter H. Smith, "Crisis and Democracy in Latin America," *World Politics* 43 (July 1991) 608-634.

[87] See Jorge Nef, "Review Essay: The Trend Toward Democratization and Redemocratization in Latin America, Shadow and Substance," *Latin America Research Review* (1988), especially 146-151.

[88] Huber Stephens, "Democracy in Latin America..." op.cit., 161.

[89] Ibid., 162.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Tilly, op.cit., 2.

unintended consequences, and long-term transformations play a fundamental part. But in all of them, social construction matters greatly."[92] In the next section, we review some key structural theories of democratization. These theories, as noted earlier, allow us to illuminate the significance of enduring military power and national-security structures.

The Second Current: Structuralist Theories

We have argued that if democratization results from "movements from below" demanding new rights, then persisting remnants of the national-security state serve to brake that process and steer the process toward a guardian model. The armed forces may continue to prevent or restrict political or social change and perpetuate existing power relations. In this section, we examine key structural theories of democratization which stress such movements from below, in order to highlight the political ramifications of military national-security structures and ideology.

Barrington Moore,[93] like Marx before him, argued that the *breakage* of old social and political structures was sometimes required to advance to a more democratic system. According to Moore, there have been four historical routes to modern industrial society which depended upon the political roles played by the landed upper classes and the peasantry in the process of transition from agrarian to industrial societies. In Britain, France and the United States, oligarchic elites presiding over vast land holdings in feudal or near-feudal agrarian economies were defeated in bourgeois revolutions (in the United States, the agrarian slave economy of the South was overthrown in the Civil War). Moore's provocative argument is that wherever bourgeois revolutionary impulses have been weak or abortive, fascism or communism have resulted. Revolutions were ultimately favorable

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[92] Ibid., 16.

[93] Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

to the development of democracy in France, the United States and Britain because they destroyed the social basis of right-wing authoritarian regimes, which under the impact of advancing industrialization show a strong tendency to culminate in fascism.[94]

Argentina's feudal-type system was never ruptured by revolution; rather new industrial classes and an industrial sector were grafted onto the existing agrarian structure. Thus Argentina's path resembles those of Germany and Japan in Moore's terms. In those countries, Moore shows, the industrial classes were unable to dislodge the agrarian elites; rather, they formed an alliance which culminated in fascism. In Gabriel Almond's cogent summation of Moore, "the landed aristocracy was able to contain and dominate the rising commercial classes, produc[ing] an authoritarian and fascist version of industrial modernization, a system of capitalism encased in a feudal authoritarian framework, dominated by a military aristocracy, and an authoritarian monarchy."[95] This explanation seems to provide clues to explaining the blockages to Argentina's various attempts at democratization.

Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens[96] significantly modify Moore's linkage between democratization and the role of the bourgeoisie. While they accept Moore's broad historical-structural approach and key findings as to the role of the land-owning class, they argue that it was the pressures exerted by the new working classes born in the industrialization process that were the key genesis of democracy. Capitalism creates the conditions whereby the subordinate working

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[94] Moore discusses fascism in detail in *Social Origins* on pages 445 to 452. While he gives no succinct definition, he discusses characteristics such as violent rejection of humanitarian ideals (especially equality); hierarchy; discipline and obedience; militarism; and a stress on violence, to the point of "a mystical worship of 'hardness,'" blood and death. Ibid., 447. He argues fascism arose as capitalism penetrated agrarian societies and displaced sectors of the population (448-449).

[95] Gabriel Almond, "Capitalism and Democracy," *Political Science*, V.24 No.3 (September 1991) 468.

[96] Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

classes gain enough strength to demand their political inclusion. That is, they reject Moore's identification of the bourgeoisie as the agent of expanding democracy, arguing that this class prefers only a narrow and restricted form of democracy if unchallenged. As Tilly notes in reference to this work, the authors "conclude that in general capitalism does, as often alleged, promote democracy, but not because capitalists prefer democratic government; all other things equal and enemies such as landlords absent, capitalists prefer something like oligarchies of wealth..."[97] As we have seen, this corresponds to our liberal form of democracy, or even the guardian model. The case of Argentina seems to substantiate this analysis.

In his 1970 article Dankwart Rustow[98] argues that democracy was not born of values (as argued by his contemporaries, modernization theorists such as Lipset, Lerner, Almond and Powell, and so on) but rather resulted, unintended, from a *historical process*. In this process there are several phases beginning with a preparatory phase, which encompasses a long and inconclusive struggle, often among social classes. Here Rustow recognizes that democracies have resulted from the clash of opposing social groups or classes, each with sufficient power to fight for its interests and aspirations for a share of scarce values. In the next phase, the decision phase, all conflicting actors realize that this political (and sometimes military) struggle will not result in a winner; a decision is made to compromise, redress specific grievances, and institutionalize democratic procedures to carry out these compromises. Again, this social-historical view of the genesis of democracy contrasts markedly with more recent perspectives which stress elite pacts and essentially disregard (or normatively prohibit) a role for subaltern sectors.

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[97] Charles Tilly, "Of Oilfields..." *op.cit.*, 14.

[98] Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics* 2 (April 1970) 337-363.

Almond[99] argues that the push from below for expanded rights and services from the state--and the threat of revolution and socialism--were crucial to the decisions by governing elites and upper class leaders to grant concessions; these elites sought compromise in order to save the system of capitalism itself. Like the others in this current, he argues that the role of adversarial social movements "from below" demanding greater inclusion is crucial to democratization. This implies that the greater the participation of broad sectors of society, the more democratic will be the polity, extending eventually to the socioeconomic realm. In other words, Almond seems to assume that the liberal model of democracy will gradually be transformed into the participatory model. Yet the armed forces in much of Latin America (and elsewhere in the Third World)--often backed by foreign powers with an interest in the status quo--have intervened in politics precisely to prevent such transformations in the past. Again, this vision contrasts with the "transition from above" model posited by the "pact theories" current in the debate.

If the pact theories are correct, we might expect that countries utilizing such pacts would become established democracies with expanding freedoms extended to the population. However, the case of Argentina--where a slow-motion series of pacts was implemented--suggests that democratization was incrementally *limited and reduced* rather than expanded by means of such pacts. Recent retrogressions in terms of democratization occurring in Haiti, Peru and Guatemala, and the continuing political power of the Pinochet forces in Chile--all countries where pacts between incoming civilian governments and outgoing military forces were made--provide another caution.[100]

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[99] Gabriel Almond, "Capitalism and Democracy," op.cit., 473. He is summarizing the work of Peter Flora and Arnold Heidenheimer, *The Development of Welfare States in Western Europe and America* (New Brunswick: Transaction Press, 1981).

[100] In October 1993, Haiti's military dictators violated a UN-sponsored pact to reinstate President Jean-Bertrand Aristide (overthrown in a September 1991 coup); a reign of terror has been unleashed against the impoverished citizens of Haiti who make up the base for democratic change. In 1992, President Alberto Fujimori of Peru seized dictatorial powers in a self-imposed coup, backed by the armed forces. He closed Congress and increased military jurisdiction in society. In Guatemala in May 1993, President Jorge Serrano

These cases seem to indicate that pacts preserving the military's political power do little to insure the development of liberal or participatory democracy, and in fact, by preserving the military's power, are counterproductive. That is, pacts serve to perpetuate political dominance by military forces uninterested in (or hostile to) expanding the rights of the majority. The evidence in this study supports this interpretation.

3. The Military in Relation to Social Forces

The previous sections lead us directly into another debate in the discipline: the issue of the "autonomy" of the armed forces in society. Are the armed forces "autonomous" actors or do they act as the coercive instrument of other political actors or social forces? Do the armed forces seek, or require, alliances with other actors in order to take power and to rule? This study attempts to answer such questions by documenting the complex interplay between the military's interests and objectives as an institution and its interests and objectives as a political actor in society. The study demonstrates that in Argentina these two dimensions became inextricably intertwined.

A continuum between two interpretations of the military institution exists in the field: at one pole, the military is considered an autonomous institution which acts primarily in its own institutional interests (Varas, Nordlinger, Stepan, Rouquié[101] and others); at the other, the military is an

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attempted to do the same, backed by the armed forces. However, mass popular protest and unanimous international condemnation--including decisive action by the Clinton administration--forced Serrano into exile and the military into temporary retreat. In Chile, the armed forces and civilian allies in government continue to thwart attempts to establish civilian control of the military. In the spring of 1993, for example, the press reported how Pinochet made known military rejection of civilian policies by staging an armed occupation of the central plaza and making various threatening statements. See also Felipe Agüero, "Autonomy of the Military in Chile: From Democracy to Authoritarianism," in Augusto Varas, ed., *Democracy Under Siege: New Military Power in Latin America* (Stamford: Greenwood Press, 1989) 83-97.

[101] Augusto Varas, ed., *Democracy Under Siege...*, op.cit.; Alain Rouquié, *The Military and the State in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Eric Nordlinger, *Soldiers and Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977); and Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

instrument of coercion in alliance with, or at the service of, elite interests, used to enforce a specific power relation and socioeconomic system (Corradi, Pion-Berlin and Lopez, O'Donnell, Evans, Fraga[102] and others). In the first group, Rouquié calls the armed forces autonomous more than once in one book[103] despite an understanding that the military state may act in the interests of certain classes.[104] Varas argues that "individual studies within each nation all point to the increasing process of military autonomy *vis-à-vis* the state and society...this very same institutional autonomy has allowed the military to develop as independent political actors *[sic]* within the different countries."[105] Stepan concentrates on institutional traits of the armed forces and explains the *abertura* (opening process) in Brazil as largely caused by internal conflicts and splits within the state apparatus, specifically among different elements of the armed and security forces, giving little weight to social opposition or international factors.[106] In recent work, Pion-Berlin and López argue that military uprisings in Argentina during the 1980s were largely due to internal conflicts and professional crises, downplaying political or ideological motivations and objectives (an analysis challenged by this study).[107] At this end of the continuum, authors generally focus on institutional-level analyses to explain such questions as why armed forces organize uprisings or coups and why

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[102] Juan Corradi, *The Fitful Republic...*, op.cit.; David Pion-Berlin and George Lopez, "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979," *International Studies Quarterly* 25, (1991); Peter Evans, *Dependent Development: the Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism...*, op.cit., and "Tensions in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy," in Collier, op.cit., 1979; and Rosendo Fraga, *La Cuestión Militar...*, op.cit.

[103] Rouquié, op.cit., 7-9, 150 and 283.

[104] Ibid., 35, 113.

[105] Augusto Varas, ed., *Democracy Under Siege*...op.cit., vii.

[106] Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics*, op.cit., especially Chapter 3.

[107] See David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*, (October 1992), 83-102 and with Ernesto López, "A House Divided...", in Epstein, *The New Argentine Democracy*, op.cit.

they withdraw from government.

At the other end of the continuum authors stress the military as an actor deeply enmeshed in society, intervening to maintain particular class structures and political-social relations of power. O'Donnell's paradigmatic 1970 study posited the alliance between technocrats, finance capitalists, and the military in the imposition of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state. Evans,[108] similarly, argued that the Brazilian military state, national capital and foreign capital formed a "Tri-pé" alliance in order to institute a particular form of dependent capitalist development in Brazil. Moreira Alves[109] argues that the very ideology of national security has a class character in the sense that "normal" interest articulation, organizing, and strikes by labor are perceived to be subversive. She calls the national-security doctrine "an ideology of class domination" that justifies brutal repression of the working classes or any threat from below (as perceived by the military).[110] Pion-Berlin and Lopez have demonstrated that the Argentine military's use of state terror was ideologically driven, merging the national-security doctrine with neoliberal ideology, which resulted in policies targeting certain social sectors as enemies to be crushed (especially labor unions strategically located in the economy).[111] This has been the case in other Latin American countries as well. Fraga (whose father is a general) argues that the Argentine armed forces have never acted alone and implies that they have acted in certain class interests. He notes that military coups in 1930, 1955, 1962 and 1976

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[108] Peter Evans, *Dependent Development...*, op.cit.

[109] Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas, 1985) 9.

[110] The evidence in this study supports Moreira Alves' argument. Although the Argentine armed forces during the *Proceso* also accused members of the elite and even members of the military and their families of subversion, and treated them accordingly, these were individual cases. These sectors were not targetted as a class, as were labor and intellectuals, for example.

[111] Pion-Berlin and Lopez, "Of Victims..." op.cit.

were all "liberal-conservative restorations"[112] in which elites used the military as an instrument. He adds, ..."the armed forces in Argentina never act in an autonomous manner; rather their action is the result of states of collective opinion of civil society."[113]

The Argentine case study below reveals that the two poles on the continuum are not necessarily mutually exclusive (indeed, these analysts and others actually range along the continuum). The military may be an independent political actor, motivated by institutional interests, *which also* acts in alliance with particular social forces. This study examines this *confluence of interests* among the armed forces and other social sectors, as well as the reasons why this convergence may cease. That is, the study documents 1) the fact that the armed forces in Argentina, as an institution, have had their own interests and their own political project, *but these have merged to a significant degree at certain moments with those of other powerful elites*, and 2) the armed forces in Argentina have historically sought alliances with powerful economic and political elites--and in turn, those elites have also sought alliances with the armed forces at certain historical moments--in order to achieve common political objectives. These common interests and political agendas diverged in 1982 after the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* began to outlive its "usefulness" to the original coup coalition; the foreign and domestic elites which had supported the military national-security state both financially and ideologically began to distance themselves from the regime, especially after the Malvinas war. At this time, the Argentine armed forces began the process of withdrawal from

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[112] Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 140.

[113] Ibid. However, Fraga's all-encompassing category "civil society" is too broad. He actually seems to mean elite sectors, or the "factors of power" (implied in the same paragraph) when he says civil society. In fact, military sectors sometimes perceive popular support for their interventions and regimes when there is really very little. Jeane Kirkpatrick's book *Leader and Vanguard in Mass Society: A Study of Peronist Argentina* notes a survey undertaken just prior to the 1966 coup (often cited as popularly supported). In response to the query "Which group has so much influence over the way the government is run that the interests of the people are ignored?" the armed forces were most often named. Some 78 percent of Argentines opposed military intervention and 64% denied such interventions had saved the nation from chaos. Cited in Alfred Stepan, *The State and Society...*, op.cit., 93, n.19.

political governance.

Overall, then, the argument made here is that the question of the "autonomy" of the military must be understood as partially a question of definition. In actual practice in Argentina, this study finds no contradiction between the fact that the military developed as an autonomous political actor, and the fact that the military needed allies and at least some social support in order to rule.

4. Democratizing the State as well as the Government: Establishing Definitions

The preceding sections lead us into a discussion of state, regime, and government. Given our interest in the impact of permanent state institutions and structures, the question arises: is a democratic *government* effective if the *state* remains authoritarian? Evidently, it is a much easier task to democratize a government, or even a regime, than the state. In fact, it is possible for a democratically-minded government to be superimposed upon an authoritarian state, and indeed this has occurred often in Latin America. Any democratization process based on a non-guardian model necessarily faces the task of establishing the supremacy of and control by citizen power--whether via mediating mechanisms and representation (the liberal model of democracy), or direct participation (the participatory model)--not only in the government or regime, but also in the armed forces themselves (part of the state). To paraphrase Madison, the two things necessary for democracy are a state capable of governing, and a populace capable of controlling the state.

First, definitions must be established. The *state* is defined in this study as the constellation of bureaucratic institutions and apparatuses including the executive, legislative and judicial branches, the civil bureaucracy, public and semi-public corporations, the legal system, and the coercive forces including the armed forces and the police (and in the case of Argentina, the *Gendarmería* and

Prefectura).[114] The state, then, includes the *permanent bureaucracies and structures* which do not change with the advent of new elected governments; in some cases these permanent structures are staffed by the same individuals across decades and elected governments. There are substantial regions of continuity despite electoral or regime changes in any state.

The *regime* is defined as "the formal and informal structure of governmental roles and processes...[including] the method of selection of the government (election, coup, selection process within the military, etc.), formal and informal mechanisms of representation, and patterns of repression."[115] That is, a regime is the system by which political functions are carried out; regimes may extend over different governments. The *government* is defined in this study as a set of particular elected officials and/or a governing set of incumbents, mainly in the executive branch. The three are not discrete entities; the government, clearly, is a component of the state. These definitions allow us to make analytical distinctions regarding which sectors of the state are undergoing a democratization process, and which remain much the same as under military rule.

The Impact of International Actors

As we have seen, this study posits that international actors, particularly the United States government, have played a crucial role *vis-à-vis* Latin America militaries. International factors also contribute to the possibility for social change and forms of democratization in the region. Authors such as Ted Lewellen[116] and James Petras and Morris Morley[117] have pointed out that the U.S.

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[114] This definition borrows from the definition in David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 402-403.

[115] Collier, op.cit., 402-403.

[116] Ted Lewellen, "The U.S. and State Terrorism in the Third World," in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, eds., *Terrible Beyond Endurance? The Foreign Policy of State Terrorism* (Stamford: Greenwood Press, 1988).

government has historically differentiated between *state* and regime or government in its relations with Third World nations. U.S. government policy has often supported processes limited to a change from a military to a civilian *regime or government*. However, governments responding to popular sectors demanding fundamental change in *state structures* or the political economy (which may conflict with permanent U.S. interests) have often been opposed by the U.S. government.[117] Petras and Morley argue that U.S. policy-makers make a clear distinction between state and regime and have historically heavily invested in the former, not the latter:

> "The state represents the permanent interests of class power and international alignments: the defense of capitalism and ties to Western markets and linkages to the U.S. hegemonic bloc. It is not based on or constructed by transitory public opinion or electoral processes...The regime represents the day-to-day policy decisions at the executive military/civilian level that can modify or negotiate the operations of the permanent interests but never challenge them without evoking a crisis."[118]

In another work, Petras argues that the "permanent political institutions of the state have increasingly defined the 'rules of the political game' and limited the scope of legislative actions by opposition parties and politicians. The *cyclical* pattern of *regime change* (military and electoral regimes) is accompanied by the *continuity* of the underlying *state structures.*"[119] In other words, the U.S. government has usually preferred the guardian sort of system in its sphere of influence; at times it has been willing to tolerate the liberal sort, but never the participatory sort, which has been perceived through Cold War lenses as communistic and threatening to U.S. interests. With the passing of the Cold War, it remains to be seen if this tendency will change.

Where did the U.S. government stand in terms of the democratization processes in Latin

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[117] James Petras and Morris Morley, *U.S. Hegemony Under Siege: Class, Politics and Development in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1990).

[118] Ibid., 111.

[119] James Petras, "Global Transformations and the Future of Socialism in Latin America" *New Political Science*, #18/19 (Fall/Winter 1990) 187.

America in the 1980s? As we have seen, for decades geopoliticians and national-security managers of U.S. foreign policy often believed too much democracy or independence in Latin America was dangerous to U.S. interests.[120] U.S. interventions, destabilizations or occupations occurred in both liberal-type systems (Guatemala 1954, Chile 1973)[121] and participatory-type systems (Nicaragua 1980s and Aristide's Haiti in 1991).[122]

The changing strategies of the U.S. government had a decisive effect on Latin America in the 1980s, especially its shift to favoring civilian regimes and liberal-democratization processes (as defined by the Reagan administration).[123] Not only leftist analysts make this argument about the significance of U.S. influence. Rosendo Fraga, for example (a self-identified neoconservative), notes:

> "The decade of the 1980s ended with the U.S. having achieved the imposition of its basic model in the majority of the Latin American countries: 'controlled' democracies that replaced military governments which had evinced contradictory attitudes, and whose support generated resistance within the U.S. public and weakened arguments about the struggle

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[120] *Supra* note 2. Some political scientists stated so openly as well. Huntington and W.W. Rostow, both influential theorists of political development (and decay) and modernization, were also high-ranking policy advisers in government, and thus in a position to put their ideas into practice. Huntington has long been concerned with the danger to the authority of the state posed by social mobilization and participation. See, for example, Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), and Huntington et al, *The Crisis of Democracy*, Report on the Governability of Democracy to the Trilateral Commission (New York: New York University Press, 1975).

[121] Some Guatemalans argue that the 1944-1954 democratic experience was of the participatory type, citing government land grants to impoverished peasants and the passage of social welfare policies and laws protecting the rights of workers. The two governments during this period promoted a form of national capitalism, however, and not socialism (as portrayed by hostile critics in the U.S. government).

[122] Press reports in October-November 1993 revealed the CIA paid *golpista* Haitian military officers beginning in the 1980s and issued reports praising their leadership capabilities. These same officers overthrew the leftist president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in 1991. See, for example, Tim Weiner, "Key Haiti Leaders Said To Have Been in the CIA's Pay," *New York Times*, November 1, 1993.

[123] For example, the Reagan administration established the National Endowment for Democracy in 1983 to promote its version of liberal (and anticommunist) democracy and fund "freedom fighters" around the world. It should be recalled that this umbrella organization funnelled money to Oliver North's network, which in turn funded the *contras*. See "The Democracy Offensive," *Resource Center Bulletin*, No. 18, Fall 1989, especially 2, 5.

against authoritarian communist regimes."[124]

The concept of controlled democracies coincides with the model preferred by the Argentine military: the guardian model. As we have argued, this model protects elite interests and keeps tight control of social change and/or political participation of the majority.

Fraga also quotes a 1987 statement referring to Latin American states by U.S. General John Galvin, ex-chief of SOUTHCOM and then-commander of NATO: "We want strong governments in the region; if they are democratic, so much the better."[125] This statement indicated a subtle change in U.S. policy: a preference for what might be called authoritarian democracies rather than military regimes. This analysis is not to say that the U.S. government unilaterally controlled the democratization processes in the region. However, the influence of the United States, with its considerable resources and ability to shape political contexts for weaker states, should not be underestimated.

Other analysts (most of whom are from the developing world) such as Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Julio Cotler and Guillermo O'Donnell have made important contributions to the clarification of elements of change and those of continuity in states during a transformation process. Pinheiro, for example, stresses the relation of the state to the social structure: "The return to the 'formality' of democracy at the last phase of political transition does not imply that from there on democracy is established...Political transitions do not question the transformation of the State with regard to its relationship with the popular classes."[126]

One observation that can be drawn from the preceding discussion is that the Hobbesian form

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[124] See Fraga, *La Cuestión Militar...*, op.cit., 10, and whole chapter.

[125] Ibid., 132.

[126] Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, "The Legacy of Authoritarianism: Violence and the Limits of Democratic Transitions," Latin American Studies Association presentation, April 1991, 2.

of political system--the guardian model--blends quite nicely with a superficial change of *government* rather than a transformation of the *state*. Such a model allows the armed forces to continue their traditional function of surveillance and tutelage of civilian sectors (still perceived as a latent threat to the system). The traditional military and civilian elites form a sort of aristocracy. However, a deeper process of change in power relations (as in the participatory model)--that is, changes in the *state*--is a much rarer (and more revolutionary) phenomenon.

This discussion enables us to see from another vantage point that analyses of democratization which focus solely on the restoration of elections and civil and political liberties[127] may obscure the underlying issues of *power relations* in political systems. These power relations may be illuminated by using the three models posited in this study. In the following pages, we seek to delve beneath the formal mechanisms of electoral democracy to examine more profound relationships: *what form* of democracy is emerging, how much political power does the majority hold, and to what extent do unelected entities such as the armed forces impose restrictions and controls upon the citizenry. The study focuses on the struggle between sectors of society attempting to increase their political power by means of opening the system, and elite sectors struggling to keep them restricted.

The final theoretical point to be made here is that the armed forces as the coercive apparatus of the state *have not been a neutral arbiter* in Argentina. The coups and military regimes in Argentine history have always been backed by particular social sectors and political actors forming "coup coalitions" (documented further in the study); more importantly, a constant across the various coups has been the fear of the masses held by the elites and the officers corps alike. This suggests that after a transition to democracy, the civilian government cannot assume that the state is a neutral

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[127] Huntington's definition of democracy, which is widely accepted, is: "A political system is defined as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote." Samuel P. Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" op.cit., 195.

apparatus. Given the prior political behavior of a key branch of the state, the armed forces, the state itself and not solely the government requires democratization: at minimum civilian control by elected authorities and subordination to constitutional restraints. The struggle in Argentina during the 1980s embodied the struggle over democratization of the state *after* democratization of the government had occurred. Politicized armed forces imply a continuing struggle for control of the state.

Note on Methodology

In Argentina, research was conducted over an eight-month period in Buenos Aires in 1992, with a follow-up trip in 1993. Given that some Argentine observers told me at the beginning of my research that the armed forces were no longer an important political actor--a perspective at odds with my hypotheses--much of the investigation was dedicated to gathering primary source material to test the core hypotheses of this study. That is, compiling a historical record of actual events, actual military demands, and the degree of success of these demands, was central. In this way, it was possible to document the military's importance as a political actor after the 1983 transition and provide evidence its attempts to insert national-security structures and values within the constitutional system and policy-making.

One particular methodological problem was the inherent difficulty in discovering underlying military attitudes, secret "hypotheses of conflict," and plans, which were crucial to my case. Given this, a deductive methodology was required, which could infer and seek to confirm the existence of such military hypotheses and plans by analyzing observable military behavior, political activities and statements. Secret documents obtained (see below), interviews, and historical research conducted in Buenos Aires served to confirm this analysis. Given the relative scarcity of official documents, interviews with knowledgeable Argentines were crucial. The author conducted over 100 interviews and in-depth discussions, many of which were taped, with Argentines from all walks of life. The

individuals interviewed (see Appendix) were chosen because they were particularly knowledgeable about the themes of this study, as scholars or as inside participants. With a number of them, repeated discussions or interviews were held over a period of more than a year.

Other methodological problems faced by the author were first, the murkiness and secrecy inherent in areas central to this study, and second, the real possibility that some interested respondents might provide misinformation, even "gray or black propaganda" (deliberately misleading or false information) for political purposes. Certain crucial questions about the functioning of the intelligence apparatus or the parties responsible for certain controversial events in the 1980s, for example, elicited widely divergent, even contradictory responses. The author has provided the various interpretations of important events in Argentina, and analytically evaluated their credibility, directly in the text. A similar problem was posed by the author's acquisition of internal military documents in Buenos Aires. While there are compelling reasons to believe they are genuine, this was sometimes difficult to confirm. For this reason, use of the documents was buttressed by evidence from public military statements and articles, interviews, press reports and other public sources. In other words, the evidence in the internal documents is used in combination with other documentary sources and interviews.

Given the nature of these issues, however, even the most careful analysis and documentation from the most credible sources may contain errors. The passing of time, perhaps, will shed more light on some of the more confusing episodes. Nevertheless, despite this difficulty, the author believes that enough material is available to permit an objective interpretation and provide a window into the complexities of transforming militarized political systems.

part I

historical antecedents, 1930-1983

CHAPTER 2

MILITARY POLITICO-IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter provides a historical context in order to understand the early social, political and economic influences upon the organizational and ideological development of the armed forces. Beginning in the 1920s, the Argentine military expanded its interests and functions into the political, economic and foreign-policy realms. Gradually, the institutional interests of the military merged with political interests. We examine in this chapter the elements that led to this military role expansion and the ways in which the military became a political "factor of power." In 1930, a faction of the army overthrew the civilian government for the first time in the 20th century. This political intervention was not solely a product of military institutional interests; it was an example of the effect of broader political influences upon the military. As Samuel Huntington has argued,

> "The effort to answer the question, 'What characteristics of the military establishment of a new nation facilitate its involvement in domestic politics?' is misdirected because the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political and reflect not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment but the political and institutional structures of the society."[1]

The political positions of different factions of the armed forces are discussed in this chapter. Early in this century the armed forces began to divide into two major political currents: nationalist-authoritarian, and liberal-internationalist (defined below). These ideological differences cannot be understood except in light of international and national--that is, external and non-institutional--influences. Norberto Ceresole has posited, in a similar vein, that all political and economic changes in Argentina have generated an immediate repercussion within the armed forces. He argues that

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[1] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) 194. See also his work *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).

each military coup between 1930 and 1955 was the result of an internal struggle to displace officers linked to rival political currents.[2] As we see in this chapter, Argentine politics from 1930 to 1943 was dominated by the liberal-internationalist wing of the army, in alliance with civilian conservatives. From 1943 to 1955, Juan Perón's nationalist-authoritarian current held sway, and established a corporatist form of state based on industrial development. Peronism led to an increasingly serious division in the armed forces. In 1955, the liberal-internationalist wing overthrew Perón in a coup and regained power once again.

This chapter also documents the factors that gave rise to the national-security doctrine, a product of institutional, national and international influences. The overthrow of Perón in 1955 enabled new, international Cold War doctrines to penetrate the Argentine military. First French, then U.S. counterrevolutionary and counterinsurgency doctrines greatly influenced the Argentine armed forces, fusing with older notions of the military mission. U.S.-dominated hemispheric security structures and training programs solidified the anticommunist military alliance in the Americas and fostered military political dominance. These structures and their impact upon the Argentine military are examined in detail. Finally, the Argentine version of the national-security doctrine is fully explored. This doctrine became the organizational and institutional basis for the national-security state.

The Early Formation of the Armed Forces

Argentina's prosperity and constitutional system were admired worldwide between the 1860s and the 1920s. A quasi-colony of Britain, Argentina progressively developed her agrarian economy

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[2] Norberto Ceresole, *El ejército y la crisis política argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Política Internacional, 1970) 28.

as the main provider of beef, hides and grains to Britain in the second half of the 1800s.[3] The Argentine army was formed in the crucible of struggles in the first part of the 19th century under dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas to defeat the provincial *caudillos*; the army "became effectively [Rosas's] own and that of the nation."[4] Between 1865 and 1870, the army fought against Paraguay in the War of the Triple Alliance; later, the army led annihilation campaigns against Native American tribes. Beginning in 1900, Argentina's army was trained and professionalized by the imperial Prussian army in a new National War College, with Prussian advisers, overseas training and arms contracts.[5]

Masses of Italian and Spanish immigrants drawn by promises of riches came to the country between 1860 and 1910; their numbers surpassed the existing population of Argentina. For many years, the oligarchic elites who owned vast expanses of land and dominated politics through the *Sociedad Rural Argentina* (Argentine Rural Society) and the Conservative Party, kept these new sectors disenfranchised. Many of the immigrants brought anarchist and socialist ideas with them from Europe; elements of these sectors formed anarchist movements, the Socialist Party and the Radical Party.[6] Some of the immigrants also entered the armed forces as a means of upward mobility. Through various fraudulent means, these immigrant sectors were denied the vote until the

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[3] For a detailed history of Argentina's early years, see Aldo Ferrer, "Economic development in Argentina: An historical perspective," in *International Social Science Journal* 134, "The Americas: 1492-1992," UNESCO: Blackwell Publishers (November 1992), 463-472; Carlos Alberto Floria y César A. García Belsunce, *Historia de los Argentinos*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Larousse, 1992), and David Rock, *Argentina 1516-1987* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[4] Charles D. Corbett (Colonel), *The Latin American Military as a Socio-Political Force: Case Studies of Bolivia and Argentina* (Miami: Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1972) 75.

[5] Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

[6] For a history of the Socialist Party, see Richard J. Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina 1890-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Institute of Latin American Studies, Latin American Monographs No. 42, 1977). For a history of the Radical Party, see Marcelo Luis Acuña, *De Frondizi a Alfonsín: la tradición política del radicalismo* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, Part I, 1984).

Sáenz-Peña reform of 1912 which granted suffrage rights to male citizens (that is, excluding women and non-citizens). In 1916, the country's first open presidential election was held and the first Radical president was elected, a charismatic and eccentric man named Hipólito Yrigoyen. He presided over a period of gradually increasing political participation and inclusion led by the Radical Party, within the framework of capitalist development. That is, Yrigoyen was hardly revolutionary; during the so-called *Semana Trágica* in 1919, he used the army to repress militant workers' strikes and scores were killed. He also used federal "intervention" powers to destroy his political competition in the provinces.[7]

Already at this time, during the era of World War I and the Russian revolution, secret associations, or lodges, devoted to anticommunism were forming in the army. *Logia San Martín* sought to pressure the government to crack down on workers and the left, and dominated the powerful officers' association *Círculo Militar*; according to Potash, their contempt for civilian rule was already apparent in the 1920s.[8] Already many officers had ideological and economic concerns implying an extension of the military mission into civilian realms. Military men were in the forefront of industrialism: the *Fábrica Militar de Aviación* (Military Aviation Factory) was established in 1916 in Córdoba;[9] General Enrique Mosconi was the "father" of the oil industry and led the state oil company, *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* (YPF), from 1922 to 1930. Other state industrial enterprises were pioneered by officers.[10] General Manuel Savio fostered Argentina's

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[7] Federal intervention in Argentina refers to the ability of the national government to replace rebellious provincial governors with federal representatives if the executive deems it necessary. See Anne L. Potter, "The Failure of Democracy in Argentina 1916-1930: An Institutional Perspective," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 13 (1981) 83-109, for evidence of Yrigoyen's use of these powers for political ends.

[8] Potash, op.cit., 11-13, 103.

[9] Curtin Winsor, Jr. *The National Security and Armament Policies of Argentina* (American University, Ph.D. diss., 1971), 173.

[10] Corbett, op.cit., 94.

heavy industry. Mosconi gave national security reasons for military industrialism. In his book *El Petróleo Argentino*, he wrote:

> "In the year 1922 the major part of combustible liquid gas that the country consumed was imported...aircraft fuel was not produced and what the country consumed was imported from the West Indian Oil Company. That is, our country, which possessed rich oil deposits in Patagonia, imported the combustible fuel necessary for its life, defense and security. The cannons of our ships were immobilized and our airplanes closeted in their hangars...This signified a situation of danger."[11]

Most argues that military industrialism was largely motivated by the national-security concerns of the armed forces,[12] specifically competition with Brazil and the United States. Other factors also led the armed forces into civilian realms, thus expanding their traditional role as defenders of the national territory from external attack. First, the lack of a directly threatening external enemy or war mission meant the armed forces increasingly turned inward, particularly the army. The quest for a meaningful mission led the army into a concern with economics and politics. Second, the absence of war or enemies meant the armed forces had to create an *esprit de corps* by other means, leading them to create abstract enemies.[13] Third, the influence of German military geopolitical doctrines, authoritarian ideology and virulent anticommunism helped to politicize segments of the armed forces. Finally, the military world was gradually growing more alienated from civil society. The last era when officers and civilian leaders fought together had been in the 19th century. As one retired army officer put it,

> "...the generation of the 1880s was the last sociological group where you had both

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[11] Enrique Mosconi, *El Petróleo Argentino* (Buenos Aires: Editorial El Ateneo, 1936), cited in Norberto Ceresole, *El ejército...*, op.cit., 45.

[12] Benjamin Most, *Changing Authoritarian Rule...*, op.cit., especially 85-109.

[13] This argument is made by Emilio Mignone in "The Military: What Is To Be Done?" *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. XXI No. 4 (July-August 1987) 16. He further stresses this situation as a determinant of the creation of vast intelligence apparatuses by each military force.

> civilians and the military who knew each other, who fought together for their country [in the war against Paraguay], and the survivors of that war had become the government...nobody paid much attention at first, but by the 1930s, [officers and civilians] went into their own ghettos, and the civilians were too busy making money. When those things begin to happen, I think you have a sort of--I don't know how to describe it, certainly you have a wall, very difficult wall to climb, a very high one. They cannot see, they cannot listen very well, and it's very difficult to make up your mind to cross the wall, and much more, to push through the wall and say let's get together and work together. This generation of the 80s is the last one where everybody respected the other since everyone knew each other very well; they were friends, many of them were relatives."[14]

Similarly, another officer commented that civilians before 1930 had little interest in military matters. In an era of prosperity and peace, with no wars since the last century, there was little need for armed forces at all. Although Argentina's Congress had the same powers as the U.S. Congress to regulate the military and control its budget, little effort was expended by civilians to understand military or security issues. The armed forces were essentially left to their own devices. This resulted in greater and greater autonomy for the armed forces in the early part of century. Moreover, the army was large: much larger than necessary for a country at peace. Finally, after 1930, civilians *could not* control the armed forces.[15]

The Merging of Political and Institutional Interests

The reference above to the growing autonomy of the military in the 1920s requires a brief discussion of the concept of "autonomy." As Pion-Berlin has pointed out, the concept implies a range of both political and institutional concerns.[16] After 1930, the armed forces were both a permanent *political* force in Argentina, beyond the control of civilians, and a self-conscious

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[14] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, April 28, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[15] Interview with Colonel Gustavo Cáceres (retired) conducted by author, October 8, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[16] David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in Latin America," *Comparative Politics* (October 1992), 83-102.

institution with professional concerns. Indeed, there was a blurring of the two realms as the classic role of the armed forces expanded to encompass new functions and interests. The armed forces had become more professional and self-confident, developed a large and disciplined army with a physical presence throughout the country, and established dominance over sectors of the economy. They had increasingly participated in political decision-making within the state, as Ministers of War and the Navy and as heads of state enterprises, representing the interests of the armed forces in the political sphere. Finally, military factions identified with political currents among civilian sectors such as the oligarchy or the Radical Party and sought alliances with those sectors--as equal political partners --for mutual goals. In short, the Argentine armed forces developed both *institutional* and *political* autonomy during this era, with a sense of themselves both as a corporate entity and as *a major factor of national power* in Argentina.

General Agustín Justo, for example, who came from a wealthy land-owning family, was linked by ideology, interest and family ties to the oligarchy; he and his followers in the army opposed the reelection of Radical leader Yrigoyen in 1928 and called for a coup.[17] Despite the developing divergence of perspectives between "liberal" and "developmentalist" factions in the armed forces (examined below), allied with different sectors of the dominant elites, most officers from both camps regarded the popular classes, workers and democrats in general as dangerous influences, possibly communists.[18] Potash and others point to these early years as the genesis of the process of military politicization.[19] In sum, military "autonomy" signified not only classical military-institutional capabilities and interests but also political capabilities and interests related to the distribution of power in Argentine state and society.

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[17] Potash, op.cit., 18-19, 43-44.

[18] Potash, op.cit., 24-25.

[19] Potash, op.cit., 12.

With the onset of the Depression and the crash of 1929, Argentina entered a period of crisis. The changing nature of the global political economy meant Argentina lost the conditions (mainly free trade with European markets) which made the country prosperous before.[20] The world collapse of prices and loss of Argentina's European markets damaged the country's ability to recapture its position in the international division of labor and made its economic dependency on Europe starkly clear. The Smoot-Hawley tariff in the United States in 1930 and a serious crop failure in Argentina that same year caused a drop in exports of 772 million pesos.[21] The decline of British hegemony, the loss of Argentina's major trading partners, and the gradual beginning of U.S. hegemony--and competition both economically and politically--were all factors in a great change in the balance of world power which would have vast implications for Argentina. The Smoot-Hawley Act, essentially instituting protectionism for the U.S. market, was regarded as an unfriendly act by Argentina; Argentines had also always resented U.S. attempts to dominate the hemisphere and sought to counterbalance them.[22]

The oligarchy--Argentina's traditional land-owning elites--and allied groups in the armed forces grew increasingly hostile to the Yrigoyen regime in 1929. The president's policies of

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[20] See Ferrer, op.cit.; Carlos Waisman, *Reversal of Development in Argentina* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Salvador San Martín, *El Poder Militar y La Nación* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Troquel, 1983); Juan Corradi, *The Fitful Republic: Economics, Politics and Society in Argentina* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Alejandro B. Rofman and Luis A. Romero, *Sistema socioeconómico y estructura regional en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu editores, segunda edición, 1974).

[21] Corbett, op.cit., 90.

[22] Argentina and the United States shared a long history of diplomatic competition based on Argentina's refusal to accept U.S. hegemony. In 1889, the United States convened the Washington Conference of American States to promote an inter-American union called "America for the Americans." Argentina resisted, counter-proposing an "America for Humanity" plan. In the League of Nations, Argentina argued against U.S. Monroe Doctrine presumptions in the Charter and demanded equality for all states. When this position failed, Argentina left the League in 1920. In the 1930s and 40s, Argentina continued to oppose U.S.-organized efforts to install a collective-security hemispheric system. See Curtin Winsor, Jr., "The National Security and Armament Policies of Argentina." Ph.D. diss., American University (1971) 50. This resistance faded after World War II, when anticommunism and the Cold War became paramount to Argentine officers and generated interest in U.S. politico-military programs.

progressive inclusion of immigrant middle class sectors within the political system and attempts to increase the state's role in the economy increasingly antagonized these elites.[23] Tensions produced by economic crisis; the growing participation and political power of the middle classes, represented by the Radical Party; disillusionment with democracy as a system among many social sectors; admiration among some sectors for Italian fascism; fear of Yrigoyen's policies and his political interventions in the armed forces and in the provinces; and the president's increasing eccentricity: all were components in the decision by the country's traditional conservative elites to terminate Argentina's system of liberal, constitutional government.[24]

General Uriburu, a pro-fascist general, led the 1930 coup; in fact his faction represented a minority of the armed forces. He was replaced in an internal coup by the more "liberal" faction of the army led by Justo in 1932. This era heralded a deepening binary division within the armed forces, between an authoritarian-nationalist current, with sympathies toward fascism and corporatism, and a liberal-rightist current, with links to the traditional oligarchy. A third segment of the armed forces, a sort of "silent majority," formed the constituency whose loyalty each of the two political currents attempted to capture.

Military Factionalism and Ideological Currents

For decades the Argentine armed forces--like the broader Argentine society--have been deeply divided on questions of government economic and political policy and the best form of state. In a 1970 comment on the 1930 coup, Juan Perón revealed the ideological divisions within the army at that time:

"In 1930, I was in the Superior War School. Within the army there was a general

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[23] Potash, op.cit., 41.

[24] See Potash, op. cit., 41-42; Waisman, op.cit.; Potter, op.cit.

> movement of opinion no one could escape. All of us were more or less committed. Always it happens in the revolutions [the term consistently used by the Argentine armed forces to mean military coups or uprisings] that 20% are in favor, 20% against, and 60% are with who wins; these are the professionals. I was a captain in that epoch. I didn't understand much of these things. But there was a military revolution and in the spirit of solidarity [*esprit de corps*], all of us in the Superior War School supported it..."[25]

This insight about the ideological environment within the armed forces is still valid; the bulk of the forces tend to be swayed by charismatic leaders who appeal to their basic shared values of conservatism, tradition and nationalism.

Many analysts point out that the ideological differences in the armed forces tend to fall along a great divide, between nationalists and liberals, but differ on the terminology used. Goldwert has differentiated the two broad groups as *liberal-nationalists* versus *integrating-nationalists*.[26] His central thesis is that the Argentine army's political history is a reflection of this dichotomy of values. Rouquié categorizes the two major currents as the *developmentalist* wing and the *economically-liberal* wing;[27] Potash, discussing the 1920s and 1930s, as an *industrial-development* wing versus a *traditional agro- and trade-promoting* wing[28] with ties to the oligarchy. Rock calls the main factions of the 1930s *nationalists* and *liberal conservatives*.[29] Fitch argues that the armed forces in recent times fall into at least 6 or 7 ideological categories.[30] This study will analyze the major

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[25] "Las memorias de Juan Perón (1895-1945)," *La Panorama*, Buenos Aires, April 14, 1970, cited in Alicia S. Garcia y Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, *Textos y documentos. El autoritarismo y los argentinos: La hora de la espada/1 (1924-1946)* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, 1988), 56.

[26] Marvin Goldwert, *Democracy, Militarism and Nationalism in Argentina 1930-1966* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972).

[27] Alain Rouquié, *The Military and the State in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 274.

[28] Potash, op.cit., 23-24.

[29] David Rock, *Argentina 1516-1987* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 216.

[30] Conversation with J. Samuel Fitch, August 29, 1992, Buenos Aires.

ideological factions of the armed forces in different historical periods; the crucial point is to understand the significance of these terms.

In reality, the terms "nationalist" and "liberal" (like "hard-line" and "moderate") must be used cautiously when referring to the Argentine armed forces; they may convey a misleading sense of military ideological positions to the U.S. reader. As Rock's term implies, so-called liberals are in fact deeply conservative, as well as virulently anticommunist and nationalistic. That is, the meaning of "liberal" in Argentine terms refers to economic rather than political liberalism, in the sense of the classic 19th-century doctrine of free trade, a perspective favoring links with foreign capital, foreign investment, and free markets. Nationalist currents, in turn, tend to espouse state-controlled development of strategic industries, protectionism, a corporatist, Catholic-organic view of society, and an anti-imperialist rhetoric in some cases; generally this current is right-wing Catholic and elements admire fascist models.[31] Other disagreements exist within the armed forces on economic, political and ideological questions, which reflect the political differences in the larger society.

The shared conservative views, shared interests, and shared sense of superiority to civilians held by the majority of the officer corps are the most crucial similarities to recognize. As a function of the insulated and elitist nature of the institution, the political views of all sectors tend toward a traditional, moralistic and hierarchical view of society. Internal discipline and strict obedience to superiors are inculcated at an early age. Cadets are brought into the military system young, as early as 12 years old, to be absorbed totally into the rigidly structured and autocratic military world. Military schools, universities and advanced officer-training institutions instill the values of order,

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[31] For a useful discussion of the links between the Argentine military and right-wing sectors of society, especially among the elites, see Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds., *The Argentine Right* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1993). Many proto-fascist and anti-Semitic groups have influenced Argentine elites and sectors within the military since the 1920s.

authority and patriotism closely linked to the values of the powerful Catholic Church. Permission is required from superiors for officers to marry and divorce is not tolerated in the Argentine armed forces.[32] Little tolerance exists for minority or nonconformist views; the superior officer's word is absolute law.

These Argentine military values and political culture, perpetuated by education and tradition within a closed environment, represented a wholly different philosophy of life than those of political liberalism or democracy. As they developed in Argentina, the armed forces became essentially an armed, right-wing political party (or parties). The growing contempt for civilians first emerging in the 1920s and 1930s deepened over time, increasing the distance between the military and civilian worlds. Ironically, there was a self-fulfilling quality to the armed forces' suspicion and dissatisfaction with civilians-as-governors, as frequent coups prevented political parties and politicians from gaining government experience. As the armed forces acquired political power, as they did in Argentina early in the century, they became capable of swinging the nation's politics sharply to the right[33]--despite being a non-elected entity with political views distinctly more conservative than most of society.

Studies on the military mentality in various countries by Huntington, Janowitz and Vagts found that "one of the most noted characteristics of the military mind is a marked conservatism,"[34] with a low faith in humanity and a pessimistic view of human nature. Utilizing survey data, they demonstrated that military officers tended to have a Hobbesian world view and images of human

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[32] Interview with Carlos Juvenal, journalist and expert on military affairs, conducted by author, October 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[33] In the 1960s U.S. policy-makers referred to this as the "moderating influence" of the armed forces. See, for example, Corbett, op.cit., introduction by Mose L. Harvey, ix-x.

[34] B. Abrahamsson, "Elements of Military Conservatism: Traditional and Modern," from Morris Janowitz and Jacques Van Doorn, *On Military Ideology* (Belgium: Rotterdam University Press, 1971) 61.

beings as inherently aggressive, willful, anarchic, emotional, and violent. Authority, order and community were seen as required, by force if necessary; a strong conservative inclination to regulate and control society was widespread. Huntington stressed the "conservative realism" of the military ethic and the military conviction that war was inevitable and violence unavoidable.[35]

Nordlinger's research[36] supports this body of work as well; his study of the political sociology of officers reveals characteristics including: an unquestioning obedience to superiors in a hierarchical setting, self-identification as a competent and modern societal force, and high value on military norms and virtues (e.g., military efficiency, force and military might as solutions to conflicts, political order as the overriding good). Thus, Nordlinger argues, armed forces tend to overestimate threats to security posed by democratic freedoms and conflicts. He critiques the model of progressive, modernizing soldiers in the modernization literature of Shils, Johnson and Janowitz, presenting evidence that military regimes are generally not congenial to social change. Rather, military forces' tendency to believe in a singular "national interest" devalues bargaining and compromise. Finally, Nordlinger observes that coups often determine which social class predominates in a country. In his study of a number of military regimes in many developing countries, Nordlinger found that military coups often change the structure of the regime, establishing authoritarian systems closed to popular participation and competition.

In Argentina, sectors of the armed forces sympathetic to Radicalism and its populist concerns with inclusion, representation, and civil liberties were gradually weeded out. Cantón argues that the professionalization of the armed forces, which took place under the dominance of the oligarchy, meant the armed forces were imbued with its right-wing ideology and vision, which contributed to

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[35] Huntington, *The Soldier and the State...*, op.cit., especially Chapter 3, "The Military Mind: Conservative Realism of the Professional Military Ethic."

[36] Eric Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

the military's propensity to intervene in the political sphere; most importantly, the armed forces became deeply hostile toward popular movements.[37] Around the turn of the century, Radicals excluded from government for years attempted to organize coups against the government of the oligarchy. These failed, but they had the support of many sympathetic officers. In 1901, the Riccheri reform of the armed forces had the effect of gradually purging these Radical sympathizers from the ranks of the officer corps.[38] While supporters of Yrigoyen still formed a percentage of the armed forces after the 1930 coup, their numbers continued to decline in the 1930s. Thus, officers with opinions more linked to the Radical Party's middle-class values and positions became a minority within the forces.

> The military's self-enforced isolation from society was deepened as, beginning in the 1920s,
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> "...special neighborhoods and clubs were constructed for officers and their families. These new institutions included free country clubs or '*círculos*' used for recreation, business functions and weddings of officers and their children. Paid for out of the military budget, these clubs--like the special apartment complexes erected near major military installations--accentuated the officers' ignorance of civilian values and aspirations...The virtual apartheid separating officers from both enlisted soldiers and civilians was epitomized in the rules governing elevators in military buildings: one set of lifts was used by officers, and another for civilians and lower-ranking officers."[39]

Thus, a complex of prerogatives and material benefits accrued to officers which gave them a vested

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[37] Darío Cantón, *La política de los militares argentinos: 1900-1971*, (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1971) 22. See also Paul G. Chevigny, "Police Deadly Force as Social Control: Jamaica, Brazil and Argentina," in Martha Huggins, ed. *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal Violence* (New York: Praeger, 1991) 189-217. Chevigny argues that police violence in Argentina is related to the longstanding fear of social rebellion held by the armed and security forces as well as the elite classes.

[38] The *Fundación Arturo Illia para la Democracia y la Paz* argues that the Riccheri reform, law 4031, had two contradictory aims: 1) to set the armed forces apart from politics by prohibiting military men from participating directly or indirectly in political parties; and 2) to transform the army into a political school for nationalism for young conscripts. Thus the armed forces developed negative ideas toward the political parties and incipient democratic process, while the establishment of obligatory military service in the law allowed the Prussian-trained officer corps to imprint the military's authoritarian ideology upon every generation of young men. See *Fundación*, "Lineamientos para una reforma militar," second ed., 1988, 5-6.

[39] Emilio F. Mignone, "The Military: What Is To Be Done?" op.cit., 16.

interest in maintaining their standard of living and position in society as a special social caste.

Military officers mixed socially and politically with members of Argentina's landed elites and industrial entrepreneurs in such organizations as the *Sociedad Rural Argentina*, the Jockey Club, the Argentine Chamber of Commerce, the stock exchange, and the *Unión Industrial Argentina* (an association of national businesses).[40] Many officers sat on the boards of directors of national enterprises or subsidiaries of transnational corporations. Others, particularly the nationalists, knew each other through Catholic church activities or lay organizations. Civilians from these organizations made up the pool of *técnicos* who staffed various military regimes.[41]

All these factors led to a military world view that promoted a hierarchical and authoritarian view of society, regarding mass participation and protest with suspicion. Like their traditional allies among the oligarchic class and later, industrial elites, intent on preserving their privileges, most officers regarded demands for inclusion or expanded political power by "sectors from below" with alarm. While the concepts of constitutionalism and democracy were lauded by the military, they assumed distinctive meanings. The constitution, for example, could at times be suspended in the higher interests of the nation, if the armed forces deemed it was being abused by irresponsible civilians.[42] That is, as the moral reserve of the nation, the armed forces had every right to substitute civilian governments. Democracy became equated with controlled and exclusionary political systems and guardian models. Later, democracy became equated with anticommunism or

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[40] For a discussion of links between key political actors, both civilian and military, in recent years, see Paul Lewis, "The Right and Military Rule, 1955-1983," in Deutsch and Dolkart, eds., op.cit., 147-180.

[41] See Lewis, ibid., as well as the other authors in the Deutsch and Dolkart volume for references to civilian members of various military regimes.

[42] This is evidenced by numerous proclamations issued by Argentine military leaders after coups. See the discussion of consistent issues raised in such statements by Horacio Verbitsky, *Medio Siglo de Proclamas Militares* (Buenos Aires: Editorial/12, 1987), especially 16-24. He finds many cases where officers cite the higher moral duty of a patriotic military to suspend the Constitution when it is being abused by civilian governments.

simply identification with and defense of the "Western, Christian world." Many of the officers in the most repressive military regimes, such as the 1976 *Proceso*, considered themselves democrats. Yet unrestricted democracy was seen as dangerous to national security. That is, their conception of "democracy" was a guardian model.

Over time, the armed forces as a whole came to see themselves as the only institution in society above narrow partisan interests, the sole representative of national unity and national interest, and saviors of the nation with a particular vocation for political leadership. As the armed forces gradually became professionalized in the early years of the century, they also gradually assumed a central political role. However, a key issue of contention within the armed forces was *how* to promote the development desired by all factions: via protectionist, nationalist development strategies and import-substitution industrialization, or via expanded links with powerful military allies, foreign markets and international capital. Other differences existed as well within the armed forces regarding positions toward the popular sectors (anarchism, socialism and Radicalism until the 1940s, and *Peronismo* and the left after that), elections and civilian government, and so on. Yet these differences usually tended to be tactical rather than fundamental. These military factions have shifted in identification throughout Argentina's history and differences have often tended to become blurred; indeed, each major current has repeatedly sought to encompass and incorporate the other in the interests of military unity.

Cold war politics and the new national-security doctrine emerging in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in a broadening of the definition of "subversion" by the militaries throughout Latin America, to encompass democratic dissent, Church-related activities for the poor, intellectual questioning, strikes and union organizing, all left-of-center opinion, and so on. This development, which had profound implications in Argentina, is examined in detail later in this chapter.

The 1930 Coup and the Rule of the Liberal-Internationalists

General José Uriburu, the leader of the 1930 coup which began Argentina's so-called "infamous decade" (*década infame*), was a German-trained general who admired fascism and a corporatist version of state and society.[43] While he preferred to eliminate all political parties, his chief rival in the army, General Agustín Justo, preferred to simply unseat Yrigoyen and then return to a restricted constitutional system. Uriburu's cabinet consisted almost totally of Conservatives, civilians from the oligarchy:[44] two were formerly officials in the *Sociedad Rural Argentina*, the traditional organization of the land-owning elites. After the Radicals won the election organized in 1931 by the military government (who thought the Conservatives would win), Uriburu proscribed the Radical party, closed its offices and exiled its leaders; he also began to organize a fascist-inspired civilian paramilitary group called *Legión Cívica Argentina*.[45] This period accelerated the development of politicized armed forces, accustomed to wielding political power, who distrusted party activity, participation by popular sectors, and non-military perspectives.

Rock notes that "nationalism emerged as a major force in Argentine politics in the mid-1930s and soon after became a central one."[46] The Roca-Runciman Pact of 1935, which gave large trade concessions to Britain, was bitterly resented by nationalist officers in the military and other sectors as a humiliating act of subservience to Britain.[47] After the 1930 coup, Argentina gradually

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[43] For detailed documentation on this era, see Alicia S. García y Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, *Textos y documentos: El autoritarismo y los argentinos. La Hora de la Espada/1* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1988); and Fernando García Molina y Carlos A. Mayo, *Archivo del General Uriburu: Autoritarismo y Ejército/1 & 2* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1986).

[44] Potash, 56.

[45] Ibid., 71.

[46] Rock, op.cit., 228.

[47] See Rock, ibid., 224; Richard Gillespie, *Argentina's Montoneros: Soldiers of Perón* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 4-5.

undertook a series of import-substitution industrialization measures due to the collapse of foreign markets and the pressure of military industrialism. At the same time, the armed forces were gradually becoming independent of the oligarchy; Cantón argues that the military took over the leadership lost by the agrarian elites.[48] Among the armed forces three factions developed in these years: one still pro-Radical and sympathetic to Yrigoyen, one right-wing nationalist, following Uriburu, and one liberal, sympathetic to Justo, according to Potash.[49] During this era of the military-oligarchic alliance--called the *Concordancia*--a growing working class was denied a political voice.[50] It was this massive constituency that Juan Perón claimed as he later began to organize his power base within labor. "What took place from 1935-1946 was a process of national capital accumulation based on the compression of wages and under the political control of a class coalition dominated by the landed elements. Peronism represented the vindication of the mass of repressed workers..."[51]

The 1930s were marked by a succession of military and Conservative governors, elected due to repeated instances of massive fraud. In 1935 the armed forces began civic action programs and became more deeply involved in running the country's infrastructure. The *Gendarmería Nacional*, Argentina's militarized border police, was created in 1938 with 11,000 men and commanded by an army officer. It was placed under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War, and was given a broad mission with both internal security and military functions. The *Gendarmería* participated in army

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[48] Cantón, op.cit., 115.

[49] Potash, op.cit., 60.

[50] For an interesting study of labor unrest and communist influence in the 1930 to 1943 era, see Roberto P. Korzeniewicz, "Labor Unrest in Argentina," *Latin America Research Review*, Vol 28 No. 1, 1993, 7-40. He argues that alarm among the armed forces, business owners, conservative leaders and other labor organizers such as socialists and syndicalists toward communist successes helped prepare the terrain for Peronism.

[51] Juan Corradi, *The Fitful Republic...*,op.cit., 52.

mobilization plans, civic action duties in rural areas, border control, and intelligence operations. It was responsible to the army and was organized and administered according to army regulations.[52]

The 1930s also involved the armed forces in domestic and foreign policy-making. With growing professionalization, growing politicization had occurred simultaneously. As Potash notes:

> "The doubling of the officer corps between 1930 and 1945, the expansion of their military management responsibilities as the forces under their control tripled, the creation of military-run factories and arsenals, the establishment of War College courses for senior officers--all these gave the military leaders increased confidence in their own abilities to handle national problems...Also contributing to the officers' growing self-image as the natural arbiters of the political process was the failure of the major political parties from 1916 on to line up solidly against military involvement. When civilian politicians repeatedly turned to Army officers for support, they were admitting their own weakness and encouraging military activism."[53]

The Rise of Perón in the 1940s and the Dominance of the Authoritarian-Nationalists

At the start of the new decade, the armed forces and the government shared a high degree of threat perception, from both internal and external enemies. In 1941, the year Germany invaded the Soviet Union, President Ramón S. Castillo (a rightist civilian from the oligarchy who was close to Justo) declared a state of siege lifting constitutional guarantees. This condition was practically permanent until September 1963.[54] He also established in 1942 a special police unit within the Interior Ministry to apply "vigilance over and suppression of anti-Argentine activities."[55] The General Directorate of Military Manufacturers (DGFM) was instituted in 1941, as the armed forces

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[52] Central Intelligence Agency, *National Intelligence Survey*, Section 54, Public Order and Safety, January 1964, listed in *Declassified Documents Reference System* (Washington D.C.: Carrollton Press, Inc., 1977), No. 10D, 10. For a useful history and compilation of laws and decrees pertaining to the *Gendarmería*, see República Argentina, Gendarmería Nacional, *Gendarmería Nacional: Bases para su Conocimiento y Consideración* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de Gendarmería Nacional, 1984).

[53] Potash, op.cit., 283.

[54] CIA, op.cit., 12.

[55] Most, op.cit., 73.

sought to become self-sufficient in weaponry. The officer corps began to develop a constellation of arms factories producing "light weapons, trucks, aircraft, and all kinds of ammunition, tanks, naval frigates, and other forms of combat equipment; also [they had] active responsibility for industrial development, especially metallurgical industries."[56] The DGFM also produced "liquid gas piping, agricultural equipment, and oil drilling machinery. It operated railroad equipment and maintenance facilities...[it] produced petrochemical products. Together with the YPF which was also dominated by the military, the DGFM exploited the nation's gas, oil, coal, iron ore, and sulphur deposits..."[57] In short, the armed forces controlled an economic empire, which in turn supplied the justification for a major voice in economic policy and decision-making.

Military leaders chafed at the deliberate efforts of the United States to deny them access to sophisticated weapons, given Argentina's refusal to enter World War II on the allied side.[58] Indeed, a major division within the armed forces during the era of World War II concerned this issue: the liberal wing preferred to support the Allies, while the pro-fascist currents argued for neutrality, given the difficulty of entering the war on the German side. By the beginning of 1943, Argentina "was surrounded by nations whose militaries were being modernized with U.S. assistance"[59] and military hypotheses of conflict posited possible threats from Brazil and the United States. Argentina refused an offer of $1 million from Lend-Lease in 1941, holding that it would increase U.S. domestic influence; both factions of the armed forces, pro-Axis and pro-Ally, wanted to build Argentina's politico-military capability and thought this required industrial development.[60]

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[56] Winsor, op.cit., 27.

[57] Most, op.cit., 94.

[58] See Winsor, op.cit., 27.

[59] Most, op.cit., 87.

[60] Most, ibid., 87.

The consequences of this heavy involvement in the nation's industry, however, included 1) the growth of state-dominated enterprise, weakening the development of an independent civilian capitalist class and 2) justification for military decision-making in economic policy and foreign policy, thus broadening the role of the armed forces beyond strictly military-institutional concerns and providing the foundation for later national-security doctrines.

The pro-Axis coup of 1943 which overthrew Castillo was motivated partly by Castillo's ambiguous position about aligning Argentina with the Allies and his continued reliance on electoral fraud. Moreover, many sectors of the armed forces saw no future in further liberalism and oligarchic rule. General Franklin Rawson, a coup leader who became president for two days before being overturned himself, presented the *golpistas'* justification for the coup: "When the country, as a result of bad rulers, is put into a situation where there are no constitutional solutions, the military have a duty to fulfill: to put the nation in order."[61] Central to this coup was another secret military lodge, the *Grupo Oficiales Unidos* (GOU),[62] a group of which Juan Perón was a member, which admired Mussolini-style fascism. The two central tenets shared by GOU members were anticommunism and economic sovereignty,[63] the latter a nationalist idea with anti-American overtones. The 1943 coup ushered in a coup coalition including small and middle-sized industrialists, the armed forces, and elements of labor.[64] After the coup, Perón became War Minister and Labor Secretary; he used the latter position to build support among the masses of workers. Many GOU members gained positions in government or were given troop commands.

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[61] Quoted in John Simpson and Jana Bennett, *The Disappeared and the Mothers of the Plaza* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985) 43.

[62] For a history of the GOU and its role in this coup, see Robert Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987) 86-92, and Potash, op.cit., 184-198.

[63] Rock, op.cit., 248.

[64] Most, op.cit., 46.

The navy was suspicious of Perón's rising influence; traditionally liberal-rightist (the navy had been trained by Britain and the United States), it was unable to counter the strength of the army.

As War Minister, Perón continued the process of military role expansion. He was instrumental in establishing a 1944 statute which further professionalized the armed forces and gave the military the responsibility to provide literacy training to all 20-year-old males. Perón also promoted industrial development; he influenced the president to create both the first public bank to finance such development and the Secretariat of Industry and Commerce. The War and Navy Ministries were given permanent seats on the board of the bank.[65] General Savio continued to head the Directorate of Military Industries and a graduate of his school, General Julio Checci, was named to head the Secretariat of Industry and Commerce.[66]

Perón was a consummate politician, adept at satisfying competing demands and incorporating rival factions. He began to develop his "Third Position" ideology, which proclaimed a middle way between socialism and capitalism, both of which he denounced as ungodly and foreign to Argentina. In his frequent speeches, Perón appealed to labor with socialist rhetoric, promising social justice, and to the armed forces with anticommunism.[67] He argued to military audiences that his program would reduce the appeal of communism to the workers.[68]

Perón became president in 1946.[69] Perón's coalition included, for the first time, the

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[65] Potash, op.cit., 251-252.

[66] Most, op.cit., 88.

[67] Potash, op.cit., 228.

[68] Gillespie illustrates Perón's dual approach by placing these two quotes from Perón back to back: "We are not in the least the enemies of capital, and the future will show that we have been its true defenders." (from a speech in October 1946). "Peaceful coexistence between oppressed and oppressive classes is impossible. We have set ourselves the fundamental task of triumphing over the exploiters, even if they are infiltrated in our own political movement." (Message to Youth, October 1965.) See Gillespie, op.cit., 1.

[69] For detailed histories of the intrigues, coups and counter-coups of this era, see Crassweller, op.cit, 85-158, and Potash, op.cit., 228-258.

working class, along with domestic industrialists and the army; he implemented policies aimed at reducing the power of the agrarian elites and foreign capital.[70] Perón created a Ministry of Defense for first time and tried to unify the commands of army and navy by creating the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He also created the air force out of the army, as a way of increasing his power over the anti-Peronist navy. Perón and his wife Eva, a powerful and revered political figure in her own right, introduced substantial welfare functions in Perón's first term. The Perón regime extended generous benefits to workers, protected domestic industries, enfranchised women and fostered strong trade unions linked to the state. Perón nationalized the rail, telephone and gas companies as well as the central bank; the state monopolized external trade.[71] He established a federal police force of 18,000 in 1949[72] and a new constitution also in that year, which set up among other things a parallel system of military courts.

Perón's populist state represented a social coalition firmly based on a project of national development. Yet Perón did not challenge the base of the landed elites' power. No land reform was introduced; the huge land holdings were not expropriated or nationalized. Perón's policies forced the agrarian elites to finance industrial expansion at their expense, but the social structure of Argentina, dominated by agro- and beef-exporting interests linked to foreign markets, was not fundamentally altered. In foreign policy, Perón aimed to steer a middle way between the two emerging Cold War powers, attempting to promote Argentina as a regional power.

To conclude this section: there were two significant developments in the 1940s. First was the institution by Perón of a new model of political economy: the populist, state-sponsored ISI model. Mónica Peralta Ramos perceptively points out that Argentina essentially experienced three

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[70] For discussions of this period, see Corradi, op.cit., Part 2.

[71] Ibid., Chapter 5.

[72] Corbett, op.cit., 99.

radically different models of development from 1930 to 1974: a) an oligarchic economy, based on large, almost feudal land holdings, dependent upon agro-export and foreign markets and capital; b) an ISI/populist model, emphasizing development of a domestic market and labor-intensive national industry; and c) the shift to a transnationalized economy in 1966, linked to the global expansion of transnational corporations, where technology replaced large numbers of workers.[73] Each of these models of development generated different social forces with vested interests in the socioeconomic model then existing, linked to different ideologies and political beliefs. The history of Argentina may be usefully interpreted in light of the violent political conflicts engendered by these socioeconomic transformations. As Marcelo Luis Acuña puts it, one of the major divisions in Argentine society that developed was between "those who see national integration in terms of Peronist social justice and progress, in a corporative framework, and those who defend the institutions and formal public liberties" of a liberal political system, such as the Radicals.[74] These conflicts of interests and ideologies had far-reaching ramifications within the armed forces as well.

The second major phenomenon of the 1940s was the consolidation of the two dominant pillars of the corporatist-populist state: labor and the armed forces. These two powerful actors came to share an intertwined, yet often antagonistic relationship; each was the only force capable of countering--or stalemating--the other. From the 1940s until 1976, the unionized working class was an actor powerful enough to block executive decisions, force the country to a halt, and marginalize political parties.[75] Even when proscribed from elections by the military, *Peronismo*--under the guidance of an exiled Perón--essentially co-governed indirectly. As they had done before when the

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[73] The coup of 1966 is discussed later in this chapter. Mónica Peralta Ramos, *Acumulación del capital y crisis política en argentina 1930-1974* (Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1978) 109-112.

[74] Marcelo Luis Acuña, op.cit., 75.

[75] See Most for an insightful treatment of Peronist labor as essentially a co-governing force.

growing political influence represented by the Radicals threatened their hegemony, the elite agrarian classes eventually turned to the armed forces as the only means to articulate their interests and suppress the Peronist working class. As Winsor noted in 1971, the central problem of Argentina's political system became "the institutional rivalry between the Peronist labor sector or mass base...and the armed forces as self-ordained guardians of the organic state and constitution," a situation he deemed "pathological."[76]

The Ouster of Perón and the Penetration of New Doctrines

By his second term, faced with a burgeoning socioeconomic crisis, Perón reversed a number of his inclusionary policies, sparking social discontent. The military was increasingly restive, influenced by the deepening Cold War and anticommunism. Most argues that important sectors of the armed forces also might have begun to see their interests served by abandoning some of Perón's nationalist policies and turning outward.

> "[The military] had tried and failed to modernize itself without foreign assistance. Since the establishment of the DGFM in 1941, the military had made significant progress in a number of areas...Despite [this], the establishment of the DGFM and the effective (if unintended) promotion of ISI activities during the 1944-1946 interval had not succeeded in developing the domestic, industrial base that would ensure the adequate defense of the nation. While iron and steel production climbed sharply between 1943 and 1944, for example, output had remained relatively static from that point...iron and steel imports increased sharply after the end of World War II...[while] iron and steel production in Brazil had surpassed Argentina..."[77]

In 1951 liberal-rightist sectors of the army attempted a coup against Perón. This event was to have significant ramifications for the next 25 years within the army.[78] Anti-Peronist elements

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[76] Winsor, op.cit., iv-v.

[77] Most, op.cit., 94-95.

[78] See Rosendo Fraga, *Ejército: del escarnio al poder (1973-1976)* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 1988) 24, 125. Some of the participants in this coup attempt—who were jailed for years by Perón—later became de facto presidents or generals who pursued strongly anti-Peronist policies. Four of them were

of all three armed forces overthrew Perón in 1955, supported by the oligarchic elites, the Church, and sectors of the Radical Party. There were many reasons, but the most important was the growing fear the military and upper classes held toward the militant and organized working classes, which were overwhelmingly *Peronista*. Even when the loyalty of these labor masses to Perón began to falter in his second term, they remained a potent political force loyal to Peronism's "three banners:" political sovereignty, economic independence, and social justice. A further reason for the coup was the growing hostility of the liberal-rightist wing of the armed forces toward Perón, and the refusal of the armed forces as a whole to give up their role as national arbiter.[79] The Church had turned against Perón after initial support.

The proclamation by General Eduardo Lonardi at the time of the first 1955 coup (two occurred in that year), named the "Liberating Revolution" by the military, said in part:

> "The Navy, the Air Force and the Army of the Fatherland abandon once again their bases and garrisons to intervene in the civic life of the Nation. We have been compelled by the imperative of the love of liberty and honor of a subjugated people, who want to live in accord with their traditions and cannot resign themselves to indefinitely serving the whims of a dictator who abuses the force of government to humiliate his fellow citizens...No scruple about the supposed legitimacy of his mandate claimed by the dictator ought to restrict the members of the Armed Forces. No democracy is legitimate if essential requisites do not exist: liberty and guarantees of personal rights...On the contrary, the article of the Constitution that orders Argentines to arm themselves in defense of the Constitution and its Laws is in full force..."[80]

This speech, like previous military justifications for intervention, claimed to support the highest values of the constitution and democracy while simultaneously abrogating them and instituting military rule. Yet Perón's violations of civil liberties and his repression of political opponents meant

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Lanusse, Suárez-Mason, Riveros, and Azpitarte.

[79] Peter G. Snow, "Argentina: Politics in a Conflict Society," in Howard Wiarda and Harvey Kline, *Latin American Politics and Development*, second ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985) 123-159.

[80] First message of General Eduardo Lonardi on September 17, 1955, reproduced in Horacio Verbitsky, *Medio Siglo de Proclamas Militares* (Buenos Aires: Editorial/12, 1987) 60-61.

that the coup had substantial support. Perón had curbed freedoms of the press and expression, brought Congress under his control by expelling leading opponents, and used violent methods to quell dissent. Peaceful dissidents and opponents of the regime--many of them Radical professors and students in the universities, journalists and members of other middle class professions, and leftists--bore the brunt of Peronist repression in the early 1950s. Liberal-rightist military officers jailed by Perón harbored intensely bitter feelings, resenting their loss of influence.

There were two key developments resulting from the 1955 overthrow of Peron. First, the political defeat of Perón's "Third Position" meant that a new doctrine of national security based on anticommunism and internal subversion, promoted by France and the United States, began to penetrate the armed forces. Many Peronist officers were purged from the army and the influence of the liberal-rightist sector, with stronger ties to foreign advisers, became dominant in the armed forces. Secondly, an important transformation of Argentina's political economy took place after the 1955 coups. From that year until 1966, political power was essentially returned to a ruling elite composed of military and landed upper class sectors linked to foreign interests. The populist state was replaced by a liberal and internationally-linked state, supported by elements of the Radical Party, the Church, and the entrepreneurial class. The new regime also benefited U.S. corporate interests. As Gillespie notes:

> "The stake of foreign enterprise in industrial production grew from 8% to 40% between 1955 and 1972, with U.S. capital accounting for 70% of new direct foreign investment in the decade from 1959 to 1969. Among the leading 25 companies, the number of national firms fell from 16 in 1957 to 8 by 1966."[81]

In sum, a confluence of powerful anti-Peronist interests had emerged which formed a coup coalition to overthrow Perón and replace his model of politico-economic development. The military established a formal democratic structure, but it was highly restrictive and repressive: elections were

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[81] Gillespie, op.cit., 16.

permitted, but the armed forces excluded the Peronists. This situation allowed Radicals to return to office, but greatly decreased their legitimacy, eventually culminating in a crisis of political authority in Argentina. The military state, headed by General Pedro E. Aramburu, joined the IMF and the World Bank in 1955 and signed technical assistance agreements with the United States, signifying a closer relationship. According to one retired officer, the primary reason-for-being of the Argentine armed forces became *internal politics*[82] after 1955. The navy had also played a key role in the coup against Perón for the first time.

The next years witnessed a deepening split within the army between sectors still loyal to Perón and right wing-internationalist sectors allied with Aramburu, the liberal-rightist general who led the coup that overthrew Lonardi. Indeed, in 1956, a counter-coup by Peronist officers failed and resulted in military executions of the leaders. This unusual action left deep scars within the institution and heralded a conflict that became more and more violent[83] in coming years. Lázara argues that such harsh action was taken by the liberal-rightist wing of the army precisely because the pro-*Peronista* officers had formed a coalition with Peronist civilian forces, mainly unionists--a dangerous precedent in the eyes of the dominant military current.[84]

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[82] Interview with Col. Gustavo Cáceres (retired) conducted by author, October 8, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[83] One retired army officer told me, "[In] 1956, there was an event which is a very important part of all this history. For the first time, in almost 80 years, somebody was shot because of his participation in a revolution, the 9th and 10th of June, 1956. They were what we might call *legal shootings*, since they were people who were court-martialed under martial law...They [had] fought for Perón. The events of the 9th and 10th of June are very important since, well, up to that time people had been put in prison for their political ideas or exiled, not shot." Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, April 28, 1992, Buenos Aires. Indeed, in 1970 General Aramburu, the president during the 1956 executions, was kidnapped and murdered by a shadowy Peronist organization that called itself the Juan José Valle Command, naming itself after one of the executed officers. Later, the Montoneros claimed credit for this assassination. This characteristic blend of interests and identity between the pro-*Peronista* military sector and the Montoneros was repeatedly in evidence in the 1970s.

[84] Simón Lázara, *Poder militar: Origen, apogeo y transición* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1988) 110.

Inter-American National-Security Structures

The armed forces, now dominated by the rightist-internationalist current, established closer linkages with French and U.S. military advisers after 1955, abandoning Perón's stance of stubborn independence, and the Argentine version of the "national-security doctrine" began to take shape. The influence of U.S. Cold War doctrines and growing post-war anticommunism were central factors in this process. The United States government was increasingly concerned with Soviet communism after World War II, and feared the spread of communist systems in the Third World. The anti-colonial struggles erupting throughout the underdeveloped world after the war seemed to many policy-makers as manifestations of, or at least as vulnerable to, Soviet subversion. Scholars such as Walter LaFeber, Norman A. Graebner and Stephen C. Rabe[85] have shown how the perceived threat of international communist revolution obsessed U.S. national security officials after the war and guided U.S. foreign policy. As Graebner points out:

> "Ultimately it was the burgeoning fears of the USSR that determined the character and magnitude of American security policy...What determined the unanticipated size of the national security effort was the assumption of danger after 1948 that permitted no less than a global defense with unprecedented military power...[Eisenhower's] administration vastly extended the country's political and military commitments to friendly governments in the Third World by assuming that all revolutionary pressures emanated not from an assertive nationalism but from a Soviet-based international conspiracy."[86]

For U.S. national-security managers, economic, political and strategic interests were inextricably intertwined; U.S. security policy included the establishment of a stable capitalist order

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[85] See Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983); Norman A. Graebner, ed., *The National Security: Its Theory and Practice 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Stephen Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

[86] Norman A. Graebner, "Preface," in Graebner, ed., *The National Security...*, ibid., v-vii.

in order to confront the specter of socialism.[87] In the Western hemisphere, U.S. policy-makers applied a foreign policy based on anticommunism and promotion of the free market system[88] and sought to keep the Latin American governments lined up behind the United States in the Cold War. As Graebner notes, U.S. officials increasingly saw the struggle with communism as an ideological war.

> "Not only did [the USSR] defy American principles of self-determination in Eastern Europe but it also proclaimed an ideology that challenged totally the creation of a liberal-democratic world order...For some American officials the struggle with the USSR had now transcended the original purpose of keeping the Russians out of western Europe and the eastern Mediterranean; it had become a global confrontation between communism and freedom, a confrontation unlimited in scope and magnitude."[89]

The most influential statement of this new perspective was NSC/68 in 1950, a strongly-worded policy document that portrayed the Cold War in terms of a global struggle between the United States and a menacing enemy "animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seek[ing] to impose its absolute authority on the rest of the world."[90]

In the Americas, the U.S. government sought to construct a hemispheric military-security system as a pillar of U.S. Cold-War defense policy. A U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff plan to secure the region's raw materials through a U.S.-led military alliance system began to be implemented via the

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[87] For discussions of U.S. national security policies after World War II, see Thomas Bodenheimer and Robert Gould, *Rollback!* (Boston: South End Press, 1988); Norman A. Graebner, op.cit.; Saul Landau, *The Dangerous Doctrine: National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); Michael Parenti, *The Anti-Communist Impulse* (New York: Random House, 1969); Lars Schoultz, *National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Augusto Varas, "Democratization, Peace and Security in Latin America," *Alternatives* (1985) 607-623; and Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977).

[88] Rabe, op.cit., 3-4.

[89] Norman A. Graebner, "Introduction: The Sources of Postwar Insecurity," in Graebner, op.cit., 20-21.

[90] NSC/68, cited in Graebner, "Introduction...", ibid., 23.

Rio Pact (officially called the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance), signed in 1947.[91] Government delegations from the Americas agreed that an attack on any state in the Americas would be considered an attack against all.[92] In 1948, government delegations to the 9th International Conference of American States at Bogotá drew up a pact for the "Defense of Democracy" against the communist threat. The Organization of American States (OAS) was founded at this conference. U.S. delegates pushed hard for the Inter-American Defense Board, headquartered in Washington D.C., to be authorized as a permanent military branch of the OAS. However, this initiative was opposed by the majority of Latin American governments, who feared U.S. military dominance and intervention.[93] The Board was given an advisory capacity.[94] The mission of the Inter-American Defense Board, also called the Inter-American Chiefs of Staff, was to "keep the planning of the common defense of the Western hemisphere in a state of preparedness."[95] It operated the Inter-American Defense College to provide advanced training to Latin American military officers.

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[91] LaFeber, *Inevitable...*, op.cit., 92.

[92] As G. Pope Atkins explains, "...the United States has pursued most of its region-wide Latin American policies through the formal multilateral institutions of the Inter-American System, seeing the system as a formal way of organizing all of Latin American under its leadership and preempting nonhemispheric influences." G. Pope Atkins, *Latin America in the International Political System*, second ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989) 204. For a critical view by retired nationalist Argentine officers of the inter-American system as an instrument of U.S. intervention, see Horacio P. Ballester, José Luis Garcia, Carlos Mariano Gazcón, and Augusto B. Rattenbach, "El sistema interamericano de defensa como paradigma de la seguridad nacional," *Revista Cruz del Sur*, Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Geopolíticos, Año 3 No. 7 (December 1985) 5-14. See also Augusto Varas, "Democratization, Peace and Security in Latin America," *Alternatives* (1985), 609-610.

[93] In Bogotá, the Latin American governments insisted on establishing a set of principles to guide relations among the states. Over U.S. opposition, two Articles were passed which stated that no state had the right to intervene in another, and that no state had the right to use coercive economic or political means to pressure states against their will. Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, second ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1972) 57-58.

[94] John Child (Lt.-Col.), *Unequal Alliance: The Inter-American Military System, 1938-1978* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980) 106-109.

[95] Organization of American States, Department of Public Information, "The OAS at Your Fingertips," official pamphlet, January 1988, 8.

In the early years, most of the Latin American governments resisted the pressure of the United States to place overwhelming priority upon first, anticommunist activity and second, creation of favorable investment climates.[96] Atkins notes: "During the initial post-World War II years, the United States was primarily interested in persuading the Inter-American system against communism in the Americas, while the Latin Americans emphasized multilateral technical assistance and economic development programs."[97] The Latin American civilian leaders deeply resented the fact that no Marshall Plan was forthcoming from the United States, and were suspicious of the perceived U.S. obsession with communism.[98] This dissension continued through the 1950s.

In 1950, Truman approved NSC 56/2, "U.S. Policy Toward Inter-American Military Collaboration," which envisioned a hemispheric anticommunist security structure.[99] In 1951, ministers of foreign affairs from the Americas met in Washington D.C. to discuss joint efforts to combat "the subversive activities of international Communism"[100] and military planning for the common defense. The Eisenhower administration (with John F. Dulles as Secretary of State) considered a policy priority to be the elimination of "international Communist subversion" in Latin America.[101] Dulles and his brother, Allen (head of the CIA) believed Latin America was headed toward revolution, with "economic nationalism, regionalism, neutralism and increasing Communist influence" affecting various countries.[102] The CIA director particularly cited the case of

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[96] Rabe, op.cit., 17.

[97] Atkins, op.cit., 233; see also Rabe, op.cit., 17.

[98] See Rabe, op.cit., 16-22, and Child, *Unequal Alliance...*, op.cit., 104-106.

[99] Rabe, op.cit., 22-23.

[100] Frederick L. Schuman, *International Politics: The Western State System and the World Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1958) 320-321.

[101] Rabe, op.cit., 26-27.

[102] Report by Allen Dulles cited by Rabe, op.cit., 31.

Guatemala. In 1954, the U.S. national-security apparatus secretly organized and financed a military coup against the Arbenz government in Guatemala.[103] The U.S. national-security establishment was becoming deeply involved in covert operations and counterinsurgency around the world; Eisenhower's 1955 directive NSC-5412/2 indicated the active nature of U.S. foreign policy:

> "Create and exploit troublesome problems for International Communism...Counter any threat of a party or individuals directly or indirectly responsible to Communist control to achieve dominant power in a free world country...In areas dominated or threatened by International Communism, develop underground resistance and facilitate covert and guerrilla operations..."[104]

Perón, promoting an independent course for Argentina, refused to join the Rio Pact until 1950. After this, U.S. military advisers began to work with Argentine officers, offering instruction grounded in anticommunism and counterinsurgency warfare. Argentina did not join the OAS until 1956, after the coup that overthrew Perón. By 1958, 12 Latin nations had concluded military assistance agreements with the United States,[105] which gave the United States the right to install a military mission within each high command of the armed forces to supervise the use of the funds and collaborate in education and instruction of the national troops.[106] Argentina had a U.S. military mission operating out of the army's Libertador Building beginning in the late 1950s.[107]

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[103] See Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (New York: Doubleday, 1982). U.S. delegates led by John Dulles at the 1954 Tenth Inter-American Conference at Caracas pressed hard to condemn the supposed communist conspiracy in Guatemala before the U.S.-backed coup. After two weeks, the resolution passed 17-1-2; only Guatemala opposed it, and Argentina and Mexico abstained. Dulles was mainly backed by the anti-communist dictators in the region, which he said was "sometimes a bit embarrassing." See Rabe, op.cit., 52.

[104] Cited in Thomas Bodenheimer and Thomas Gould, *Rollback!*, op.cit., 12.

[105] Corbett, op.cit., vi.

[106] Ballester et al, op.cit., 7.

[107] Rosendo Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 68.

The French Influence

The most important influence upon the Argentine armed forces in the 1950s, however, was French. The French armed forces were deeply involved in guerrilla wars in Indochina and Algeria and imported new doctrines of counterrevolutionary war to Argentina.[108] In 1981 General Ramón Camps, the fanatical general who commanded the Buenos Aires concentration camps during the dirty war of the 1970s, spoke of foreign influences upon the Argentine armed forces:

> "In 1957 studies on 'communist revolutionary war' were begun in the Argentine Army in an organized form...this relied upon the assistance of two chiefs of the French Army...All the Argentine officers worked basing themselves on the French doctrine, applied in Indochina and in operation at that moment in Algeria. This form of instruction was maintained in general until 1975, to be more precise until 'Operation Independence' in Tucumán,[109] and its expansion, known as 'taking the offensive,' responded to a resolution adopted in September of this same year by the commander-in-chief of the army...In Argentina we received first the influence of the French and then the North American, applying each one separately, then taking concepts from both...The French focus was more correct than the North American: the former stressed a global conception and the latter only the military elements exclusively, or almost exclusively...Finally we came of age and put into practice our own doctrine, which gave us victory over the armed subversion in Argentina."[110]

As is clear from the above quote, the Argentine military in the 1950s felt an immediate affinity with the all-encompassing counterrevolutionary philosophy propounded by French advisers. Unlike U.S. training in those years, the French concepts were more fully developed in ideological terms; there were Catholic and messianic undertones that found resonance in the politico-cultural

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[108] Many officers interviewed in 1992 spoke of this, particularly the influence of General Carlos Jorge Rosas, who had received training in France.

[109] This rural campaign marked the beginning of overt participation by the army in the counterinsurgency of the mid-70s; it is discussed in depth in Chapter 4.

[110] Ramón J. A. Camps, "Apogeo y declinación de la guerrilla en la Argentina," *La Prensa*, January 4, 1981, 2, second section, cited in Emilio F. Mignone, *Derechos Humanos y Sociedad: El Caso Argentino* (Buenos Aires: CELS, Ediciones del Pensamiento Nacional, 1991) 64.

traditions of the Argentine officers.[111] Moreover, given the political history of the Argentine military--its deep involvement in coup-plotting, political intrigue and actual coups--the political mission implicit in the French doctrine provided a justification and an inspiration.

Indeed, in the 1971 book *On Military Ideology*, Jacques Van Doorn pointed to the French counterrevolutionary doctrine as a rare example of an autonomous military ideology, which included theories on revolutionary war and psychological warfare.[112] He traces the origins of this doctrine to the bloody guerrilla and colonial wars which caused French military officers in combat to grow resentful toward distant civilian rulers and develop an alternative national and political ideology. This ideology emphasized the unique mission of the armed forces in the global crusade against communism, a struggle which necessitated ruthless tactics. Van Doorn quotes leading military strategist General Chassin:

> "What can the Western nations do to avoid the accomplishment of Mao's plan for world conquest? We must oppose a struggle based on subversion with the same weapons, oppose faith with faith, propaganda with propaganda, and an insidious and powerful ideology with a superior one capable of winning the hearts of men."[113]

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[111] Several retired army officers confirmed this view in interviews. One said, "Part of our training had been provided by the Americans, but the backbone--the counterrevolutionary concept--came from the French...Your military taught us what is a correct approach, let's say in the case of Northern Ireland...the whole concept is be a good boy. Kill them but don't do any nasty things. And civil wars--and this was a civil war [in the 1970s], although it was in some sort of disguise--civil wars are not clean wars. It is not nice to say so, but it is a fact of life. Because there is so much hate, so, so much hate, that it is not enough to kill the other guy...And well, the American military that had taught us was pre-Vietnam. When we made contact in the early 70s with the guys after Vietnam, well they were different. They were different, although I can't compare an Asiatic war with a Latin American war, perhaps with the exceptions of Peru and Colombia..." Interview with retired army officer, May 14, 1992, Buenos Aires. Another retired officer told me with pride that the Argentine armed forces were regarded by the Pentagon as "specialists in the application of the French counterinsurgency doctrine." Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, June 18, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[112] J. Van Doorn, "Ideology and the Military," from Morris Janowitz and Jacques Van Doorn, op.cit., xvii. For another treatment of the French influence on the Argentine armed forces, see Jorge Tapia Valdés, "La Doctrina de la Seguridad Nacional...", op.cit., 238-239.

[113] Van Doorn, ibid., xvii.

The French doctrine's stress on "dirty war" found a ready audience in Argentina.[114] It was no accident that French counterinsurgency troops had resorted to massacres and other brutal means to repress the anti-colonial movement in Algeria;[115] the theories justified these measures by couching the struggle in messianic terms. Further, the nature of the wars themselves was highly political: in both Indochina and Algeria, the native combatants saw the struggles as wars of national liberation.

In general, guerrilla wars profoundly politicize armies. First, the establishment of elite commando units--small, relatively autonomous, and faced with high levels of danger and uncertainty--facilitates increasing decentralization of authority and command. Second, this fosters "a new operational code [which] leads to a new corporate ideology and ultimately to a latent political ideal with fascist undertones glorifying strength, sacrifice, and violence for their own sake."[116] Small autonomous units become accustomed to independent decision-making and violent methods, without waiting for orders from distant civilians. Third, the pervasive involvement of intelligence organizations in guerrilla wars fosters ideologically-driven activities by centralizing information, propaganda, psychological operations and covert activity in one location.[117] Finally, the new type of anti-colonial struggle in the 1950s and 60s meant large proportions of the population were involved. Ordinary citizens--men, women and children--participated in various ways to resist what they saw as a foreign occupation force; the enemy of the French was no longer an opposing army

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[114] *Supra* note 111.

[115] George A. Kelly, "The French Army Re-Enters Politics 1940-1955," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. LXXVI (1961), 199, cited in Van Doorn, ibid., xxii.

[116] Van Doorn, ibid., xxvi, referring to the French case.

[117] Van Doorn, ibid., xxv. For an excellent treatment on how the Israeli occupation of Arab lands politicized the Israeli army, see Yoram Peri, "Political-Military Partnership in Israel," *International Political Science Review*, Vol 2, No. 3 (1981) 303-317.

but common citizens. In short, in guerrilla wars a complex set of factors combine to make civilian control of military combat forces increasingly difficult.

The French influence made a deep impression upon the Argentine officers. Two Argentine officers who received training in France gained great influence in the army. During the 1960s they, assisted by U.S. pressure, were able to sway the more legalistically-inclined officers toward transforming the military's doctrine to a focus on counterrevolutionary war,[118] which blended with the U.S.-promoted national-security doctrine's stress on counterinsurgency (discussed in the next section). According to one officer:

> "To understand what the Argentine military did in the 70s and in the 80s, and what they are going to do in the 90s, one has to go back to the 50s. When a couple of army men came back from France. In those days they were lieutenant colonels. One is still alive, General [Alcides López] Aufrank. He's in the steel industry right now, Acindar. And the other one is dead, General [Carlos Jorge] Rosas. Both of them were tremendously efficient, tough guys. You could put all the generals we have now in one battle and you wouldn't have half López Aufrank and Rosas. They went to France to their *Ecole de Guerre* at the end of the 50s, and they came back with the gospel. The gospel was counterrevolutionary warfare, and they brought it at the strategic level.
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> "There is a third character, a police officer, Commissioner [Alberto] Villar. Villar ended his career and his wife--they were bombed on board their cruiser, a big-sized motor boat, by the Montoneros...This guy Villar was a wonderful man, a tough character, very tough. He had been sent by the Federal Police to France for one of those exchange courses which are conducted each year. Countries invite people...each year one officer went from the Argentine Federal Police. Villar went, and he came back with the gospel of the French Police about counterrevolutionary warfare, tactical urban warfare...And Aufrank and Rosas brought the strategic level, this guy brought the urban tactical level. We didn't have yet the jungle tactical level--that was provided by the USA and the Colombians. When was it provided? By the end of the 50s and the beginning of the 60s. In the early 60s, the Argentine army didn't really have proper training...I was a cadet at that time, and when I remember the exercises, the field training exercises that I took part in, I smile and laugh about them, because they were sort of naive. We didn't really know very much about counterguerrilla warfare at the tactical level, and our officers really didn't know much. There was a guerrilla threat. Remember [Fulgencio] Batista

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[118] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, May 14, 1992, Buenos Aires.

fled Cuba at the end of '58, and in '59 Castro came into Havana..."[119]

Significantly, Villar was one of the founders and directors of the Triple A,[120] a right-wing terrorist organization that emerged in 1973 in Argentina and committed hundreds of assassinations (the Triple A is discussed in the next chapter).

The Argentine armed forces permitted a restricted election in 1958, denying the vote to the Peronists; Arturo Frondizi, head of one of two competing wings of the Radical Party, won the election. His term was marked by conflicts with the military with interesting parallels to conflicts during the 1980s Alfonsín administration. In 1959, the nightmare imagined by counterinsurgency advocates since the second World War occurred: in Cuba, a guerrilla movement with popular support overthrew long-term dictator Batista and a revolutionary government, headed by Fidel Castro, took power in the Western hemisphere.

U.S. Influence on the New National-Security Doctrine

The 1959 Cuban revolution generated a whole series of counterrevolutionary reactions and revolutionary movements throughout the impoverished and class-stratified nations of Latin America. In the United States, the CIA considered *Peronismo* itself a subversive threat, as did the bulk of the Argentine armed forces.[121] Essentially, to U.S. national-security officials, "subversion" had come

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[119] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, May 14, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[120] See, for example, Rodolfo Peregrino Fernández, *Autocritica Policial* (Buenos Aires: El Cid Editor/Fundación para la Democracia en Argentina, 1983) 10 and organizational chart in appendix; Eduardo Luis Duhalde, *El estado terrorista argentino* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Caballito S.R.L., 1983) 47-50; Emilio Crenzel, *El Tucumanazo/1 & 2* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de America Latina, Biblioteca Política Argentina, 1991) 155; and Gillespie, op.cit., 154. Fernández--a former *Proceso* functionary--says Villar was one of the first police to receive training in "interrogation techniques" at the U.S. Army School of the Americas in Panama. Fernández, op.cit., 72.

[121] Note the language of a CIA *National Intelligence Survey* on Public Order and Safety in Argentina, January 1964: "...Since the successful overthrow of Perón the prime cause of disorder has been the attempts of extremist groups--Peronists, Communists, or extreme nationalists--to gain power by subversive means...subversive movements have caused the armed forces, who regard themselves as the foremost defenders

to mean any social force capable of upsetting pro-U.S. and anticommunist governments, or posing a threat to a stable capitalist order or U.S. investment.[122] In these terms, nationalist movements (or governments) were suspect. Moreover, by the 1960s the United States was involved in its own counterinsurgency war in Vietnam, and employed "dirty war" methods to prevail, as the French had done.[123]

The Kennedy administration's response to the danger of "more Cubas" in the hemisphere was a dual strategy stressing *security* and *development*. The creation of the Alliance for Progress sought to promote development and progress to defuse the attraction of socialism, while stepped-up counterinsurgency organization, training (both tactical and ideological), and financing of Latin armed and security forces[124] sought to provide security by eliminating revolutionary threats. As a 1965 U.S. Embassy cable stated,[125] "One of our objectives in Argentina is to improve Argentina's

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of constitutionalism, to maintain tight control over the nation's security units..." Declassified document #10D, *Declassified Documents Reference System* (Washington DC: Carrollton Press, Inc., 1977) 1.

[122] A Department of State background paper on Argentina stated that 260 U.S. firms formed "a large and active" business community in Argentina and that U.S. investment amounted to $1 billion. In May 1961, an investment guarantee agreement had been signed between the two governments. U.S. Department of State, *Background Notes, Argentina*, April 1965.

[123] Edward N. Luttwak notes that one U.S. special forces unit in Vietnam, the Studies and Observation Group, combined intelligence officers of all three services, and engaged in "deep infiltration of enemy territory for intelligence-gathering, aircrew rescue, *sabotage, kidnapping, and assassination, as well as 'black' propaganda by radio and planted rumor.*" [emphasis added.] This "small and discreet army" included some 2000 U.S. military men and 8000 local recruits. See Luttwak, *The Pentagon and the Art of War* (New York: Institute for Contemporary Studies/Simon and Schuster Publication, 1985) 26. Other U.S. counterinsurgency techniques included the Phoenix Program, essentially an assassination program of suspected Viet Cong collaborators which resulted in the deaths of over 25,000 people and the imprisonment of some 35,000 more. CIA Director William Colby gave these figures in his testimony during Congressional investigations in the 1970s. See Richard Alan White, *The Morass: U.S. Intervention in Central America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) 42; see also Douglas Valentine, *The PHOENIX Program* (New York: Morrow, 1990).

[124] For good treatments of this change in U.S. national security policy, see D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) especially 20-24, and Douglas Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

[125] American Embassy, Buenos Aires, "Limited Official Use" memorandum of April 14, 1965, "Justification for Public Safety Survey Team to Argentina."

capabilities for countering communist infiltration and internal subversion." U.S. training in various military schools for Latin American officers included a heavy dosage of ideological indoctrination. Some 20% of the program for Latin American officers was devoted to communism, and technical training also stressed the "communist menace," according to Rouquié. Training included study of tracts such as "What is communism? Communist Illusion and Democratic Reality: The Expansion of Communism in Latin America."[126]

Many authors have noted the inherent contradiction in U.S. policy of attempting to combine the promotion of liberal systems with the promotion of counterinsurgency doctrines and military forces as natural leaders of state and society. In fact, promoting democracy was not the highest priority of the Kennedy administration, nor of the Johnson administration after it, as evidenced by Kennedy's famous quote concerning the Dominican regime: that among "a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the Trujillo regime, or a Castro regime, we ought to aim for the first, but we really can't renounce the second until we are sure we can avoid the third."[127]

The Conference of American Armies: A New Anticommunist Structure

In 1960, immediately after the Cuban revolution, U.S. military officials initiated an important new inter-American structure: the Conference of American Armies, a hemispheric security

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[126] From U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Assistance and Foreign Sales Facts*, Washington, D.C., 1973, cited in Alain Rouquié, *The Military and the State*, op.cit., 137.

[127] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965) 660. Trujillo was the dictator of the Dominican Republic, who was murdered in 1961. The 1975 Church Committee Report found that U.S. government officials had implicitly condoned his assassination; former CIA agent Phillip Agee, however, said that the Chief of the Caribbean CIA branch was deeply involved in planning the assassination, which was carried out by Cuban exiles using weapons provided by the CIA. See Agee, *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* (New York: Stonehill, 1975) 50.

organization dominated by the United States and its new organizational and ideological doctrines.[128] These secret conferences occurred on a yearly basis until 1969, when they began to be held every two years until the present (Chapter 6 contains an analysis of the 1987 Conference). Partially through the vehicle of these Conferences, the inter-American defense system was reorganized to deal with the new hypothesis of conflict: military and/or ideological infiltration of communism in the Americas. In the Conferences, planning, intelligence-sharing and strategizing took place regarding the means to counter this posited threat.

U.S. counterinsurgency specialists were developing a concept of "total war" during the 1960s, as a result of the contemporary experience in Vietnam, where the *population* of a country rather than its *territory* was seen as the key military-political objective. As the 1960s progressed, U.S. counterinsurgency experts argued that revolutionary movements could not be defeated by military means only; economic, political, social and psychological realms were crucial as well. The "hearts and minds" of the people needed to be won, necessitating an entirely new role for the armies in a political-ideological battle of East versus West.[129] The U.S. doctrine stressed the idea that the

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[128] It should be noted that these important conferences have escaped the attention of most U.S. scholars thus far. According to retired nationalist officers, the U.S. commander-in-chief of the Latin America zone, Major T.F. Bogart, inaugurated these conferences in Panama in 1960 with a call to deepen the ties of friendship, acquaint the Latin Americans with the resources of the U.S. military, and enhance mutual cooperation among the armies. Ballester et al, "El sistema interamericano...". op.cit., 8. For other material on the Conference of American Armies, see República Argentina, Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación, *Diario de las Sesiones del Congreso* (April 7, 1988 and April 13-14, 1988) 3005 and 3123, passim; Samuel Blixen, "El Estado policial que nos preparan los militares," *Brecha* (Uruguay), Año III, No. 145 (August 26, 1988); Luis Garasino, "El 'narcoterorrismo," *Clarín*, November 9, 1987; articles in *Compañero* (Uruguayan newspaper), Año XVIII, No. 139 (September 1, 1988); Fernando Nadra, "Los Cerebros del Terror," *Qué Pasa*, n.d. (circa 1988).

[129] For a good analysis of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Vietnam, the splits between counterinsurgency advocates versus conventional war advocates in the U.S. military at that time, and the links to U.S. "low-intensity war" strategies in the 1980s, see Sara Miles, "The Real War: Low-Intensity Conflict in Central America," *NACLA Report on the Americas*. V. XX No. 2 (April/May 1986), 18-48; see 19-21 for information on counterinsurgency thinking in Vietnam. See also Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era...*, op.cit.; T. N. Greene (Lieutenant Colonel), ed., *The Guerrilla--and How to Fight Him* (Selections from the Marine Corps Gazette), (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962); and David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, under the auspices of The Center for

cold war with communism required a new military mission transcending traditional defense of borders and territory from external attack; "subversion," which could be from within or without, was the primary enemy. That is, the traditional military concept of *territorial defense* was replaced with that of *ideological frontiers*.[130]

The second of the secret articles forming the charter of the Conference of American Armies stated that the mission of the armies was "to protect the continent from the aggressive action of the International Communist Movement,"[131] a movement which instigated internal subversion. U. S. officials pressured heavily to transform the principal mission for the Latin American armies from external defense to internal security, and to identify communism as the principal internal enemy, while reserving for the United States the defense of the hemisphere from external attack. Moreover, the U.S. government would only sell weapons geared toward internal security to the armed forces.[132] At first, there was resistance to this change from the Argentines. Many of the older officers considered internal security to be a police function beneath the dignity of the armed forces.[133] Gradually, however, sectors promoting a counterinsurgency role for the army became

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International Affairs, Harvard University, 1964).

[130] An Argentine officer active during this era, Col. Gustavo Cáceres (ret.), said the concept of ideological frontiers came from West Point. Interview with Col. Gustavo Cáceres conducted by author, July 21, 1993, Buenos Aires.

[131] As documented in Chapter 6, this language continued to be used by the armies into the late 1980s. "Los ejércitos americanos ya no se ocupan del comunismo," *La Nación*, April 13, 1992. According to this newspaper article, the armies replaced "communism" in Article 2 during the 1991 conference with vague "threats to peace, security and democracy."

[132] No heavy armaments or equipment geared toward offensive purposes or external defense were offered to the Latin American armies by the United States. Interview with Col Gustavo Cáceres (ret.) conducted by author, July 21, 1993, Buenos Aires; see also Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 68.

[133] The American Embassy recognized this resistance in a 1965 cable: "The police have the primary responsibility for keeping internal order. If, however, a situation begins to get out of control and to exceed the capabilities of these forces, the military intervene. In general, the armed forces do not consider it their primary mission to maintain internal security." American Embassy, Buenos Aires, "Justification for Public Safety Survey Team to Argentina," op.cit.

dominant. As one retired army officer put it, younger officers who had been trained in counterinsurgency finally won the internal struggle to involve the armed forces directly in domestic counterinsurgency:

> "I was one of the officers pushing for training the troops in counterinsurgency warfare. [General Juan Carlos] Onganía at that time, even though he gave that West Point speech on national security, believed the fight against the guerrillas was a police job. So did [regiment commander Reynaldo] Bignone. But I prepared a whole training course for the troops, which stressed counter-guerrilla warfare. And Bignone called me in, and asked if I really thought this was necessary. I said yes, and he let me go ahead."[134]

This new hypothesis of conflict became dominant over the course of the 1960s throughout the region. This development was of fundamental importance because the hypothesis of conflict orients the planning, operations, resource utilization, logistics, training, intelligence and other military preparation of the armed forces. The new focus meant in practice the construction of massive national-security structures geared toward counterinsurgency and policing of the armies' own civilian populations. The Argentine armed forces gradually transformed themselves into a counterinsurgency army during the 1960s, and installed the first national-security state in 1966.

In short, the Conference of American Armies became a central national-security structure and vehicle for ideological unity, orienting and organizing the strategy, structures and doctrine of the Latin American militaries. The United States continued to cooperate with the Latin militaries in the Conferences during the years when they were implementing coups to overthrow elected governments and establish repressive national-security states.[135] This U.S. alliance with the militaries led many Latin American civilians to characterize the new national-security doctrine of the

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[134] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[135] A series of coups occurred in Latin America during the 1960s. The 1967 conference was held in Buenos Aires under the Onganía regime; the 1968 conference in Brazil was during the worst period of repression by the military state in that country. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, most of the Latin American countries were under military dictatorship.

Latin militaries as a U.S. export.[136] At minimum, the Conferences provided international legitimacy to these new military states.

U.S. Training and Ideological Influence

The U.S. Army School of the Americas was operated under the auspices of the Conference of American Armies.[137] U.S. experts developed training courses in the U.S. Army School in Panama and at centers in Fort Bragg and Washington D.C., instructing army officers in counterinsurgency, civic action, intelligence and counterintelligence.[138] Course 0-47, for example, included civic action (development of the community, civic action and psychological operations or PSYOPS) (item 4); PSYOPS in communications media; utilization and control of rumors (item 6); exercise of counterinsurgency: practical exercises (item 8); and communism: theory and strategies; communist ideology and insurgency doctrine, communist strategy in Latin America, communist propaganda, agitation and terrorism (item 9). Lernoux reproduces a syllabus from a Pentagon course

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[136] See, for example, Argentine Congressional debates on April 7, 1988, and April 13-14, 1988, where various Senators document the influence of the Conference of American Armies and other U.S.-promoted organizations in the development of the national-security doctrine in that country. República Argentina, Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación, *Diario de las Sesiones del Congreso*, 1988, 3005 and 3123, passim. Military officers and civilians across the political spectrum share this view regarding the decisive influence of the United States.

[137] The Army School is referred to in Latin America as the "School for Coups." For a recent brief article on the School, see Douglas Waller, "Running a School for Dictators," *Newsweek*, August 9, 1993. He points out that the school has produced hundreds of "less than honorable graduates" including death squad operatives, torturers and architects of nation-wide policies of elimination of political opposition in their countries.

[138] See, for example, U.S. Army School of the Americas, "Field Manual 31-16, Operaciones de contra-guerrilla," Fort Gulick, Panama, June 1968. This manual on counterrevolution (in Spanish) instructed the military reader in the use of counterinsurgency techniques, psychological operations, formation of "irregular forces" to carry out repressive actions, and various forms of surveillance of the civilian population in the counterinsurgency war.

for Latin officers entitled "Utilization and Containment of Rumors."[139] Between 1950 and 1975, 2,766 Argentine officers were trained in U.S. institutions, some 600 of whom attended the School of the Americas in Panama.[140]

U.S. policy encouraged and legitimated role expansion within the Latin militaries by promoting the "security and development" doctrine. First, internal security and counterinsurgency functions assigned to Latin American militaries justified military operations and intelligence which monitored, controlled and/or repressed Latin America's civilian sectors. Second, U.S.-promoted civic action programs, "military-in-development" projects, and training in economic policy-making, financial management, public administration, and other civilian functions led the militaries to believe they were being groomed for political leadership of their countries. A former director of the Inter-American Defense College, Admiral Gene LaRocque, stated that "The college is training [military] people to more efficiently manage a government."[141] Third, broadly-defined concerns with security and development placed the military at the center of the domestic political process. Security policy encompassed and subsumed domestic politics. These concepts of security and development, in short, were crucial in shaping the new national-security doctrines of the Latin American armed forces.

U.S. counterinsurgency theory in the 1960s also emphasized "nation-building," or the construction of new social structures to meet the basic needs of people and preempt the appeal of

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[139] Duhalde reproduces the syllabus for course 0-47 of the U.S. Army School of the Americas in *El estado terrorista argentino*, op.cit., 52. Lernoux, in *Cry of the People*, op. cit., 471-473, discusses the course emphasizing the use of "black propaganda," or false information, to spread fear, hatred, or hope.

[140] Martin Edwin Andersen, "The Military Obstacle..." op.cit., 104. A number of these officers went on to become high-ranking officers in the *Proceso*.

[141] Cited in Penny Lernoux, op.cit., 165.

revolutionary movements that promised new social systems.[142] This work, undertaken by the armies, was subsumed under various "civic action" programs of road-building, hospital construction and so on. The U.S. military-in-development literature of the late 50s and 60s also stressed the key role of the military as nation-builders and engines of national development as well as political stabilizers.[143] In a briefing to Congress in 1963, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara stressed the importance of training courses at U.S. military schools in terms of cultivating Latin American officers as friends and future leaders. In 1968, his design for national security in the Western hemisphere explicitly emphasized the necessity for development to undercut the attraction of socialism. McNamara's stress on "security and development" as the foundation of national security is still quoted today by nationalist sectors of the Argentine military.[144] In 1969, Nelson Rockefeller visited Latin America on a presidential mission and called the militaries "the essential

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[142] Miles, op.cit., 20. See also the following articles from *Army Information Digest:* "The School of the Americas Shows How Armies Can Be Builders," No. 20, Feb. 1965, 16; "The Army's Role in Nation Building and Preserving Stability," No. 20, Nov. 1965, 6; and from *Military Review:* Captain Richard A. Jones, "The Nation-Builder Soldier of the Sixties," January 1965; Lt. Col Gerald L. Tippin, "The Army as Nation-Builder," October 1970. Cited in Jorge Tapia Valdés, "La doctrina de la seguridad nacional..." op. cit., 259, n.29.

[143] For example, John J. Johnson wrote that in Argentina, Guatemala and other Latin American countries, the military was "the country's best organized institution and is thus in a better position to give objective expression to the national will." He went on: "Social upheavals will keep societies in disequilibrium...since the armed forces will probably remain for some time the only agency capable of countermanding rampant demagoguery, they will appear different to the states of Latin America than they do with states with great national cohesion...they will on occasion be the most reliable institution to insure political continuity...and stand as a bulwark of order and security in otherwise anarchical societies..." From *The Military and Society in Latin America* (Stanford. Stanford University Press, 1964) 143, 260-261. Lucian Pye wrote "armies...can provide a sense of citizenship and appreciation of political action," an analysis critiqued by Welch, op.cit., 30. Similar views were common in the modernization literature of the period.

[144] See, for example, General Osiris G. Villegas (ret.), "La llamada doctrina de seguridad nacional," *Revista Militar*, No. 721, (January-February 1989) 26. This nationalist officer quotes from McNamara's work *The Essence of Security:* "Security is a complex aspect of the policies of nations which goes further than the preparation of military forces for war...the security of the republic does not rest exclusively, nor even primarily, in the armed forces but in political and economic development." [translated from Spanish quote by author]

force for constructive social change."[145] In short, U.S. leaders placed overwhelming emphasis on the presumed *leadership role* of the armed forces, and upon their *internal security and development* functions in Latin America, which greatly affected the self-image and internal functioning of the armies.

The Argentine National-Security Doctrine

A number of characterizations of the new national-security doctrine that developed in Latin America in this era have been offered by analysts and protagonists. In Argentina, three documents are generally regarded as the expression of the Argentine version of the doctrine: General Onganía's 1964 speech to the Fifth Conference of American Armies at West Point; Law 16,970, which institutionalized the national-security doctrine in Argentina after the 1966 coup; and a 1969 book by General Osiris Villegas entitled *Políticas y estrategias para el desarrollo y la seguridad nacional* (*Policies and Strategies for Development and National Security*). These paradigms of Argentina's national-security doctrine are further discussed in the next chapter.

It is difficult to summarize the myriad components and expansive concepts which make up the national-security doctrine. Indeed, Jorge Vanossi, Argentine constitutional expert, called the doctrine "nothing more and nothing less than the ideological-juridical presentation of the argument against popular sovereignty."[146] First, while some general concepts were similar among all the Latin American militaries, each interpreted the doctrine according to its own politico-cultural history and environment. Second, the concepts embodied by the doctrine were general and elastic enough to permit a variety of policies among different states. In essence, the doctrine combined a

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[145] Nelson A. Rockefeller, "Quality of Life in the Americas: Report of a Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere," *Department of State Bulletin*, December 8, 1969, 505.

[146] Jorge Vanossi, *El estado de derecho en el constitucionalismo social*, second ed. (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1987) 477.

cataclysmic vision of a global East-West struggle in which the armed forces were the bulwarks against communism; a theory of counterrevolution and counterinsurgency; a notion of security and development as interdependent; a focus on ideological-cultural war; and a hypothesis of conflict emphasizing internal enemies, that is, citizens of their own countries.[147] A concise definition offered by José Zalaquett, a Chilean lawyer formerly with Amnesty International, is:

> "In its essentials, the national-security doctrine regards domestic political struggles as an expression of a basic East-West conflict and sees Marxist penetration and insurgency as an all-pervading presence of a new type of enemy fighting a new type of war. Civilians are also warriors, ideas a different form of weapon. Democracy and politics cannot lead the fight against Marxism (indeed they often pave the way). Neither can they coordinate all national resources effectively so as to achieve modernization and economic development, pillars of a modern notion of national security. This can only be done by the professionals of national security, the military. Since the war on Marxism is an insidious one, unorthodox methods are called for, including torture and extermination of irredeemable political activists."[148]

Argentine analyst Ernesto López argues that between 1955 and 1962, the military doctrine of national defense was replaced by the doctrine of national security, and this substitution of *internal* for *external* mission formed a good part of the explanation of the upheavals that occurred in

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[147] For an interpretation which argues that the national-security doctrine was based upon the ideology of right-wing nationalist and fascist organizations in Argentina, see Leonardo Senkman, "The Right and Civilian Regimes, 1943-1955," in Sandra McGee and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds., *The Argentine Right* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1993), especially 126-130. He mentions the influence of Tacuara, a right-wing, anti-Semitic, absolutist-Catholic terrorist group, and also the *Legión Nacionalista Contrarrevolucionaria (LNC)*, a right-wing paramilitary organization made up of civilians and active and retired military officers. The latter organization appears to have been much like a *logia* which included civilians; it had a large influence in the 1960s, especially in the air force. Members who were active-duty officers taught the LNC credo (stressing the three main enemies of communism, free-masonry and Judaism) at the Aviation School in Córdoba; key civilian LNC leader Jordán Bruno Genta taught his doctrine of counterrevolutionary war to air force intelligence and army troops at Campo de Mayo. Senkman's work adds an important view of the impact of right-wing and fascist organizations and virulent anti-Semitism upon military views and the national-security doctrine. However, his interpretation downplays the decisive influence of French and U.S. concepts upon the Argentine officers and the national-security doctrine.

[148] José Zalaquett, "From Dictatorship to Democracy," *The New Republic* (December 16, 1985) 18.

Argentina for the next 30 years.[149] He stresses the year 1956, when General Rosas returned from France and assumed the direction of the Superior War School; the major military journals then began to emphasize new forms of guerrilla and counterrevolutionary warfare.[150] O'Donnell quotes General Onganía's definition:

> "The armed forces exist to guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nation, to preserve the moral and spiritual values of Western and Christian civilization, to maintain public order and domestic peace, to promote the general welfare, to sustain the enforcement of the Constitution, of its rights and essential guarantees, and to maintain the republican institutions in which they are established legally."[151]

Clearly, this definition of the role of the armed forces encompasses every aspect of national life. Here it becomes evident that the national-security doctrine expressed an *expansion of the perceived institutional interests* of the military to include political interests. The armed forces were converted into an all-powerful political actor in state and society, whose corporate interests became fused with the political interests of the nation itself. The national-security doctrine established an omnipotent role for the armed forces. In its essence, the national-security doctrine was the theoretical foundation for a militarized state; it was the organizational and ideological basis for a particular form of governance.

David Pion-Berlin disaggregates the components of the doctrine and distinguishes between hard-line and soft-line versions.[152] He traces the roots of the doctrine to geopolitical thinking with

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[149] Ernesto López, *Seguridad Nacional y Sedición Militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1987) 13-14. This book is a detailed treatment of the development of the doctrine within the Argentine armed forces, including international influences.

[150] López, ibid., 137-140.

[151] West Point speech by Onganía in August 1964, cited by O'Donnell, "Modernization and Military Coups..." op. cit., 104.

[152] David Pion-Berlin, "Latin American National Security Doctrines: Hard- and Soft-Line Themes," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 15 No. 3 (Spring 1989), 411-429.

differing theories of the state, national security, and strategy, and points out that during the *Proceso*, Argentine military journals translated and reprinted the writings of Nazi geopolitical thinkers.[153] Alfred Stepan sums up the main concepts of the doctrine as *internal security* and *national development*[154] and stresses influences from the United States, citing U.S. government documents and programs from the 1960s. Maria Helena Moreira Alves, discussing the doctrine in Brazil, calls the doctrine a tool for the maintenance of a state structure to facilitate dependent capitalist development and in practice, an ideology of class domination.[155] This is a vital point: the doctrine was clearly in line with the interests of national elites as well as U.S. geopolitical and economic interests, all of which benefited from the repression of challenges to their hegemony. Further, "development" was promoted by the military regimes as economic growth closely linked to foreign investment and international capital from the "Western, Christian world."

To the Argentine military in the 1970s, the concept of "subversion" was expanded to the point where many Peronists, intellectuals, priests, journalists and peaceful dissidents or opponents of military rule were equated with terrorists and made to suffer the same treatment, which was often torture and death. For example, an officer who seized and tortured a priest named Father Orlando Iorio told him, "You are not a guerrilla, you're not involved in violence, but you don't realize that when you go to live there [in the shantytown] you are bringing people together, you are uniting the poor, and uniting the poor is subversive."[156] This quote also demonstrates the class-biased nature of the doctrine.

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[153] Pion-Berlin, ibid., 423.

[154] Alfred Stepan, "The New Military Professionalism..." op. cit., 49-50.

[155] Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas, 1985) 9.

[156] Cited in Emilio Mignone, *Witness to the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina, 1976-1983* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, English translation, 1988) 107.

A highly significant development occurred between the 1960s and 1970s in Argentina regarding the primary emphasis of the national-security doctrine.[157] In the 1960s, the stress on security and development, which paralleled the focus of the Alliance for Progress and U.S. interests, was dominant, although moralistic attempts by the armed forces to legislate social attitudes also took place. However, by 1976 military attitudes, and the doctrine, had changed. During the *Proceso*, internal development was sacrificed in order to discipline the population and eliminate the power of the unions by destroying the industrial base upon which Peronism was founded. This neoliberal restructuring of the economy implemented by the regime in 1976 in fact harmed national businesses in Argentina[158] as well as unionized workers. In short, the national-security doctrine subtly changed from a major emphasis on security and *development* to an overwhelming focus on *security*. This change signified: a) a response to changed conditions, especially the rise of guerrilla organizations and increasing labor militancy in the 1970s; b) the dominance of the liberal-internationalist wing of the armed forces in the *Proceso* government; and c) the impact of the changing global economy, and the *Proceso* regimes' perceived confluence of interests with international capital and finance.

A key implication of these developments was that the division within the armed forces between the nationalist-authoritarian current--which still stressed security and development--and the liberal-rightist current became more pronounced in the 1970s and 1980s. This may be characterized, in ideological terms, as the clash between the "older" national-security doctrine, with its emphasis

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[157] The following analysis benefited from the author's discussions with J. Samuel Fitch in July-August of 1992, and Claudio Lozano, director of *Instituto de Estudios Sobre Estado y Participación* in Buenos Aires, May 1992.

[158] Much documentation exists on this phenomenon. See, for example, Adolfo Canitrot, *La disciplina como objetivo de la política económica* (Buenos Aires: Estudios CEDES, second ed., 1979); Juan Corradi, "Military Government and State Terrorism in Argentina," in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., eds., *The Politics of AntiPolitics*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, second edition, 1989) 335-344; David Pion-Berlin and George Lopez, "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979," *International Studies Quarterly* 25, (1991).

in ideological terms, as the clash between the "older" national-security doctrine, with its emphasis on security and development, and the "newer" national-security doctrine, which stressed the global, ideological war (or "World War III") and downplayed the "development" aspect of the doctrine.[159] Despite these differences, however, the "war against subversion" served to keep the two currents united; conflicts became more acute after the transition to democracy.

In sum, a sort of "internationalization" of Cold War concepts and anticommunist doctrines occurred after World War II which were linked to the socioeconomic and national-security interests of both national and international elites. In Argentina, where the armed forces had been profoundly politicized since at least 1930, U.S. and French counterinsurgency doctrines and training reinforced this trend and provided new legitimacy for the military as the dominant political force in the nation. To summarize: 1) the new national-security doctrine was a rationale for the armed forces to retain, and even expand, their traditional role in society as permanent arbiters of the national destiny, thus serving the interests of a powerful caste of high-ranking officers with privileged positions in Argentine state and society (as well as their civilian allies); 2) the doctrine's focus on anticommunism served as an ideological means for the armed forces to unify rival factions; 3) the doctrine's stress on civilian subversion led the armed forces directly into a role in politics and domestic intelligence. Clearly, when the enemy became civilians rather than a professional army, the concept of war and the entire structure of military preparation dramatically changed. Further, the *ideas* of citizens, not only their actions, were sufficient to define them as subversive or not. Finally, the new doctrines of national security, with their expanded notions of subversion, also provided a political-ideological justification for a policy of violent repression--essentially a policy of state-sponsored terror and human rights abuses--in the name of national security.

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[159] However, the armed forces fiercely resisted attempts by *Proceso* Economy Minister José Martínez de Hoz to privatize or restructure the industries they controlled.

Perceived threats of communist influence and infiltration led to a wave of military coups in the 1960s and 70s in Latin America[160] and a number of violently repressive regimes, often condoned or tolerated by the U.S. executive.[161] The Argentine *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*--the military regime from 1976-1983--was one of the most violent in the hemisphere, and certainly the most repressive in that country's history.

Events Leading to the First National-Security State

Frondizi had assumed office in 1958 with the implicit permission of the armed forces.[162] Yet almost immediately, in July 1958, a civil-military crisis erupted when two navy chiefs castigated him for allowing Peronist influence in government. Frondizi overcame this with the assistance of the Minister of the Navy. Two months later, a rebellion occurred in the air force. This time, Frondizi gave in to military demands, setting an important precedent by "sanction[ing] the insubordination of commanders against both military hierarchy and civilian authority."[163] (Alfonsín was criticized for similar reactions to military defiance in the 1980s.) In November,

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[160] Between 1962 and 1966 there were nine military coups in Latin America. These were in Argentina (March 1962), Peru (July 1962), Guatemala (March 1963), Ecuador (July 1963), Dominican Republic (September 1963), Honduras (October 1963), Brazil (April 1964), Bolivia (November 1964) and Argentina (June 1966). From Rouquié, op.cit., 418, n.40.

[161] In a secret "Memo to the President" in March 1962, White House advisor Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote to President Kennedy regarding the 1962 coup in Argentina: "Should the State Department or the White House issue a statement disapproving of the action of the Argentine military in interrupting constitutional processes in Argentina (without, of course, closing the door to eventual relations with the new government)? Arguments pro. The failure to do this will lead the military in other countries to suppose that they have a green light to stage coups of their own...Great concern is reported throughout Latin America, from the particular friends of the Alliance for Progress...Arguments Con. ...In some cases (El Salvador in the past, perhaps Cuba in the future), we have welcomed military coups...It would be safer to move with caution..." Declassified document, *Declassified Documents Reference System*, op.cit., #896A.

[162] For a detailed treatment of the Frondizi regime, see Catalina Smulnovitz, *Oposición y Gobierno: Los Años de Frondizi/1 & 2* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina S.A., 1988).

[163] Goldwert, op.cit., 177.

Frondizi declared a state of siege during a labor strike; over 700 Peronistas were arrested after his own vice president and military leaders called publicly for repression. Frondizi demanded the resignation of his vice president, but his capitulation to military demands was another indication of weakness.[164]

Frondizi launched a major economic reform which utilized IMF "shock treatment" measures such as wage freezes, a massive devaluation, cutbacks of public workers and cuts in public services.[165] New strikes in 1959 were broken by the military, including those occurring during times when Frondizi was out of the country. The navy forced the resignation of Frondizi's Secretary of the Navy in July and in September an army general, Carlos Toranzo Montero, forced the resignation of the Secretary of the Army. This army officer, a strong-willed anticommunist, became army commander-in-chief. He pushed to reorganize the army in line with an internal-security mission, and imposed a military policy of "vigilance" over the civilian government.[166] The military also insisted that Frondizi dismiss his economic team and replace it with another led by Alvaro Alsogaray, a right-wing laissez-faire advocate.[167] Alsogaray--a former officer himself--came from an oligarchic family with a lineage of military officers. The Frondizi government, in short, increasingly resembled a guardian model, constrained and coerced by the armed forces.

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[164] Corbett, op.cit., 105.

[165] Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, second ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 93.

[166] See Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980) 315-331, for an illuminating review of Toranzo Montero's clashes with the Frondizi government. This officer led an uprising in 1959 much like those of the *carapintadas* in the 1980s. Frondizi responded by offering concessions. Toranzo Montero, a recent delegate to the Inter-American Defense Board, wanted to reorganize the army to fight communist-inspired revolutionary movements. He told Potash that as army commander-in-chief, he believed in "the Army's need to exercise vigilance over the actions of President Frondizi's government" because it had "deviated from the objectives of the Liberating Revolution [the 1955 military government]." Ibid., 320-321.

[167] Ibid., 93-94.

The armed forces demanded martial law during the March 1960 Congressional elections, putting the country in a situation of "internal war."[168] That same month, the government, under pressure from the armed forces, instituted the Plan CONINTES national-security structure. Plan CONINTES (CONINTES stood for *conmoción interna de estado*, state of internal commotion) authorized, in emergencies, "the suspension of certain constitutional guarantees and combining police and armed forces elements into a unified anti-terrorist command under army direction...[and] authorizes trial [of civilians] by military tribunal."[169]

Frondizi began to lose support from both the Peronists and the military; his neoliberal economic measures were highly unpopular with the population and a state of social unrest was increasing. In this context, the Peronists won six provincial governorships and 43 seats in the Chamber of Deputies in the 1961 elections, when Frondizi permitted them to vote in an attempt to win support. Frondizi's wing of the Radical Party lost badly.[170] He was overthrown soon after. José María Guido as acting vice president assumed the presidency, but he was completely subservient to the armed forces. The armed forces overthrew Frondizi due to: 1) his willingness to open the political system to the proscribed *Peronistas* (that is, the armed forces regarded him as insufficiently vigilant in repressing the Peronists), 2) his mild challenges to military tutelage of government, 3) his foreign policies, including willingness to act as intermediary between Fidel Castro and the U.S. government, and his meeting with Che Guevara in 1961.[171]

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[168] Corbett, ibid., 105.

[169] CIA, op.cit., 7. Winsor notes that the Plan was suspended in August 1961 but intermittently reimposed until 1964, when civilian president Illia suspended it; the military regime of Onganía reimposed it during civilian uprisings in 1969. Winsor, op.cit., 123.

[170] Corbett, ibid., 106.

[171] Clearly this is a schematic presentation of Frondizi's government, a complex period in Argentina's history. Space constraints preclude a more detailed analysis.

The armed forces solidified their political dominance in this period. During this era they began to divide into so-called *azules* and *colorados*. The *colorados*, liberal-rightists, were well-exemplified by the navy, which was violently anti-*Peronista* and anticommunist and favorable to laissez-faire capitalism and links with international interests, to the point of involvement in banking or corporate business interests. The *colorado* faction of the army favored direct military rule and repression of the Peronist Party. This faction's stronghold in the army was centered in the infantry and artillery units, and provincial garrisons, in the 1960s. The *azules*, or integrating-nationalists in Goldwert's terms, favored civilian rule, with a power-sharing role behind the scenes;[172] they were descended from the so-called Legalists of previous years. They were willing to sacrifice direct rule in exchange for a strong bargaining position *within* the state. Less fanatically anti-*Peronista*,[173] the *azules* preferred denying voting rights to Peronists rather than violent repression. This faction's support came mainly from the powerful Campo de Mayo garrison in the 1960s. They thus controlled the cavalry, with motorized units and tanks.[174]

The *azules*' power was revealed in September 1962, when their troops, led by General Onganía, took over central Buenos Aires. An armed conflict broke out between the two factions which resulted in the defeat of the *colorados*.[175] The *azules* placed officers in key government and military positions; Guido remained as titular president. Hundreds of *colorados* were retired and arrested. Several other battles occurred during the next months, into 1963, between the two

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[172] Goldwert, op.cit., 178.

[173] General Rattenbach, an *azul*, distinguished between Peronism and Justicialism (the formal name for the Peronist movement), calling the former "men addicted to Perón" and the latter "a combination of ideas which deserves the most respect." Admiral Rojas, a *colorado*, rejected this distinction. From Goldwert, ibid., 193.

[174] Goldwert, ibid., 189.

[175] Corbett, op.cit., 107-108.

factions, involving all three branches of the military. In April of that year, another armed battle broke out which included an air force bombardment of an army tank column on the road to Buenos Aires.[176]

Onganía proscribed the Peronists and paved the way for a return to elections. These occurred in July, 1963, and Arturo Illia, from the other wing of the Radical Party, won the election. He received only one fourth of the popular vote; the Peronists cast blank ballots.[177] Soon, however, he incurred the wrath of the armed forces by failing to prevent the growing strength and radicalization of the Peronists and youth in general, or halt inflation. Illia decided, in fact, to legalize the Peronists, but this move did not prevent a military-union alliance against the Radical president.[178] The elites were also dissatisfied with Illia; as Senkman puts it: "Ultimately, the bourgeoisie's increasingly rightist tendencies would lead it to choose the anti-democratic option of military *golpismo* to increase the likelihood of success for its socioeconomic programs, in disregard of the parliamentary and institutional democratization that had been attempted after 1955."[179] In 1964 the United States and Argentina agreed to initiate a U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP), which led to new military aid, arms sales, and the adoption of U.S. military organization techniques.[180] In August 1964 General Onganía presented his famous national-security speech at

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[176] Corbett, ibid., 108.

[177] Corbett, p. 109.

[178] In 1992 interviews, several Radicals referred to this "pact," and indeed, fear of another such alliance loomed large among the Radicals during the Alfonsín administration. See also Rosendo Fraga, *Ejército: del escarnio...*, op.cit., 17, for an allusion to this pact; and Senkman, op. cit., 123.

[179] Senkman, op.cit., 122. He argues that between 1955 and 1976 the key concerns of all sectors of the political right in Argentina--defined as the liberal wing linked to foreign capital, the *Nacionalistas*, the Peronist right, and elements of the armed forces--were first, government economic policy, and second, the suppression of mass political movements. Ibid., 140.

[180] Winsor, op.cit., 71. Winsor comments extensively on the growing anticommunism of the Argentine armed forces. He also shows that the massive intelligence apparatus being put into place by the armed forces was mainly targeted against the Peronists, despite their insistence that it was directed against communism.

West Point during the Fifth Conference of American Armies (analyzed in the next chapter). In 1964-65, the high command of the army began drawing up a series of studies and plans for a new regime and a political economy that addressed their concerns for security and development.[181] Finally, this period also saw the emergence of small guerrilla bands, inspired by the Cuban revolution, which engaged in combat with units of the *Gendarmería* in the northern provinces; they were effectively defeated.

Illia enraged the armed forces and U.S. government officials for other reasons related to relations with the United States. First, he annulled the oil contracts Frondizi had negotiated with U.S. oil companies to exploit Argentina's reserves.[182] Second, Illia declined U.S. overtures to join the inter-American invasion force in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and form part of a permanent force to fight hemispheric subversion.[183] The U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic sparked large anti-imperialist demonstrations among Argentine students and unionists in a climate of increasing volatility. Finally, on June 28, 1966, Illia was overthrown in a planned military operation in the first institutional coup by the Argentine armed forces. They established Argentina's first national-security state.

"The armed forces have focused on communism as the chief threat to the nation because it is more convenient politically than would be a like assault on Peronism...[and justifies] new equipment and their own role as guardians of the nation." Op.cit., 70.

[181] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 180. See also his analysis of currents and factions among the armed forces during this period, 180-182.

[182] See Pedro Sánchez, *La presidencia de Illia* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, 1983) 14-20 for an account of this development. Averell Harriman was sent by John F. Kennedy to discuss the matter with Illia and Dean Rusk expressed grave disagreement. Partly as a result of the Argentine action, the Hickenlooper amendment was passed in the U.S. Congress, authorizing the suspension of U.S. aid to countries that annulled contracts with U.S. firms.

[183] Corbett, op.cit., 110; Goldwert, op.cit., 201.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the developmental process by which the Argentine armed forces came to wield powerful political influence in the state and society. A fusion of military institutional and political interests occurred as the military gained influence and control in economic and political realms in the early part of the century. The military coups of 1930 and 1943 were reflections of broader conflicts in society as well as political and ideological factionalism within the military. In the 1940s, Perón instituted a nationalist-authoritarian form of the state based on his "Third Position" between capitalism and communism, and promoted the "three banners" of political sovereignty, economic independence, and social justice. In 1955, the liberal-rightist sector of the armed forces regained political dominance after ousting Perón. They resolved to strictly control the influence of Peronism and open Argentina to international alliances and the international economy. The Cold War and the growing influence of French and U.S. counterinsurgency doctrines and training fused with longstanding notions of military superiority and effectiveness to produce a particular ideology, called the national-security doctrine.

The growing anticommunism of the Argentine armed forces amid the tensions of the Cold War added a deeply ideological and messianic dimension to military thinking. Eventually, the concept of a "holy war" against subversion led to a new definition of the enemy which encompassed many sectors of the population, especially Peronists. That is, the principal military target became domestic political actors. In 1966, the armed forces installed a new form of state--the national-security state--organized and founded upon the tenets of this doctrine, for the first time.

CHAPTER 3

ARGENTINA'S FIRST NATIONAL-SECURITY STATE

This chapter analyzes Argentina's first national-security state and demonstrates the centrality of the national-security doctrine as the basis for its organization. The doctrine became the legal and theoretical foundation of this state type, as evidenced by the decree-laws and acts of the military government. We examine this legal-juridical foundation and its basis in the norms and concepts of national security.

The military became more intensely politicized during this era, inspired by anticommunist doctrines, the Cold War climate and the rise of social opposition in Argentina. During this period, the armed forces created permanent intelligence and security structures with which to monitor and control the civilian population. This meant the armed forces became more deeply entrenched in the center of politics in Argentina. National-security structures, ideology and counterinsurgency methods were developed and consolidated in the 1960s. The new mission and doctrine of the armed forces, based on internal security, achieved hegemony within the armed forces during this period.

This chapter also discusses the growing resistance to military rule beginning in 1969-1970. We examine the complex array of political forces in the country and the growing tensions between Peronists and anti-Peronists, right and left. The armed forces began implementing "dirty war" methods to silence perceived enemies in the early 1970s and a right-wing terrorist organization, the Triple A, appeared. Popular rebellions such as the *cordobazo* (named for its location in Córdoba), and the emergence of armed guerrilla groups eventually led the military to withdraw from government in 1973. They allowed elections and the return of the Peronists to government in that year. Despite the end of military rule, however, political polarization and turbulence continued to escalate.

The armed forces gradually spread their national-security structures throughout the country. After Perón's death, they maneuvered to regain decisive power within the state and over the government of Isabel Perón. The military's commanders decided that an even more drastic restructuring of Argentine state and society was required to achieve national security and root out leftist and nationalist-Peronist ideas. The armed forces overthrew the government of Isabel in 1976 and installed Argentina's second national-security state, the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional.*

Before the coup of 1976, the armed forces issued secret documents to allies and sympathizers in the civilian population to explain and line up support for the coming coup. We analyze some of these documents and the "coup coalition," or alliance among civilian and military actors, prior to the coup. The attitudes and practices of the U.S. government are also explored.

The 1966 "Argentine Revolution"

The new regime ushered in by the armed forces on June 28, 1966, differed from prior coups led by retired officers and/or segments of the armed forces. This time, the coup was planned by the joint high command of the three forces; all branches of the armed forces moved together in a coordinated military operation.[1] *El Instituto para el Desarrollo de Ejecutivos de la Argentina (IDEA)*, founded by big business groups in 1960 and administered by a council including representatives of Fabricaciones Militares, Dupont Chemical, General Electric, IBM, Shell, First

[1] For a fascinating account of the military politico-psychological campaign (reflecting military PSYOPS training) carried out for a period of months before the coup to discredit the Illia government and democracy in general, and create a *golpista* consensus, see Alain Rouquié, *Poder Militar y Sociedad Política en la Argentina, Tomo II* (Buenos Aires: Hyspanamérica Ediciones, 1986) 244-245. Two magazines sponsored by sectors of the army, *Confirmado* and *Primera Plana*, called openly for a coup as the only means to achieve efficiency, modernization, and national greatness; these sentiments were echoed by the business community.

National City Bank, Esso, and Bunge & Born, had supported the *golpista* campaign.[2] The new *junta* immediately made clear that this regime would not be a temporary "corrective" regime as in the past. Rather, the armed forces sought to totally transform state and society and institute a new political, economic and social model for Argentina. The armed forces essentially occupied the state and began to transform its structures from a liberal-democratic model to a hierarchical, authoritarian, militarized model based on the national-security doctrine. The violent closure of all channels for political expression had the result, however, of generating even more volatile conditions, with growing social unrest and a crisis of political authority. New revolutionary organizations emerged, as part of the Peronist movement and middle class youth became radicalized. Given the dearth of other means of articulating their interests, many individuals increasingly supported, passively or actively, the resort to violence as a means of achieving objectives.

The armed forces issued several proclamations after the 1966 coup. In its "Message of the Revolutionary Junta to the Argentine People"[3] the *junta* justified the action of the military as necessary to restore "authority, whose ultimate end is the protection of liberty." According to their view, the country had been swept into a situation of anarchy "characterized by the collision of sectors with antagonistic interests, a situation aggravated by the absence of elemental social order." The *junta* complained that "monetary inflation...was aggravated by an insatiable statism" in a clear declaration of the regime's politico-economic preferences. In an allusion to Illia's rebuffs toward the inter-American national-security system, the *junta* added that "our international dignity has been

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[2] Ibid., 246. A declassified USAID document reveals that the United States assisted IDEA through AID, promoting "private sector development by bringing in experts to lead seminars for IDEA" and funding a "labor training program" via AIFLD. See USAID, *Country Field Submission FY 1971, Argentina*, September 1969. Declassified January 12, 1981.

[3] Reproduced in Verbitsky, *Medio Siglo...*,op.cit., 99.

gravely compromised by the vacillation and indifference in well-known episodes."[4]

In their "Act of the Argentine Revolution," one of the founding documents of the national-security state, the *junta* announced 14 measures, five of which produced fundamental changes: 1) The commanders of the three armed forces constituted themselves as the political power of the nation; 2) The president, vice president, governors and vice-governors throughout the country were relieved of their duties; 3) Congress and the provincial legislatures were dissolved; 4) All members of the Supreme Court and the Attorney General of the Nation were dismissed; 5) All political parties were dissolved. The other items announced future actions to be taken, including the naming of General Juan Carlos Onganía as president.[5] Characteristically, the armed forces took pains to present the coup as a legal and just, almost quasi-constitutional, measure, undertaken in the highest interests of the nation. However, for the first time, the actions taken by the armed forces revealed their rejection and abolishment of the liberal-democratic system itself. The armed forces abrogated not only the Peronist party, but all parties; no titular president or governor was allowed to remain; all mediating organizations between the state and civil society were eliminated. Clearly, the coup coalition considered the populist and anti-imperialist tendencies of both major parties, the Radicals and the Peronists, too dangerous to its interests to allow a democratic system--however restricted--to remain functional.

Legal Structures of the National-Security State

The military regime set no limits to the expected term of the military in government. Indeed, the nature of the regime revealed that the former *azules* (as Onganía had been) had moved

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[4] Ibid., 103.

[5] Ibid. For a detailed account of the Onganía regime, see Gerardo Bra, *El Gobierno de Onganía* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1985).

significantly to the right. That is, they now favored direct military rule, rather than elections with restricted participation and a position of power behind the scenes of a civilian government.

The armed forces took immediate steps to construct a state founded upon their supreme national-security principles of security and development. Decree-Law 16,970 created two new organizations to institutionalize *security and development* via a military presence in the state: the *Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo (CONADE*, the National Council of Development), and the *Consejo Nacional de Seguridad (CONASE*, National Security Council). General Osiris Villegas, a nationalist officer, became director of CONASE;[6] the three commanders of the armed forces, the Defense Minister and the chief of Intelligence were also members. CONASE was authorized to establish "Zones of Security" in the country for better administration of security[7] (Article 12, Section f of Decree-Law 16,970) and set up a National Commission of Zones to coordinate and administer these zones.[8] According to one retired officer, the country had been divided into military security zones

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[6] Ernesto López, *Seguridad nacional*...op.cit., 178. Villegas's first book was entitled *Guerra revolucionaria comunista (Revolutionary communist war)* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1963); he later authored a book, mentioned in the last chapter, which became known as the prototype for Argentina's national-security doctrine. See Osiris Villegas, *Políticas y estrategias para el desarrollo y la seguridad nacional [Policies and Strategies for Development and National Security]* (Buenos Aires, Pleamar, 1969). Ironically, in 1989 Villegas (and other officers) claimed that there was no such thing as the national-security doctrine, suggesting that references to it by numerous authors, practitioners and politicians in Argentina were part of the ideological war and a campaign of disinformation and discrediting of the armed forces. See Villegas, "La llamada doctrina de seguridad nacional," *Revista Militar* (January-July 1989), 22-26.

[7] José Manuel Ugarte, *Seguridad Interior* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Arturo Illia para la Democracia y la Paz, 1990) 157.

[8] Ibid, 158. A retired high-ranking army officer explained in 1992 the profound effects produced by this division of country into military zones. "During years, decades, all us Argentines were accustomed to seeing our maps divided into blocks, cut up into big spaces saying First Army Corps, Second Army Corps, Third Army Corps, Fourth Army Corps here, Fifth Army Corps...But--these poor fellows, who ascended to general, they send me to command the Third Army Corps, and I look at the map and say, but that means the whole northeast of the country is under my command. And that's it--they're under my command. And every month I have to send an intelligence report on what is going on in each city, Salta, Tucumán, Jujuy, Catamarca, La Rioja. And it says what he thinks of the governor of Catamarca, with what woman is he running around...do you see?" Interview with Col Gustavo Cáceres (retired) conducted by author, October 19, 1992, Buenos Aires. *After* the transition to civilian government, according to this officer, internal military maps and

for intelligence purposes since the late 1950s. Commanders were responsible to determine possible communist objectives in their areas.[9]

CONASE developed sub-organizations including Information (an intelligence research and policy-making body), Special Affairs (concerned with labor conflicts and "subversion") and Security Control.[10] A number of intelligence organizations were expanded in size and capability and subsumed within CONASE.[11] SIDE, the *Secretaría de Inteligencia de Estado* (State Intelligence Service) instituted an Advisory Committee for Ideological Classification which categorized persons as "communists," "probably communist, but with insufficient evidence to prosecute in court," and other groupings.[12]

The military regime sought to spur new industrialization in the country with the aid of foreign capital and transnational corporations. Wages were frozen by the regime, and Decree-Law 16,936 (August 1966) virtually prohibited the right to strike through its mechanisms for obligatory arbitration of labor disputes.[13] Other laws raised the retirement age from 60 to 65 and legalized a "civil defense service" which gave authorities the right to mobilize workers for government projects.[14] The new regime, according to Winsor, took "a relatively favorable view toward foreign capital investment, particularly when it conforms to the guidelines of the CONADE and is in concert

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planning documents retained these divisions, reflecting the entrenched conceptions of the national-security doctrine.

[9] Interview with Col. Gustavo Cáceres (ret.) conducted by author, July 21, 1993, Buenos Aires.

[10] Winsor, op.cit., 112.

[11] For a detailed description of the many intelligence organizations in this era, and their institutional competition, see Winsor, op.cit., 113-122.

[12] Winsor, op.cit., 119.

[13] Rouquié, op.cit., 281.

[14] Ibid., 281.

with domestic capital resources, public or private."[15] CONADE organized and coordinated the national development of the country, prepared budgets and projects, and issued regulations for all development activities in the country. It included the military president, the five ministers of the cabinet, and a number of secretaries of state as non-permanent members. CONADE's secretariat was headed by General Juan Enrique Guglialmelli, an officer from the developmentalist wing of the army.[16] Corbett points out that the armed forces were clearly attempting to integrate both the liberal-rightist and nationalist wings of the forces, assigning the former to political leadership and the latter to public development and infrastructure posts in the new regime.[17] Guglialmelli had directed the Superior War School, the Superior Technical School and the Advanced Studies School of the army during the mid-sixties, where he taught courses emphasizing the interdependence of national security and economic development.[18]

The national-security state also instituted far-reaching changes in Argentina's legal-juridical structure by rewriting major sections of the country's criminal, commercial and civil codes. No military governments in the past had tampered with the civil and commercial codes. This is further evidence that the national-security state was qualitatively different than previous military regimes and intended to totally remake Argentine state and society. For example, in 1968 the government enacted the most profound changes to the civil code in a century (Decree-Law 17,711). In 1972, Decree-Law 19,550 established a new corporate business law. Decree-Law 19,551 enacted a new

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[15] Winsor, op.cit., 263.

[16] Ibid., 265.

[17] Corbett, op.cit., 121.

[18] Ibid, 117.

bankruptcy law.[19]

Moreover, the military government, for the first time, called its rulings *laws* rather than *decree-laws*, thus usurping the legislative function and enacting laws intended to be permanent (for example, the consecutive numbering system of Congressional legislation was maintained). In past transitions to civilian rule, military decrees had often been repealed or abrogated by the courts because they were issued without Congressional debate and authorization. However, the 1966-1973 government issued so many laws that this was impossible.[20] The militarized system was constructed by the armed forces in order to permanently entrench its policies in Argentina, despite transitions to civilian rule. That is, the military governments sought to establish the framework for a permanent guardian system even after the transition to civilian rule.

National-Security Ideology

Decree-Law 16,970 institutionalized the organizational and ideological foundation of the national-security state:

> "**Article 1.** The present law establishes the juridical, organic and functional bases for the preparation and execution of the national defense, with the end of achieving and maintaining the national security necessary for the development of the activities of the country in procuring its national objectives.
>
> **Article 2.** National security is the situation in which the vital interests of the nation

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[19] Interview with Alejandro M. Garro, Argentine attorney, legal scholar, and Lecturer at Columbia University, conducted by author October 14, 1993, New York.

[20] After the 1973 transition, the Peronist government adopted the pragmatic position that the de facto laws could not all be repealed without major chaos. The courts adopted the theory that Congress must expressly abrogate particular decree-laws or they would remain in place. Onganía's changes to the criminal code, for example, were abrogated. The same situation arose after the *Proceso*, which modified or enacted thousands of laws; during the government of Alfonsín, the same pragmatic policy was adopted by the courts. Garro interview. In other words, many of the military laws remained in place, enduring structures of the national-security state. The author is indebted to Kenneth P. Erickson for alerting her to the significance of the military's use of the term "laws" rather than "decree-laws."

are protected from substantial interference and disruption."[21]

The definition in Article 2 is key because it codified the expansive conception of national security espoused by the armed forces. The "vital interests" of the nation, as we have seen, were defined so broadly as to include the armed forces in every aspect of national life.[22] Years later, during the Alfonsín administration, while the new Defense Law with its new definition of the military's scope of action was debated in Congress (see Chapter 1), military officers continued to use and defend the 1966 definition internally. In fact, it appeared in 1992 that this operational definition was still in effect within the armed forces, despite the passage of the Defense Law.[23] This clearly suggested that at least some elements of the national-security ideology continued to underlie the educational formation and the internal tactical and strategic thinking of the armed forces.

Onganía was close to right-wing Catholic circles, and his fundamentalist proclivities led him to enact various measures to preserve public morality. He abolished "suggestive" dress, imposed censorship of theater and film, and attempted to enforce his moral vision.[24] Onganía also ordered a purge of the national university in Buenos Aires after its rector called the coup "*gorila*" and "fascist" and decried the overthrow of Illia.[25] The regime sent military officers and right-wing civilians to "intervene" the university (that is, assume its administration and leadership). In one assault by police on horseback, called *la noche de los bastones largos* (night of the long batons), scores of professors and students were injured when police swept through the university, beating

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[21] Reproduced in República Argentina, Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación, *Diario de las Sesiones*, (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Congreso, 1992) April 7, 1988 session, 3011.

[22] See Ugarte, op.cit., 151-158 for a detailed analysis of all the articles of the law.

[23] See Chapter 9 on the Menem administration.

[24] Corbett, op.cit., 114.

[25] Editorial de la Universitaria de Buenos Aires, *Fragmentos de una memoria: UBA 1821-1991* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1992) 148.

those who resisted. Many professors resigned their posts and many intellectuals left the country after this.[26] The eight national universities were all intervened.[27] The regime's Decree-Law 17,245 (April 1967) prohibited all activity on campuses related to "forms of militancy, agitation, propaganda, proselytism, or indoctrination of a political character."[28] The regime clearly intended to arrest politicization and social mobilization in all realms of society, especially among the intelligentsia, youth, and unionized workers; whether by design or not, it was a strategy in line with the prescriptions of many U.S. modernization theorists of the day.[29]

Onganía's "West Point doctrine," presented during the Conference of American Armies in 1964, crystallized the national-security thinking of the Argentine military and previewed the coup of 1966. In this speech--which Villegas later insisted was written by him[30]--Onganía quotes liberally from the U.S. Declaration of Independence to demonstrate the Argentine army's respect for popular sovereignty. A difference in conceptualization becomes apparent, however, when he asserts that "the state and the armed forces do not exist by themselves, but rather are objective manifestations through which the people express their will to live, develop, and preserve themselves within an organized social community."[31] The armed forces, fused with the state, have become

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[26] Ibid., 148, 158.

[27] Gillespie, *Soldiers...*, 63.

[28] EUDEBA, ibid., 159.

[29] Authors like Lucian Pye, Samuel Huntington and Daniel Lerner, for example, argued against broadened literacy, education and participation in the 1960s. Lerner wrote that literacy "may be dysfunctional--indeed a serious impediment--to modernization..." Weiner as well wrote of strategies to slow mobilization in underdeveloped nations. See Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics*, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (1965), 403-430; Daniel Lerner, "The Transformation of Institutions," mimeo, 19 (cited in Huntington, ibid., 403); Lucian Pye, *Politics, Personality and Nation Building* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962) 4-5.

[30] See Villegas, "La llamada..." op.cit, 23. The speech is reproduced in this issue of *Revista Militar*, op.cit., 79-86.

[31] Onganía speech, op.cit., 80.

the metaphysical representation of popular sovereignty. As Lázara points out, Onganía turns the notion of popular sovereignty--including the right to reject unjust governments--into its opposite.[32] Popular will and sovereignty no longer reside in the people, but in the armed forces, the true representatives of the essence of the nation. The doctrine "transmutes the principle of popular sovereignty as a source of legitimacy for the power of the state into the legitimacy of military sovereignty over society, which is done by *occupying the state apparatus* in the name of the people, [whose will is] not consulted, but rather *interpreted.*"[33] [emphasis in original]

The speech affirmed a corporatist vision of the nation as "a spiritual family"[34] with "a consciousness of a national being, summarized in the idea of Fatherland which gives cohesion and indestructible spiritual force to a feeling of social solidarity."[35] The military's mission was:

> "to guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state; to preserve the moral and spiritual values of Western Christian civilization; to secure public order and *interior peace*; to improve the general well-being; and to sustain the existence of the Constitution, its rights and essential guarantees and the maintenance of the republican institutions which are established within it."[36] [emphasis in original]

Here one clearly recognizes the military virtues of order, unity, and national defense in the classic sense. But also here are the fundamentalist undertones of right-wing Catholicism, with a rigid insistence upon vague Western, Christian values; the obsession with internal security; the concern with a military role in economic development; and a subtle lack of commitment to democracy (rather republicanism is stressed).

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[32] Lázara, op.cit., 163.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Onganía speech, op.cit., 80.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

Onganía continues that whoever betrays this way of feeling and thinking "is anti-American"[37] and expands on the concept of internal order:

> "We have already noted that the armed institutions have as a mission, in the internal sphere, the preservation of the interior peace, the maintenance of republican institutions, and the sustenance of the essential rights and guarantees enshrined in the Constitution. It is clear, then, that this duty of obedience ceases to exist absolutely if--under the influence of alien ideologies--a disruption of authority is produced which would signify the elimination of the basic principles of the republican system of government, or a violent swing in the equilibrium and independence of powers, or an exercise of constitutional capacities that presupposes the cancellation of the liberties and rights of the citizens. In emergencies of this type, the armed institutions, at the service of the Constitution, cannot, certainly, maintain themselves impassively, under the pretext of a blind submission to established power, which would convert them into an instrument of an illegitimate authority..."[38]

Onganía again cites the Declaration of Independence after this, but now its function is clearly to justify the military prerogative to overthrow elected governments if the armed forces autonomously determine that they have violated Western, Christian values.[39] The speech in its totality illustrates the major ideas and justifications of the national-security doctrine, including the perceived right of the Argentine armed forces to vest themselves with the absolute power of the state.[40]

The Emergence of Civilian Resistance

The military governments of Generals Onganía and Lanusse (between 1966 and 1973) instituted economic policies to insure an influx of foreign capital which engendered a massive de-nationalization of domestic industry and capital (General Levingston attempted some statist

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[37] Ibid., 81.

[38] Ibid., 83.

[39] Ibid., 81.

[40] Villegas, in this issue of *Revista Militar*, argues that the "West Point doctrine" was actually the authorized product and policy of the constitutional government of Illia, as was Decree-Law 16,970, and therefore not "nefarious and totalitarian" at all. See Villegas, "La llamada..." op.cit., 23-24.

retrenchment, but he was soon replaced by Lanusse). This hurt the national bourgeoisie, weakened the middle and working classes, and greatly strengthened the hold of the transnational corporations in the economy (Corradi 1985). Decree-law 18,601 gave foreign banks the authorization to purchase Argentine banks; 19 were sold between 1967 and 1969.[41] Gillespie notes that the policies of neoliberal Economy Minister Adalbert Krieger Vasena were

> "soon interpreted as an attempt to consolidate the hegemony of big industrial and financial monopolies associated with foreign capital, at the expense of the rural bourgeoisie and the popular sectors...By 1971, 66 of the leading 120 companies were owned or controlled by foreign interests, and a further 18 were clearly linked to them...Bankruptcies rose from 1,647 in 1968 to 1,982 in 1970..."[42]

Growing social rebellions, the emergence of new revolutionary organizations (the Montoneros, linked to Peronism, and the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*, or ERP,[43] a Trotskyist group) and tensions among the ruling elites (Corradi 1985, Gillespie 1982, O'Donnell 1979) led to a situation of increasing instability. Essentially, a *political* crisis of legitimacy and political authority developed in the midst of simultaneous socioeconomic upheavals and restructuring. The military regime was resented and feared, the Radicals were weak, divided and seen as illegitimate as well. Only the majority party, the Peronist Party, had an aura of legitimacy; it was the largest social force, yet had been mostly banned for decades. All the various ideological currents of Peronism looked toward Perón, exiled in Spain. The Vandorist wing, led by Agusto Vandor (leader of the powerful Metalworkers Union and the General Confederation of Workers, the CGT) sought ways to cooperate with the military regime, and Vandor himself sought to replace Perón as

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[41] Julian Martel, "Domination by Debt: Finance Capital in Argentina," *NACLA Report* (July-August 1978), 24.

[42] Gillespie, op.cit., 61-62.

[43] The ERP later identified with Che Guevara and the Cuban revolutionary model. For a history of the ERP's leader, Mario Roberto Santucho, and the ERP, see María Seoane, *Todo o Nada: La Historia Secreta y la Historia Pública del Jefe Guerrillero Mario Roberto Santucho* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta Argentina, 1991).

the supreme leader of Peronism. Leftist and rebellious currents looked to Perón for instructions.[44]

Perón encouraged the development of the left-wing of Peronism,[45] while simultaneously maintaining relations with the right-wing, especially among the big unions. The Montoneros saw in Perón the anti-imperialist, populist leader of the *descamisados* (the shirtless ones); as Gillespie argues, Perón's adroit use of his proposed "national socialist" state was ambiguous enough to attract both the right and left of the Peronist movement.[46] Yet traditionally, Peronism was anticommunist. Since the 1940s, Perón had championed a "third way" between capitalism and socialism. There was an inherent tension between the right-wing, anticommunist currents of the movement and the leftist youth who saw the Cuban revolution as an inspiration. Many of these young people joined the Montoneros or leftist groups. This tension reached explosive levels in the early 1970s and developed into a virtual civil war between the opposing currents of Peronism during the 1970s.

According to Gillespie, "The crucial experience...for most of those who later rallied to the Montonero cause was that of the 1966-1970 *Onganiato* [Onganía government]. It undermined the labor support for conciliatory Vandorism, opening the way for limited but significant working-class radicalization, and it also had a pronounced effect among the middle classes..."[47] Yet the ideology

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[44] The orthodox Peronist union bureaucrats formed the right wing of the Peronist movement. They were generally willing to establish alliances with the military in an effort to win their demands from the state; many were sympathetic to a corporatist state type where labor and the military would play important roles, as during the early days of Perón. The left wing of Peronism--which included a large portion of Argentine youth in this era--was sympathetic to popular revolution, was anti-imperialist and espoused Perón's three banners. The ideology of many Peronists and of the Montoneros leaders (the armed wing of the Peronist left) was ambiguous, as described below. It is difficult to precisely characterize Peronist ideology because it encompassed many ideals which were simultaneously espoused by both right and left; the political spectrum as ordinarily visualized scarcely applies in Argentina.

[45] In 1971 Perón lauded the Peronist guerrillas, which he called "special formations," by saying: "We have such a marvelous youth section which every day unequivocally demonstrates its capacity and greatness...I have absolute faith in our lads who have learned to die for their ideals." Cited in Gillespie, op.cit., 40.

[46] Gillespie, *Soldiers...*, 38-39. Gillespie argues that the youth of Peronism were naive and idealistic, seeing in Perón what they wanted to see. Ibid., 41-46.

[47] Gillespie, ibid., 61.

of the Montoneros, at least that of its leaders, was ambiguous from the beginning. The political origins of some of the leaders were among right-wing organizations such as Catholic Action and *Tacuara*, a violent, anti-Semitic group modeled after the Falangists.[48] The Montoneros came to be known as the leftist guerrilla wing of Peronism, yet their politics reflected the ambiguities of Peronism in several ways. They were nationalist, anti-imperialist, and staunch believers in the "three banners" of economic independence, social justice and political sovereignty. Yet unlike some left organizations, they relied on terrorist tactics and a militaristic style rather than working-class organizing, and they sought to establish alliances and coalitions with the nationalist faction of the army.[49] The ERP, on the other hand, saw the armed forces as the enemy, to be fought in combat and/or dismantled and replaced by Cuban-style militia units.[50] The armed forces treated them as an enemy to be destroyed from the moment they emerged.

Andersen has argued that Mario Firmenich, leader of the Montoneros in the 1970s, was in fact linked to military intelligence.[51] Many Argentines suspected there were overlapping interests

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[48] Gillespie, op.cit., 47-49; see also Senkman, op.cit., 126, for a discussion of *Tacuara*.

[49] One retired navy intelligence officer told me: "...that was another tension within the armed forces in the early years [of the 1970s]. The navy wanted to fight both the ERP and the Montoneros equally. But the army had a different policy. That's because the Montoneros were born within Peronismo. You know, Peronismo includes the left and the right...it is a sentiment rather than a party. The Montoneros were strongly nationalist, paramilitary--really like an army, and like sectors of the Argentine army. When two other groups, the FAP [Peronist Armed Forces] and the FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces], both more Marxist, were incorporated into the Montoneros, that's when they became more like an international movement...But for many years the army did not want to fight the Montoneros in the same way as ERP, the Marxist group." Interview with retired navy officer conducted by author, August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires. For a critical analysis of the Montoneros, see also Pablo Giussani, *Montoneros: La Soberbia Armada*, ninth ed. (Buenos Aires: Tiempo de Ideas, 1992).

[50] Fraga, *Ejército: del escarnio...*, op.cit., 67.

[51] Martin Edwin Andersen, a former aide to Senator Alan Cranston, was a journalist in Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s. See his *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the 'Dirty War'* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); "SIDE-Montoneros: La conexión secreta," Parts 1 and 2, *L'Expresso* (Italy), (June 5 and 12, 1987). See also *Somos*, "Por qué volvió Firmenich: ¿Guerrillero o servicio?" [translation: "Why did Firmenich return: Guerrilla or intelligence agent?"] (June 8, 1992), 4-10. A number of analysts point out that *Tacuara* was linked to and protected by state security. See, for example,

and alliances between the nationalist-authoritarian wing of the army and the Montoneros. Other youth members of Tacuara grew up to become military officers; moreover, many of the Montoneros came from military families. This relationship will be discussed in the course of the text, for it had significant implications for the politics of the 1970s.

Social Conflict and Military Counterinsurgency

In 1968, the United States sent a 30-member Special Forces Mobile Training Team as part of U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP) to train elite teams from the army and the *Gendarmería* in anti-guerrilla warfare.[52] U.S. MAP issued approximately $2.5 million between 1964 and 1968 for the civic action programs of the armed forces,[53] a mission seen by the military as a means to win the "hearts and minds" of the people and preempt "subversion."[54] The Argentine military consolidated its hold on civilian functions, further penetrating Argentine society, in this era. The air force controlled Ezeiza national airport, the national airlines Aerolineas and LADE, the National Commission of Space Research, and the weather service; the army took command of most of the administration of the state; the navy controlled the major port in Buenos Aires and commanded the *Prefectura*.[55]

Senkman, op.cit., 126, 140.

[52] Winsor, op.cit., 96.

[53] Ibid., 280.

[54] The new U.S. doctrine espoused "total war," including civilian populations as targets, which was diffused to the Latin American officers through training programs and advising. The 1967 Air Force ROTC manual, entitled *Fundamentals of Aerospace Weapons Systems*, for example, defined "military target" in the following way: "Any person, thing, idea, entity or location selected for destruction, inactivation or rendering non-usable with weapons which will reduce or destroy the will or ability of the enemy to resist." Cited in Introduction by Anatol Rapoport to Carl Van Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Anatol Rapoport (New York: Penguin Books, 1968, re-issued 1982) 62-63.

[55] Winsor, op.cit., 132-142.

On the economic front, the military government sought to open the economy to the international market. In the rapid restructuring of the economy between 1966 and 1968,[56] eleven sugar mills in the province of Tucumán were closed down. Tucumán was a rural heartland dominated by the sugar industry;[57] other semi-tropical provinces such as Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa and Misiones were hard hit by the economic restructuring.[58] In May 1969, several students were shot by security forces during anti-government demonstrations in the cities of Rosario and Corrientes.[59] In June 1969, a series of violent strikes and protests erupted in these provinces, most notably in the major industrial city of Córdoba. This latter uprising, known as the *cordobazo*, was a spontaneous rebellion uniting recently unemployed sugar workers and students in pitched battles with police,[60] prompting the army to occupy the city to restore order. In San Miguel de Tucumán, some 20,000 people took over the city for a brief period in a Paris commune-style action.[61] Córdoba was also a center of a growing religious movement, called the Third World Priests movement, sparked by the 1966 Medellín meeting of the bishops and the Church's new socially-oriented theology. Factory occupations, massive student protests, general strikes in various

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[56] For detailed analyses of the economic restructuring policies of the regime, see O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*, op.cit.; and William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[57] In 1965-66, 100% of Argentina's sugar exports went to the United States; in 1967, the figure was 89.9%, and in 1968, 78.2%. It steadily decreased after this. "El azúcar argentino en cifras," *La industria azucarera*, cited in Emilio A. Crenzel, *El Tucumanazo/1 y 2 (1969-1974)* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, Biblioteca Política Argentina, 1991) 33.

[58] Rouquié, *Poder Militar...*, op.cit., 291.

[59] Lázara, *Poder Militar...*, 176.

[60] For a detailed account of the uprisings in Córdoba and the rest of Tucumán, see Crenzel; see also Francisco Delich, *Crisis y protesta social: Córdoba, mayo de 1969* (Buenos Aires: Signos, 1970).

[61] Crenzel, op.cit., 10.

cities, and other militant actions occurred over a period of several years. The breakdown of the region's economy, anger at the "anti-national" policies of the government, and the repressive policies of the regime met with increasing popular opposition throughout the country. The "Tucumanazo" continued sporadically until 1973, and intervention was undertaken by the police, *Gendarmeria* and anti-terrorist units of the army to quell generalized social upheavals in cities, various factory occupations and university building seizures.[62] General Jorge Videla, commander of the Fifth Army Brigade, and police commander Alberto Villar,[63] heading a special police anti-terrorist unit called the Blue Brigade, supervised the armed and security forces in charge of the suppression of the conflicts in the region.

Violence also affected the capital. In June of 1969, 15 supermarkets in Buenos Aires owned by Rockefeller interests were bombed, a demonstration of opposition to Rockefeller's trip to the city.[64] Also in June, Economy Minister Krieger Vasena resigned. Several days later, on the anniversary of the uprising of pro-Peronist officers against the Aramburu regime in 1956, a bomb exploded in the Superior Council of the armed forces.[65] Later that month, conservative labor leader Vandor was assassinated. In 1970, ex-president and retired general Aramburu was kidnapped. A shadowy Peronist organization that called itself the Juan José Valle Command--naming itself after one of the officers executed by the Aramburu government in 1956--claimed responsibility.[66] Later, the Montoneros claimed credit for this act.

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[62] Ibid., 9-10.

[63] As noted in the last chapter, Videla later became the army leader of the 1976 *Proceso* coup and its first president; Villar was a founder of the Triple A terrorist apparatus.

[64] Crassweller, op.cit., 294.

[65] Crenzel, op.cit., 57.

[66] Winsor, op.cit., 109.

Aramburu was kidnapped after two young men dressed as army officers visited him, then told him he was under arrest. His body was found a few weeks later.[67] The murky circumstances surrounding his assassination led many Argentines to believe that in fact the internal struggle among army factions--that is, the traditional split between liberal-rightist wing (of which Aramburu was one) and the nationalist wing (close to Onganía)--was the real genesis of his death. For example, it was publicly known that Aramburu (and another general, Lanusse) had been angling for Onganía's ouster and favored calling elections as a way of defusing Peronist opposition and incorporating the Peronist civilian right-wing into an electoral coalition.[68] With Aramburu's assassination, a turning point was passed in Argentina.[69] The assassination of a powerful army officer sent shock waves through the country, and the conflict became deadly.

Internal Developments in the Armed Forces

The burgeoning social disturbances and concurrent rise of the radical left in Argentina alarmed the armed forces. The specter of revolution had arisen, and some elements of the military began to press for applying their counterinsurgency training. Onganía, who had opposed a military role to repress social conflict, was soon outnumbered.[70] The de facto president, who had surrounded himself with right-wing Catholic advisers and was growing increasingly autocratic--even ignoring the counsel of his fellow officers--was forced out in June 1970. The army named a military intelligence general named Roberto Levingston--who had been stationed in Washington D.C. as military attaché and delegate to the Inter-American Defense Board--to succeed him.

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[67] Personal conversations with Argentines.

[68] Crassweller, op.cit., 296.

[69] Both Argentine military officers and civilians made this comment to me in 1992.

[70] See Chapter 2.

In a perceptive analysis, Pablo Giussani[71] argues that the rise of social conflict in the 1960s led the armed forces to reconsider the target of their hypothesis of conflict. That is, the armed forces began to *redefine the internal enemy*: now, the left and rebellious social classes--"subversion" --were seen to be a greater threat than orthodox *Peronismo*. Giussani contends that this change was the basis of the *azul-colorado* split: the former wanted to incorporate anticommunist elements of Peronism into the counterinsurgency struggle. The new definition of the enemy pushed the armed forces toward new alliances with right-wing Peronists. A similar analysis is found in one of Rosendo Fraga's books, despite the major differences between the two ideologically.[72] Fraga's book asserts that during this period "subversion came to be the 'principal adversary' of the army, while *Peronismo* was transformed into a 'secondary adversary.'"[73] Indeed, this reordering of priorities was the basis of the decision by the armed forces to allow Perón to return to Argentina after 18 years in exile. By this time, Levingston had been replaced by General Lanusse as president; Lanusse's faction of the army decided to bring back Perón in order to secure popular support to confront the guerrillas[74] (and, by implication, guarantee a non-revolutionary and non-communist alternative to resolve Argentina's political and socioeconomic crisis).

In 1970, disappearances of leftist, Radical and Peronist political figures and activists began to occur. Fraga states that the first clandestine detention camps were set up in that year.[75] In

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[71] Pablo Giussani, *Los Días de Alfonsín*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1986) 178-180.

[72] Giussani was a leftist Peronist and progressive journalist who in the 1980s became a close adviser to Alfonsín (before Giussani's death). His book *Montoneros: Soberbia Armada* criticizes the messianic view of revolution and the militarism practiced by Montonero leaders. Fraga, one of the foremost experts on the Argentine military in the country, heads a neoconservative think-tank funded by a liberal land-owning family (Romero Feris) called *Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría* (Center of Studies, Union for the New Majority) in Buenos Aires.

[73] Fraga, *Ejército: del escarnio...*, op.cit., 17.

[74] Ibid., 23.

[75] Ibid., 41., n.4.

December 1970, lawyer Néstor Martins and his client were seized in the center of Buenos Aires and never seen again; communist and Peronist militants also disappeared.[76] Fraga frankly says the period from 1970 to 1973 was the "laboratory" for the repressive operations that were utilized by the armed forces later during the most violent period, from 1975 to 1979: "the methods and plans that the army used in the [1975-1979] period were the extension and intensification of those used a few years before, also with success..."[77] As justification, Fraga posits "the necessity of confronting the enemy with his own methods, that is with heterodox actions...';[78] this is the justification usually used by the armed forces for the dirty war system of torture, disappearance and assassination. The other major rationales used are that information can only be obtained through torture[79] and that in war, violence and cruelty are inevitable.[80] In August 1970, Peronist leader José Alonso was assassinated; in 1971, the ERP and the Montoneros carried out bank robberies, kidnappings of corporate executives and other violent acts. By 1971, the new military system of repression, based on the national-security doctrine and counterinsurgency strategy, was clearly in evidence[81] and amounted to a secret war.[82]

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[76] Lázara, op.cit., 180.

[77] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 23.

[78] Ibid., 22.

[79] See, for example, interview with Aldo Rico, former army *comando* and leader of *carapintada* uprisings, in Jorge Grecco and Gustavo González, *Argentina: El Ejército que Tenemos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1990) 148.

[80] General Osiris Villegas--the defense lawyer for General Ramón Camps during the trials--used this defense. See Giussani, *Los Días de Alfonsín*, op.cit., 308, 339.

[81] See Lázara, op.cit., 180-181. He writes that many of those who disappeared during this period later turned up in police stations and were "legally" detained, although tortured; this indicated the function of the police in the new repressive system.

[82] Rouquié uses this term to mean the army and police abandoned concerns about legal methods in their crusade to annihilate "subversion."

The Return of Peronism: 1973-1976

In July 1972, Lanusse introduced the Great National Accord after negotiations with Perón in Madrid, a mechanism whereby the old general would be allowed to return to Argentina. Essentially, the dominant liberal-rightist wing of the armed forces sought a controlled transition to civilian government, to defuse the explosive tensions in the country. Elections were scheduled for 1973. The army drew up a document called "The Five Points" which contained conditions to be placed upon the new civilian government; all the active-duty generals signed it in February 1973.[83] The *Peronista* presidential campaign for Héctor Cámpora, who was essentially a front man for Perón, featured the slogan "Cámpora to government, Perón to power." According to Fraga, the army was in close contact with the Radical Party as both the dominant wing headed by Lanusse and the Radicals feared a Peronist victory.[84]

Members of the Montoneros and leftist *Juventud Peronista* had prominent positions in the Peronist party and the electoral campaign. Cámpora won the elections as part of the FREJULI coalition of Peronist and leftist groups; on May 25, 1973, crowds gathered in the plaza and angrily chanted at surrounding troops, "*se van, se van y nunca volverán!*" ["They're leaving, they're leaving, and never will return!"] The army was in a state of anxiety, fearing the return of the Peronists and the rise of the left, and unable to understand why its prestige was at the lowest point in its history.[85] Almost immediately, Cámpora freed hundreds of political prisoners, including

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[83] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 35 ; actual document reproduced on page 49. Points included to "assure the...continuity of the political process" initiated by the military regime, support the republican institutions, assure the independence of the Judicial Power (e.g., those judges appointed by the military), and prohibit indiscriminate amnesties. Several of these points were in fact violated by the first civilian government.

[84] Ibid., 36. He cites meetings between Radicals such as Juan Carlos Pugliese, Antonio Tróccoli and Miguel Angel Zavala Ortíz with Generals Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante and Guillermo Suárez Mason.

[85] Ibid., 39.

Montoneros; military sources often cite this event as a reason why the armed forces lost faith in the legal system and felt compelled to bypass it during the dirty war.[86] The government contained members of the Peronist left as well as the national business class; the Minister of the Interior was close to the Montoneros, and there were eight Montoneros in Congress and others in provincial administrations and in university positions.[87] However, they were still outnumbered by members of right-wing Peronism. José López Rega became Social Welfare Minister (and gradually established himself as the most powerful man in the country after Perón's death). López Rega, a bizarre, right-wing Peronist who was a long-time aide to Perón, was one of the founders of the Triple A, the shadowy terrorist organization which he used to assassinate political enemies.[88]

In the army, Lanusse was replaced as commander-in-chief by nationalist General Jorge Raúl Carcagno. Carcagno, who was close to Peronism, took a series of political decisions that alarmed the liberal-rightist wing of the armed forces. For example, he ordered the intelligence units of the army to cease their focus on "subversion"; according to Fraga, this order was only complied with

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[86] Fraga says this, ibid., 40; also interviews conducted by author in Buenos Aires with military sources, September and October 1992. However, this argument fails to convince because first, the methods of the dirty war had been in effect since 1970; second, the armed forces had demonstrated their lack of faith in the legal system before, especially in 1955 and 1966 when they replaced many judges; third, and most importantly, no rationale for torture, disappearance, and murder is either morally or legally justifiable.

[87] See Gillespie, op.cit., 130-132.

[88] See Santiago Pinetta, *López Rega: El Final de un Brujo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Abril, documento de *Siete Días*, 1986) for an interesting journalistic account of López Rega's life. López Rega had links to *Propaganda-Due* (P-2), an Italian fascist lodge associated with the Masonic lodge, which helped finance the Triple A and was also linked to the CIA. Discovery of the Italian structures of P-2 in that country in 1981 brought down the Christian Democratic government; P-2 members had penetrated the highest levels of government, the military, and intelligence. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 29, 1983, 11 and *El Periodista*, No. 159 (25 September-1 October, 1987) 5-10. Former Argentine Federal Police Chief Miguel Angel Iñiguez said publicly that López Rega ordered the founding of "death squads to liquidate our enemies...including their families" shortly before Perón took office in 1973, although Perón apparently did not approve. See Margaret Grammer-Vallejos, "López Rega: Echoes from the past," *Argentine News* (April 22, 1986) 18-21.

"formally" and the intelligence officials continued their counterinsurgency operations regardless.[89] In April 1974, for example, the chief of intelligence for the army traveled to Chile to discuss coordinated counterinsurgency operations with the Pinochet regime.[90] Also, courses taught by intelligence officers on covert operations and counterinsurgency continued in the Campo de Mayo army base despite Carcagno's orders.[91] The nationalist wing wanted the police to deal with the insurgency; Carcagno believed the army should remain at the margin of such operations, and other generals such as Crespo, Camps, Bignone, and Videla also still preferred to avoid involving the army in the counterinsurgency struggle.[92] During this period, the Montoneros avoided targeting

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[89] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 67, 69. This defiance of orders from its superiors showed the increasing political and operational autonomy of the intelligence apparatus.

[90] Ibid., 127. Substantial evidence exists documenting Operation Condor, an organization of international coordination of covert operations and repressive campaigns among the armed forces and intelligence services of the Southern Cone countries in these years. In 1990, a Chilean newspaper, *La Nación* (a quasi-organ of the Chilean government) denounced a secret 1976 Chilean-Argentine operation. Some 200 cadavers of Chilean dissidents were discovered in Argentina, individuals who had been tortured to death or assassinated by the Chilean secret police, DINA. The Argentine security forces had assisted them by burying the bodies on Argentine soil. According to the paper, the operation had also involved the secret police of Stroessner's Paraguay and the intelligence services of Uruguay. The operation was called *Operation Colombo*. See *La Jornada* (Mexico), July 16, 1990. This operation was probably a part of Operation Condor, documented by analyst Saul Landau and others. After a remote control car bombing killed Chilean exile Orlando Letelier and his colleague in Washington D.C. in 1976, the FBI found evidence pointing to the Chilean government *and* to "a national security conspiracy that spanned six countries, all ruled by pro-U.S., fanatically anticommunist military juntas". According to Landau, a special agent of the FBI investigating the crime in Buenos Aires was informed by an Argentine military intelligence officer that the act was committed by a secret organization named Operation Condor, which extended from the Southern Cone into middle South America. Further, the CIA knew about the operation and had "played a key part in setting up the computerized links between the intelligence and operational units of the six military regimes: Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia." See Landau, *The Dangerous Doctrine...*, op.cit., 119. Landau obtained a classified secret cable entitled CHILBOM written by this FBI agent, detailing Condor. For articles on archives from Operation Condor recently discovered in Paraguay, see *Diario Noticias* (Asunción, Paraguay), February 16, 1993, 8-9 and February 17, 1993, 16; and Andrea Ferrari, "El perseguidor de Stroessner," *Página/12*, April 23, 1993, 17.

[91] Fraga, op.cit., 127.

[92] Ibid., 68. This may seem paradoxical, since several of these generals headed the *Proceso* soon after. These generals were known as relatively moderate at the time because they generally preferred controlled civilian governments to military dictatorships and because of their views regarding internal security cited above. However, gradually these officers became convinced that the military should install a national-security state; they presided over the dirty war. For a rare book-length testimony by a former *Proceso* official, see

the army.[93]

In a series of shifts highlighting the internal struggle within Peronism, the right wing of Peronism headed by López Rega forced the leftist-Peronist Cámpora to resign as president. He was replaced by rightist-Peronist Raúl Lastiri (who was López-Rega's son-in-law) in July 1973. Lázara points to the environment of violence and breakdown of democratic and constitutional norms in this period: during the legislative session when Cámpora submitted his resignation, the public galleries were full of members of the Peronist right and teams of bodyguards of gathered union leaders brandishing high-caliber weapons,[94] in an implicit threat to the deliberating legislators below. In the spiraling wave of violence, it became difficult at times, if not impossible, to determine who was responsible for some assassinations and other attacks. The contradictory nature of the Montoneros' politics; the possibility that various factions of the armed forces were utilizing PSYOPS and counterintelligence/counterterrorist methods; the burgeoning hostility between right and left wings of Peronism *and* nationalist and liberal-rightist wings of the army: all contributed to a climate of increasing terror, confusion and chaos.

The Montoneros: Manipulated by Army Intelligence?

As noted previously, Martin Edwin Andersen presents evidence that the Montoneros were actually led by persons linked to military intelligence and authoritarian-nationalist sectors of the

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Reynaldo Bignone, *El último de facto: La liquidación del Proceso, memoria y testimonio* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1992). Much of the book is a highly personal set of rationalizations for the 1976 coup, the *Proceso* and the dirty war.

[93] Ibid., 130, 202. The guerrillas, according to Fraga, sent secret messages to the army asking for dialogue. In March 1975 the Montoneros told the army, via a document sent to a military unit, that they sought a "united national liberation front" with the army in order to construct "national socialism." Ibid., 164-165.

[94] Lázara, op.cit., 190.

army.[95] Andersen suggests that in particular Mario Firmenich, Montonero leader, was working with army intelligence (and/or the CIA), casting the violent events of the 1970s in an even more tragic and incredible light. His analysis suggests that the bloody episodes of the 1970-1976 period were at least in part engineered by military intelligence in order to justify military rule and the imposition of a national-security state.[96]

According to *El Cronista*, a Buenos Aires news sheet,[97] FBI agent Robert Scherrer, who was stationed in the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires to coordinate with military intelligence in the 1970s, told Andersen that Firmenich was a double agent controlled by an army colonel who held important intelligence positions, named Alberto Valín. Valín is widely believed to have helped organize the Bolivian coup in 1980 and headed the training of the Nicaraguan *contras* in coordination with the CIA in 1981-1982. *Somos* also interviewed Leandro Sánchez Riesse, former officer in Battalion 601 (army intelligence) and a man with long-time links to the U.S. and the CIA, and currently contracted by the DEA. The magazine asked if Firmenich was a member of 601. The officer replied "No...[but] it could be that he had individual contacts with people from 601..."

The confusing welter of alliances, counter-alliances and intrigue in Argentina demonstrated the complexity of the tragic events of the 1970s. Several Argentines interviewed in 1993 cautioned against placing too much weight on the theory that intelligence manipulation of the Montoneros was

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[95] Several military sources supported this analysis in conversations with me, while a high-ranking navy intelligence source (retired) denied it. Interviews conducted by author with retired navy officer, September 29, 1992, and retired army officer, October 19, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[96] See Martin Edwin Anderson, op.cit., for this theory. The question of army infiltration--including direct manipulation via *provocateurs* and double agents--remains controversial in Argentina, but Andersen's evidence is persuasive. *Somos*, an Argentine news magazine, cites Andersen and its own sources in an investigation as to whether Mario Firmenich, leader of the Montoneros, was linked to army intelligence, and indicates that this was the case. See *Somos*, "Por qué volvió firmenich: ¿Guerrillo o servicio?" ["Why did Firmenich return: guerrilla or intelligence agent?"] (June 8, 1992) 10. According to Andersen, Firmenich's role "was no secret" in the U.S. intelligence community, according to "high-ranking sources" cited in *Dossier Secreto...*, op.cit., 374, n.12.

[97] *El Cronista*, October 11, 1992.

decisive in the mid-1970s. The leftist current of Peronism was an authentic social movement, not centrally controlled by leaders such as Firmenich, according to former participants. The Montoneros were part of a broader canvas of political ferment in those years; unionized workers, for example, were also becoming more rebellious, at times escaping the control of orthodox Peronist union leaders. However, if Andersen is correct, the destruction of the Montoneros and the physical elimination of many leftist youth of the 1970s were a graphic illustration of the effects of military counterinsurgency strategies such as infiltration, deception, and provocation.

The Culture of Violence and the Emergence of the Triple A

In June, 1973, Perón returned permanently to Argentina. The day of Perón's return, hundreds of thousands of persons flocked to Ezeiza airport to welcome him back with banners and drums. However, when the leftist-revolutionary wing of Peronism pushed forward to the stage area, a barrage of machine-gun fire from right-wing Peronists on the stage felled masses of people. In the ensuing massacre at least 250 people died and some 400 were wounded.[98] It was a measure of the weakness of the newly re-established liberal system that neither Congress, nor any other state agency, investigated this event; it was dismissed as an internal struggle in Peronism. The man who directed the ambush from the stage was a retired army lieutenant-colonel who was security head of army intelligence under Perón in the early 1950s. Named Jorge Osinde, he was an under-secretary of López Rega's Ministry of Social Welfare.[99] That is, the massacre was directed by elements of

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[98] For a detailed account, see Horacio Verbitsky, *Ezeiza*, 12th ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Contrapunto, 1986).

[99] John Simpson and Jana Bennett, *The Disappeared...*, op.cit., 57, 63. This book is written in a journalistic style; the most frustrating aspect of this is the complete absence of citations or footnotes. However, the authors are BBC journalists, they conducted hundreds of interviews for the book, and much of their information was confirmed by other sources in my research in Argentina. See also Gillespie, op.cit., 106, and Senkman, op.cit., 134-135.

right-wing Peronism, sponsored and harbored by the state, against left-wing Peronism. Later, these elements formed the basis of the Triple A, or *Alianza Anticomunista Argentina*--an organization later discovered to be made up largely of extreme-right Peronists, police, and some nationalist army officers and intelligence officers.

On September 7, 1973, the ERP struck an army target, breaking a short truce.[100] The ERP had become known for kidnappings and assassinations of corporate executives and armed attacks against military targets since 1971.[101] In the September 9 elections, Perón won by a landslide; he became president on October 12 with his wife Isabel as vice-president. On September 25, CGT Secretary-General José Rucci--a man the U.S. Embassy called "the mouthpiece of Perón[102]--was assassinated. This was seen by the U.S. Embassy as "a direct affront to Perón."[103]

There was much speculation that the ERP was responsible, especially after a call from someone claiming to speak for the ERP was received by the chief of police,[104] but in an unusual public declaration, the ERP denied this.[105] The police confiscated newspapers and closed a

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[100] Also in September 1973, the right-wing coup led by General Pinochet overthrew the moderate-socialist government of Salvador Allende in neighboring Chile. Argentina's other neighbors also had military governments: Brazil (since the 1964 coup); Uruguay (where the nominal civilian president gradually ceded power to the armed forces in a process called *"bordaberization"* after President Bordaberry); and Peru (since the 1968 coup).

[101] The Montoneros had called a truce when Peronism returned to government. The two organizations generally acted separately, given their differing political views.

[102] U.S. Department of State, limited-use cable 7238, October 1973. The Embassy said Rucci had tended toward anti-U.S. positions and predicted that his replacement, sub-secretary-general of the CGT Romero, would better serve U.S. interests. The author is grateful to Martin Edwin Andersen for making reserved U.S. documents from this period available to her.

[103] Cable 7238, ibid.

[104] U.S. Department of State, limited-use cable, September 1973.

[105] U.S. Department of State, confidential cable, July 1974.

television station that reproduced the ERP's denial.[106] In a reserved cable, the U.S. Embassy said the ERP's denials had to be taken seriously since they traditionally did not issue such denials if they were in fact responsible. The Embassy noted that if Peronist elements were responsible, the repercussions would be significant, since Perón was calling for unity within the Peronist movement. This suggests that the perpetrators of the assassination wanted to split the Peronist movement and sow distrust and hatred among the Peronist factions. Other results of this murder were 1) an intense crackdown on the left; police set up dragnets throughout the capital, stopping cars and entering homes; police also shot a number of persons in raids. 2) Perón denounced the Montoneros for publicly calling Rucci a traitor as Vandor had been.[107] In other words, this event helped turn Perón against the Montoneros, his former allies. However, Gillespie points out that the Montoneros seemed to regret Rucci's murder at the time, and clear responsibility was never established; the Montoneros "assumed" responsibility (as opposed to "claiming" responsibility) one year later.[108] The Argentine Communist Party blamed the CIA[109] for the act. Andersen's extensive research led him to blame the Triple A.[110]

An elliptical conversation reproduced in a reserved U.S. Embassy cable to Washington in September 1973 raises intriguing questions about who was really responsible for Rucci's assassination:

> "A well-connected Peronist source told Emboff [e.g., Embassy official] yesterday that identity of Rucci's killers known to top levels government security forces and

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[106] U.S. Department of State, limited-use cable, September 1973.

[107] Gillespie, op.cit., 150.

[108] Gillespie, ibid., 165, n.4.

[109] U.S. Department of State, limited-use cable, September 1973.

[110] Andersen, *Dossier Secreto...*, op.cit., 342, n.45. Former Montoneros, however, deny this. See Miguel Bonasso, "Firmenich: Secreto," *Página/12*, April 25, 1993, 14-15. A former Montonero, he believed the Montoneros killed Rucci.

> Peronist movement. Source refused to elaborate further but seemed to imply that despite Gen. Iñiguez's statement (see pp. 2) [note: Iñiguez was the officer heading the police, who said he received the call from the ERP] ERP may not have been responsible. To direct question as to whether those responsible were from labor sector of Peronist movement, source replied in negative. To follow-up question 'were they then from some other sector of movement', source refused to reply and requested that Emboff drop subject."[111]

Pinetta, citing "military sources," says López Rega and the Triple A were responsible for the professional assassination of Rucci; López Rega hated the unionist,[112] perhaps because Rucci rivaled his own influence with Perón. In 1983, another confirmation of this analysis was provided by Horacio Salvador Paino, a self-identified founder of the Triple A and former army officer. He told *Gente* magazine that the Triple A, under López Rega, assassinated union leaders Rucci and Atilio López, as well as Bishop Mujica, and nationalist Bruno Genta.[113] Given the contradictory nature of the evidence, it is very difficult to determine who was responsible for these assassinations.

In November, the Triple A surfaced with its first act against an individual: the attempted assassination of Radical Senator Hipólito Yrigoyen, by placing a bomb in his car.[114] Iain Guest suggests that the Triple A assassination attempt against Yrigoyen, which occurred two months after

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[111] U.S. Department of State, limited-use cable, September 1973. This interchange shows the absolute terror generated by the violence of that era.

[112] Pinetta, op.cit., 50.

[113] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 8, 1983, 11, and Horacio Paino, *Historia de la Triple A*, (Montevideo, Uruguay: Editorial Platense S.A., 1984). Bruno Genta's death was also blamed on leftist guerrillas at the time.

[114] Mr. Yrigoyen, a nephew of the former Radical president, was gravely wounded on November 21, 1973, necessitating six operations. He was the victim of another bomb attack on the 15th of April 1975 in his province. He received threats from the Triple A: "...during this period I received threats constantly. One day I received--in the Senate of the Nation, on my desk, delivered by hand--a threat! They warned me not to speak during certain discussions of laws such as 2681, in the case of modifying the *Código Penal*...I spoke anyway. I received news of many cases of torture, with complete names of victims; the *Diario de Sesiones* of September 30, 1975 records more than 30 cases of torture that I read into the record." Interview with Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen conducted by author, May 11, 1992, Buenos Aires.

the murder of Rucci, was in retaliation for Rucci's murder by the Montoneros.[115] The Triple A employed methods such as forced disappearance of victims by men in unmarked Ford Falcons, torture, bombings of houses and cars, and written threats addressed to prospective victims and their families. Then, it vanished after the March 1976 coup. Many informed sources in Argentina argue that the Triple A was a creature of the military intelligence apparatus of the armed forces, in league with right-wing Peronists and police. The same methods and even the same vehicles were used after the coup, without the signature notes and death lists from the Triple A.[116] During the judicial investigation of the Triple A in Argentina in 1983 (case number 65111), José María Villone--head of SIDE--was accused of being a founder of the terrorist organization.[117] When Yrigoyen was tortured and interrogated by army officers in Bahía Blanca in 1975, they told him: "You want to know all about the Triple A? Well, we're the Triple A. We put the bomb in your car."[118]

Despite links to army intelligence, however, the Triple A was by no means a simple instrument of the armed forces high command during this period. Other evidence, discussed below, suggests that the organization, or organizations, of the Triple A represented a parallel paramilitary force that concerned the leaders of the armed forces because of its links to Peronism. In fact, substantial evidence suggests that serious institutional competition arose between López Rega and the chiefs of the military.

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[115] Iain Guest, *Behind the Disappearances: Argentina's Dirty War Against Human Rights and the United Nations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) 18.

[116] Human rights activist Emilio Mignone and Senator Yrigoyen both presented this analysis to me in interviews. Interviews conducted by author with Emilio Mignone, June 16, 1992 and Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen, May 11, 1992, Buenos Aires. See also Robert Cox, "The 'warlock': A figure of fear," in *Argentine News* (April 22, 1986), 8.

[117] Pinetta, op.cit., 57.

[118] Lernoux, op.cit., 340-341.

The Armed Forces and López Rega: Struggle for Power

Fraga's discussion of the Triple A suggests that the armed forces feared the rise of a Peronist paramilitary organization linked to the civilian Peronist movement, whose power and firepower rivaled their own. Further, he supplies evidence that an intense rivalry developed between the army high command and López Rega over control of the military-security forces. For example, the army sought to assume command of the police by appointing a general to head that increasingly important repressive force,[119] but for several years López Rega was able to appoint one of his allies to the post. In 1975, the appointment of General Alberto Laplane as army commander-in-chief--the choice of López Rega--was the point of maximum power of López Rega's group within the army.[120] In other words, the long struggle between the liberal-rightist current and the authoritarian-nationalist current of the military resurfaced in the struggle for control of the repressive forces. This indicated, once again, the merging of the institutional interests and the political interests of the armed forces. The institutional fear of a competing armed organization blended with the political antagonism between two visions of state and society. If this interpretation is correct, it implies that the dominant liberal-rightist wing was witnessing--and fearing--the gathering strength of its traditional rivals, both within the army itself and in the state and society: the nationalist-authoritarian wing of the army, with links to Peronism.[121]

That is, the bulk of the army, sympathetic to the liberal-rightist wing, feared the

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[119] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 132, 169, 179, 229.

[120] Ibid., 192.

[121] Fraga never explicitly says this; however, a close reading of his analysis leads one to this conclusion. The liberal-internationalist current feared López Rega would engineer their defeat both internally and in terms of political influence on state and society (137); the leadership of the army was preoccupied with the influence of López Rega upon the government, especially the president, and the growing power of the police as a rival armed force; the army sought access to the intelligence archives of the police, which were off limits to the military (132, 150).

"peronization" of the army and the rise to dominance internally and in state and society of their old adversaries. This point makes clear the intermingling of *institutional* and *political* interests and concerns of all sectors of the armed forces. While this struggle was internal, it was also *political,* because each major faction held distinct, developed and contending views regarding how state, society and economy should be organized and run.

Army head Carcagno led the army toward a convergence with Peronism. In October 1973, Operation Dorrego was implemented by Carcagno: it was a joint civil-military operation carried out by army forces and contingents from the *Juventud Peronista* (JP). Some 5000 army troops (including 4000 conscripts) and hundreds of Peronist militants worked together to clean roads damaged by flooding, construct canals and perform other operations over a period of 20 days.[122] Carcagno and his nationalist wing of the army were seeking political advantage. Inspired by Velasco's military populism in Peru, they calculated that an alliance with Peronism and a civil-military convergence could form the basis of a new power coalition for a new government after Perón's death.[123] These developments were seen with foreboding by the liberal-rightist wing of the army.

As president, Perón took steps in line with his old populist style. He re-nationalized seven major commercial banks and expropriated other firms (such as the Swift meatpacking company). He also prohibited Shell and Exxon from the oil retail business.[124] In the international arena, Perón took other steps to re-declare Argentina's traditional independence from foreign domination. In the 10th Conference of American Armies in Caracas, Carcagno demanded the expulsion of the

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[122] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 70-71. He says 800 members of the JP were involved; Gillespie says 8000. Gillespie, op.cit., 161. The figure of 800 seems more likely.

[123] Ibid., 70. Perón had already suffered a heart attack in June and was in frail health.

[124] Martel, "Domination by Debt..." op.cit., 28.

U.S. military mission in Argentina, which had worked out of an office in the Army Building since the late 1950s.[125] Argentina, along with Peru, proposed a redrafting of the Rio Pact to eliminate the implicit justification for intervention in countries with domestic conflicts. There was sympathy among some other Latin American armies for this position. The Argentine position reflected the anti-imperialist convictions of Peronism: Carcagno argued that insurgency would disappear when its social and economic causes were corrected, and called for a change in the role of armies as praetorian guards of an unjust order. He also asserted that Argentina rejected attempts to force the armed forces to serve the interests of giant corporations with no loyalty to the national interest. Finally, he called for conferences of the South American or Latin American armies without the participation of the United States.[126] Clearly, Carcagno's Peronist position made powerful enemies, both within the Argentine army and the U.S. national-security apparatus. Such demonstrations of nationalist independence were considered by the U.S. national-security establishment to be dangerously close to communism during the height of the Cold War.

In May, 1974, the U.S. government awarded funds to Argentina's repressive apparatus, notably to the police, for narcotics interdiction and police training programs. López Rega and U.S. Ambassador Robert Hill held a televised press conference in which the Social Welfare Minister said openly, "...the anti-drug campaign will automatically be an anti-guerrilla campaign as well."[127] According to a General Accounting Office report in 1976, U.S. narcotics funds to Latin American police forces increased by about 600% between 1973 and 1974. This was approximately the same

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[125] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 75. According to Fraga, the United States had postponed the 1971 Conference of Armies because it was worried about the increasing resistance of some of the armies, particularly in Peru and Chile, to U.S. dominance. By 1973, Velasco of Peru had been replaced by a hard-line general and Allende had been overthrown.

[126] Ibid., 76-78.

[127] Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People*, op.cit., 339.

amount that had been cut by Congress in 1974 from police training programs funded through the Agency for International Development's public safety program, after Congress discovered that the police utilized the funds, arms and equipment supplied for torture and assassination.[128]

In short, López Rega's police were receiving funds from the U.S. government at the same time as the Triple A, made up of elements of those police, was assassinating hundreds of persons. Other Argentine sources have said that in fact López Rega was working for the CIA; after he was forced out of the country, he took up residence in the United States until he was extradited during the Alfonsín administration.[129] Furthermore, López-Rega was a member of the Italian Masonic lodge Propaganda-Due, or P-2, as were high-ranking military officers and Perón himself.[130] A 1992 BBC documentary on the Cold War featured an interview with U.S. Colonel Oswald LeWinter, who asserted that the CIA had infiltrated or controlled right-wing terrorist organizations including P-2 and recruited members on the basis of anticommunism.[131] In other words, there were interconnections and alliances based on shared anticommunism among the CIA, the P-2, the Argentine military and police, and documented U.S. support for López Rega.

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[128] Lernoux, ibid., 339. She notes that former CIA agent Philip Agee asserted that the Federal Police in Buenos Aires were the CIA's main liaison. One CIA officer told Lernoux in an interview, "If you think the Brazilian police's torture methods are bad, you should see what goes on in the Argentine prisons." Ibid., 338.

[129] See Pinetta, op.cit., 27. *Argentine News* reported in April 1986 that an FBI spokesperson, Paul Miller, testified on behalf of López Rega during extradition proceedings in 1986. The former minister had been living in Florida for an unspecified amount of time. See Joe Schneider, "Awaiting Extradition," *Argentine News* (April 22, 1986) 20.

[130] Pinetta, op.cit., 99; *Página/12*, June 13, 1992. Many other sources confirmed this, including retired military officers. Interviews, May 1992.

[131] Reported by *Página/12*, June 13, 1992. See also Lewis, "The Right..." op.cit., 173-174. P-2 laundered enormous funds through its international network of businesses, the Catholic church and the underworld, according to Lewis; its political purpose was to serve as an anticommunist international.

The Death of Perón and the Ascendence of the Far Right

Perón died on July 1, 1974. According to Fraga, his death opened the way for the armed forces to regain their traditional political weight as a factor of power within the state.[132] The hidden struggle between the armed forces, in which the great majority of officers were violently anti-Peronist, and López Rega, the most powerful Peronist of the era, intensified almost immediately.[133] López Rega exercised a strong influence over Isabel, now president. He presided over a significant repressive apparatus, and he succeeded in having allies appointed to powerful positions in the state and in the army.

On July 15, 1974, Arturo Mor Roig, a Radical who was formerly Interior Minister under the military regime headed by Lanusse, was assassinated. Close to the liberal-rightist wing of the army, he had been one of the architects of the return to elections and civilian government in 1973.[134] The guerrillas were again blamed publicly. However, the U.S. Embassy noted in August 1992 that no clear responsibility had ever been established, and that the modus operandi used to kill Mor Roig was like that used by the Triple A.[135] If elements linked to the Triple A were responsible, this would mean that the escalating war between the authoritarian-nationalist wing of the army linked to López Rega and the liberal-rightist wing of the army (linked to Lanusse) had reached the point of "civil war."[136]

Under Isabel and López Rega, the government moved steadily to the right. Isabel could not

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[132] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 111.

[133] Ibid., 204-205. Fraga cites the election in the *Círculo Militar*, which was a contest between pro-Peronists and anti-Peronists in the army. The anti-Peronists won by approximately 10 to one (4000 votes to 400).

[134] U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy cable to Washington D.C., July 1974.

[135] U.S. Department of State, limited-use cable written by Ambassador Terence Todman, August 1992.

[136] However, Bonasso, the ex-Montonero, argued that known Montoneros were responsible for this assassination as well, which he also considered a terrible mistake. See "Firmenich...", op.cit.

claim to unify both the right and left of Peronism as Perón had. As we have seen, Perón himself had publicly turned against the left and the Montoneros before his death.[137] In September 1974, the Montoneros decided to return to clandestinity and armed struggle against the government.[138] Right-wingers or self-identified fascists replaced the leftist-Peronists in the universities and the Education Ministry; the government "intervened" 15 universities, fired 4000 professors, and imprisoned 1600 students by July 1975.[139] The Triple A claimed credit for assassinating hundreds of leftist Peronists, journalists, and non-Peronists. Triple A members were also believed to be the assassins of Chilean constitutionalist General Carlos Prats in Buenos Aires.[140] In September 1974, the Montoneros kidnapped two businessmen, the Born brothers, and obtained the sum of $60 million from their corporation, Bunge & Born, for their release. On November 6, Isabel declared a state of siege.

In February 1975, the armed forces finally took the decision to intervene overtly and officially in the counterinsurgency war. The ERP had declared a "liberated zone" in Tucumán and for the first time the armed forces mounted a military campaign in the province. A secret decree signed by Isabel, López Rega and other government officials on February 25--without the approval of Congress--recognized the "necessity to adopt adequate measures to eradicate" subversion in Tucumán. Article 1 said: "The General Command of the Army will proceed to execute whatever military operations are necessary to effect the neutralization and/or annihilation of action of the

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[137] On Mayday, 1974, in a huge rally addressed by Perón in the plaza, thousands of leftist Peronist youth and Montoneros chanted "What's going on, general? the government is full of *gorilas!*" Perón furiously attacked the left, calling them "beardless wonders" and "infiltrators who work within and who in terms of treachery are more dangerous than those who work outside..." According to Gillespie, the leftist crowds left the plaza, leaving it two thirds empty. See Gillespie, op.cit., 149-150.

[138] Ibid., 164.

[139] Ibid., 157.

[140] Ibid., 155. Simpson and Bennett note that the DINA, Chile's secret police, had an office located in police headquarters in Buenos Aires. Simpson and Bennett, op.cit., 138.

subversive elements acting in the Province of Tucumán."[141] *Operación Independencia*, led by General Antonio Domingo Bussi,[142] was a fierce and ruthless struggle against the ERP guerrillas and much of the population; the guerrillas were eliminated in the region. This operation served as a pilot project for the greater repression to be implemented in 1975-78 in Buenos Aires and other major urban centers. The government also created a new Internal Security Council, dominated by military officers; the provincial police were placed under military control.[143]

On February 26, the Montoneros abducted and assassinated the U.S. consul in Córdoba. In March 1975, there was open discussion of a "legalist coup" to replace Isabel and López Rega; according to Fraga, elements of the Radicals along with the army were involved in this plotting.[144] General Alberto Laplane, López Rega's choice, became commander-in-chief of the army in May 1975. López Rega also imposed the appointment of a new Economy Minister, Celestino Rodrigo.[145] There was growing opposition to López Rega--popularly called *el brujo* [warlock or sorcerer]--by many political and social actors, including the CGT and the 62 Organizations,[146] the Church, the Radicals, and the left wing of Peronism.[147] The liberal-rightist wing of the army,

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[141] Decree 261, February 25, 1975. This decree was of overriding importance in the political struggles of the 1980s; the armed forces used it to argue that the constitutional government of Isabel had authorized the dirty war.

[142] The history of this campaign is documented in Hernán López Echagüe, *El Enigma del General Bussi: De la Operación Independencia a la Operación Retorno* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1991).

[143] Gillespie, op.cit., 203, n.119.

[144] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 162.

[145] Ibid., 192.

[146] The 62 Organizations was the confederation of Peronist unions headed by Lorenzo Miguel, a right-wing Peronist; they saw their main enemies as López Rega and the guerrillas. They began making overtures to the army and tried to establish a new military-union pact. See Fraga, ibid., 112.

[147] See Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 153-162.

led by General Jorge Videla, sought to deepen contacts with these civilian sectors in order to form an alliance to force López Rega out.[148] These commanders sent a report to the Minister of Defense--then Italo Luder, a Peronist who was closer to the Videla wing of the army--revealing members of the army who were with the Triple A, five headquarters of the organization, and López Rega's role.[149] Finally, in July 1975, Isabel dismissed López Rega. The coalition of forces against him had finally compelled the president to replace him and send him out of the country. According to Paino, the former Triple A member, command of the Triple A at this point passed to Colonel Suárez Nelson, under General Harguindeguy.[150] In short, the Triple A was absorbed by the army.

Planning the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*

In August 1975, Videla became head of the army, signifying the return to dominance of the liberal-rightist wing. According to several sources, the active-duty generals held a secret meeting in August to discuss a new coup and a complete transformation of Argentine state and society. This decision seems to have been the result of both institutional and political factors, as we have noted. The liberal-rightist wing feared the power and influence of Peronism--both left and right wings--in the state, the armed forces and society. This combined both military institutional and political interests.

This analysis allows us to see that the need to defeat the guerrilla threat (often the military's publicly-stated reason for the coup) was *not the only, nor even the most important, element* of the

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[148] Ibid., 166-168.

[149] Ibid., 197.

[150] Paino, op.cit., 150, 162, 175.

decision. Indeed, Videla himself stated that the guerrillas had been virtually defeated in 1975;[151] a secret intelligence report stated that actions by the guerrillas dropped from a high in September 1974 of 520 to 200 in January 1976.[152] Rather, it appears that the dominant elements of the army, backed by powerful social forces and political actors among the elites and foreign interests, decided to eliminate leftism and Peronism, with their overlapping nationalist and anti-imperialist ideologies, and all of their sympathizers in Argentina, and re-make state and society from the roots. The goal was to obliterate the "subversive" ideas of Peronism and its three banners. That is, the *Proceso* was primarily aimed not at the small guerrilla forces, but at majority sectors of the population with no links to armed conflict. As documented in the next chapter, the goal of the *Proceso* was to transform the organization of Argentine state and society and "change the mentality of Argentines."

The *Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales* (CELS, a human rights and legal defense organization) has calculated that despite the widespread violence, the guerrillas numbered no more than 2000 at their peak, with some 400 (that is, 20%) active in the guerrilla violence. Meanwhile, the military and security forces swelled to approximately 200,000 soldiers, with an enormous infrastructure and modern arms.[153] In October 1975, the government conceded to the armed forces command of a military campaign against the guerrillas throughout the entire territory of the country. Secret Decree 2772 effectively ceded absolute power to the armed forces.[154] Despite

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[151] Emilio F. Mignone, *Derechos Humanos y Sociedad: El Caso Argentino* (Buenos Aires: CELS, Ediciones del Pensamiento Nacional, 1991) 53.

[152] Guest, *Behind the Disappearances...*, op.cit., 20. Guest emphasizes this was a secret report prepared by the foreign ministry not intended for publication, lending greater credence to its assessment.

[153] One assumes the other 80% provided strategic or infrastructural assistance. Mignone, *Derechos Humanos y Sociedad*, op.cit., 53.

[154] Decree 2772 said "Execute whatever military and security operations are necessary to effect the annihilation of action of the subversive elements in the entire territory of the country."

such concessions, rumors of a coming coup against the Peronist government increased. The government decided to move the presidential elections from March 1977 to October 1976, in order to ward off a coup. According to Fraga, this move was useless, as the "factors of power and pressure groups" as well as the armed forces knew that the Peronists, and not the Radicals, would win the election.[155] He states that the United States favored the replacement of Isabel via a quasi-legal succession by a "moderate" general, such as Roberto Viola or Carlos Delia after a trial by Congress.[156] However, elements of the powerful Peronist unions opposed any impeachment proceedings against Isabel.

Between December 1975 and January 1976, a number of powerful Argentine industrialists and business groups made their position known: they formed the Permanent Assembly of Business Entities, made up of the Argentine Chamber of Commerce, The Argentine Rural Society, The Argentine Chamber of Construction, the Argentine Rural Confederation, and the Union of Argentine Rural Groups, along with most major industrial enterprises. This organization, representing big agrarian and commercial capital, initiated a national strike in February 1976, blocking roads with tractors, holding rallies and idling thousands of workers, in an effort to destabilize the government of Isabel.[157] The campaign of destabilization dovetailed with the maneuvering of the armed forces to create a climate of chaos and justify a military coup.

Final Preparations

There were clear signals that the armed forces decided to implement a total war and a coup-

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[155] Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 224.

[156] Ibid., 224.

[157] Ibid, 225, and Liliana de Riz, *Retorno y Derrumbe: El Ultimo Gobierno Peronista* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica Ediciones Argentinos, 1987) 198.

d'etat soon after Jorge Videla took command of the army, despite the fact that the guerrillas were essentially reduced to a nuisance force by late 1975. Several sources assert that in August or September 1975, Videla chaired a secret meeting of his top officers to discuss the coup and the strategy to eliminate "subversion," utilizing the tactics of "dirty war."[158] The army decided after Videla's assumption to assume a more dominant political role in order to liquidate subversion and *take on the role of political arbiter*. The counterinsurgency strategy and clandestine repressive apparatus were consolidated and expanded in preparation for a nation-wide repressive campaign and assumption of total power with the 1976 coup. General Ramón Camps wrote in an article entitled "Apogeo y declinación de la guerrilla en la Argentina" that in September 1975 a decision was taken by commander-in-chief of the army--Videla--to "pass to the offensive" and take over the government, which occurred on March 24, 1976.[159] Previewing the methods of the dirty war, Videla said at the 11th Conference of American Armies in Montevideo in October 1975, "All those persons necessary will die in order to achieve the security of the country."[160] In November 1975, the armed forces approached José Martínez de Hoz, an economist from a wealthy land-owning family with close ties to the international financial community, transnational corporations, and the IMF, and asked him to prepare an economic plan for the new regime.[161] A retired officer told me that he

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[158] See, for example, Simpson and Bennett, op.cit., 76; Fraga, *Ejército...*, op.cit., 234; Eduardo Luis Duhalde, *El estado terrorista argentino* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Caballito S.R.L., 1983) 74-75.

[159] Cited in Andrés Avellaneda, *Censura, autoritarismo y cultura: Argentina 1960-1983/2* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1986) 207.

[160] Clarín, October 24, 1975.

[161] Interview with Italo Luder in Emiliana López Saavedra, *Testigos del "proceso" militar (1976-1983)/2* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1984) 241. The military's relation with Martínez de Hoz typified the alliance between the liberal-rightist wing of the armed forces and prominent internationally-linked families of Argentina. Martínez de Hoz was also a former president of Acindar Steel, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel, and its largest shareholder, as well as a member of the boards of Pan American Air and ITT. See Andersen, *Dossier...*op.cit., 146.

was incorporated into the coup conspiracy in December 1975, when he was ordered to begin typing the decrees which would be issued on March 24. He also said the major politicians knew of the coup in advance.[162] On February 16, 1976, Videla and his eight top generals met semi-publicly to discuss the timing of the coup. The head of the navy, Admiral Emilio Massera, advocated an immediate coup but Videla preferred to wait until the Peronist government was completely discredited by the increasing anarchy.[163]

Confidential documents were sent to selected important civilian allies by the armed forces during this period to provide advance notice of the coup. One, "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Polítca de Unión Nacional" ("First Bases for the Political Proposal of National Union"), outlined the military's forthcoming policies and programs. It emphasized the necessity of re-installing Western, Christian values and culture in Argentina. In a classic statement of the national-security ideology, the document stated:

> "The Armed Forces have not fallen into the temptation of taking on this historic task by themselves. They have assumed, on the contrary, the responsibility of convoking the Nation in order to build the Nation herself...because they [the armed forces] are an unequivocal manifestation of the National Unity. Those who convoke are not an expression of one sector, tendency or particular view. They are the Armed Forces of the Nation."

Another secret document, "Bases para la intervención de las FFAA en el proceso nacional" ("Bases for the intervention of the armed forces in the national process,")[164] stressed the necessity to "abandon temporarily, for however long is necessary, electoral formalities" and provide the

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[162] This officer said: "...when you write about it, don't forget to forget who told you so!--I also took messages, personal messages to politicians, verbally. They knew in advance. They knew very well in advance. Everybody knew." Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, April 28, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[163] Simpson and Bennett, op.cit., 36.

[164] Reserved armed forces documents acquired by author in Buenos Aires, n.d. Clearly, however, both documents announce the forthcoming coup and *Proceso*; they probably date from late 1975-early 1976. Argentine experts on the military point out that secret documents of the armed forces traditionally bear no imprints, dates, names nor any other identifying trait; indeed, the presence of such identifying marks may indicate the document is not authentic.

population with "a new common ideological context, identified with the ARGENTINE ESSENCE."[165] This document stressed absolute confidentiality, and mentioned that the armed forces intended to facilitate in the future the formation of a "movement of national opinion"[166]--a concept which became central to the military idea of a controlled transition to democracy (discussed in the next chapter). This document announced that the military campaign would have three phases: Phase 1) Assumption of control, where the enemy is defined as "public immorality, administrative corruption and subversive delinquency;" Phase 2) institutional reordering, "to achieve a situation of security, legal order, administrative efficiency and economic prosperity;" and Phase 3) Consolidation, where the final objective is "the installation of a true democracy, authentically representative...inspired by the greatness of the country and the common good."[167]

The Role of the United States

What was the attitude of the United States during this period? In late 1975 and early 1976, President Ford was in the White House, Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State and George Bush was in charge of the CIA. U.S. policy-makers had long distrusted the unpredictable Peronists, given their economic nationalism and their stubborn independence *vis-à-vis* U.S. policy objectives. A strong military government, particularly one close to U.S. military orientations and protective of U.S. investments and economic interests, was preferred by many policy-makers. Contacts between the Pentagon and the Argentine army, and the CIA and the military-security forces, remained constant throughout the *Proceso*. Bilateral military contacts, training courses and military programs

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[165] "Bases para la intervención de las FFAA en el proceso nacional," 1. Emphasis in original.

[166] Ibid., 4.

[167] Ibid., 5.

continued until the 1982 Malvinas war.[168]

According to documents on Operation Condor[169] discovered in 1993 in Paraguay, the U.S. government was involved in the repression of the 1970s through its embassies in Latin American countries and the CIA. For example, letters were found in the archives which were authored by the U.S. ambassador with instructions for the Paraguayan police on whom to pick up. The former teacher and unionist who discovered the archives, Martín Almada, was himself arrested, "disappeared" and tortured for three years. He found a letter in the archives instructing police to arrest him on orders from the U.S. embassy. Also in the archives was data from U.S. government sources on how to revive victims of torture and the near-dead.[170]

One army source suggested to me that any analysis of Argentina had to consider conspiracies,[171] and implied that the U.S. government was involved or at least provided the "green light" to the Argentine generals to go ahead with the 1976 coup. The latter suggestion was also

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[168] Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 69.

[169] *Supra* note 90.

[170] Andrea Ferrari, "El perseguidor de Stroessner," *Página/12*, April 23, 1993, 17. Almada has published a book on his ordeal and how he came to discover the archives, entitled *Paraguay, la cárcel olvidada*. While he was disappeared, his wife received anonymous phone calls with taped sounds of screams under torture and voices telling her that her husband was dead; she died of a heart attack before Almada was released, at 33 years old. Almada was freed in 1977 and went into exile, where he worked with UNESCO.

[171] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, May 14, 1992, Buenos Aires. This officer elliptically said: "All right, conspiracy...I believe that..you know, we are a small country....And being a small country, where there are some objectives--not as many as some people think--but some objectives taken, why shouldn't there be some arrangements, some secret talks? With guys coming from where the power is...if you read Latin American history and see how our war of independence was fought, the importance of...well, conspiracy was a part, an important part of the conflicts...There are characters who came and went out before you managed to see what they were doing. Well, that's the way conspiracies work. People move so quickly and so shrewdly that they are able to do what they have to do and disappear...I would say that in those conspiracies, the people who took part were only people from the governments. There were very few international organizations, I mean business organizations, with the power to organize a conspiracy and fund that conspiracy and support it...You know, somebody asked Napoleon which were the three most important things to have to make war. And this guy, who knew something about it, said, 'Money, money and money'...There is nothing if you don't have the money to pay for it. And that's one of America's biggest resources..."

made by other military sources. As noted previously, a special agent of the FBI named Robert Scherrer was assigned as liaison to the Southern Cone country's military-security forces, from 1971 to 1978-79.[172] After the coup, in 1977, General Gordon Sumner--who was head of the Inter-American Defense Board at the time--called Argentina the "anchor of the South Atlantic with great strategic importance." He also said "Argentina represents the battlefront of this hemisphere."[173] After 1980, Reagan administration officials cultivated the Argentine military in order to secure their assistance in training the Nicaraguan *contras*.

Martin Edwin Andersen provides convincing evidence that Henry Kissinger gave the "green light" for the *Proceso*. He reports that former U.S. ambassador in Buenos Aires Robert Hill revealed that Kissinger specifically gave the generals the green light during the 6th General Assembly of the OAS in Santiago, Chile in June 1976.[174] Andersen says this information was confirmed by other U.S. officials who requested anonymity. The Argentines at the OAS meeting were worried that the U.S. would criticize their policy of dirty war, but Kissinger told them essentially to finish "cleaning up" before the next U.S. Congress convened.[175] After the entry of the Carter administration, Kissinger returned to private business and maintained close contacts with the generals and with the *junta's* Economy Minister, Martínez de Hoz; the latter was also close to David Rockefeller.[176] In June 1978, Kissinger was an official guest of the *junta*. He gave a speech where he virtually told the armed forces that Carter's administration--and U.S. concern with

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[172] *El Cronista*, op.cit., October 11, 1992.

[173] MASA, "Argentina: A People's Struggle" (pamphlet reproduced by the Third World Coalition, a project of the American Friends Service Committee, 1978) 25 and 27.

[174] Martin Edwin Andersen, "The Military Obstacle..." op.cit., 105; see also his "Kissinger and the 'Dirty War,'" *The Nation* (October 31, 1987) 477-480; and "Argentina 1976: Kissinger autorizó los crímenes militares," *Brecha*, Montevideo, Uruguay (23 de octubre, 1987) 12-14.

[175] *Brecha*, ibid., 12.

[176] Ibid., 14.

human rights--was temporary.[177]

Given U.S. national-security aims in this era, U.S. longstanding concerns with Peronist government, and the close military-to-military and intelligence ties between the Pentagon and the Argentine military, it appears highly probable that some form of "green light" was communicated to the Argentine armed forces. Military sources indirectly confirmed this analysis in 1992 interviews by saying that the U.S. government opposed a coup against Alfonsín and that this was one of the central reasons why none occurred.[178]

Conclusion

The situation in Argentina continued to deteriorate in late 1975 and early 1976. In December 1975, the ERP attacked the Monte Chingolo military arms depository outside the capital. This action resulted in a bloody military defeat for the guerrilla forces; some 200 people were killed. The attacking group had been infiltrated by army double agents well in advance.[179] This defeat represented the virtual demise of the ERP as a credible threat. Nevertheless, the armed forces proceeded with their plans for a military coup. In late December, an air force officer led an uprising to overthrow the government. The commanders of the armed forces did not support this coup attempt because they wanted to wait until the government of Isabel was completely discredited in the

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[177] See Simpson and Bennett, *The Disappeared...*, op.cit., 273. Kissinger's statement after the 1970 election of socialist Salvador Allende in Chile illustrated his views on Latin American democratic processes. He said a country should not be allowed "to go communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people." Cited in Landau, op.cit., 86.

[178] Interviews conducted by author in Buenos Aires August 24, 1992, with expert close to military, and August 26, 1992, with retired army officer.

[179] A military officer involved in this counterinsurgency campaign told me the army had infiltrated the guerrillas and was completely prepared for the assault on Monte Chingolo. Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, April 28, 1992, Buenos Aires.

eyes of the population.[180]

By mid-1975, as shown in this chapter, the heads of the armed forces were convinced that Peronism had to be eliminated or completely disarticulated as a political actor in Argentina, as well as all leftist, liberal, democratic or socially-concerned sectors which were seen as the breeding grounds for "subversion." The values of Western, Christian civilization as understood by the armed forces had to be imposed within the Argentine mentality, forcibly if necessary. Jacobo Timerman, a renowned journalist who had many military contacts before and after the March 1976 coup, gives an anecdote which is revealing regarding this attitude in the armed forces. He tells of meeting with an Argentine navy officer shortly after the coup:

> "Like many of the military of that period, he had an almost visceral hatred of the Peronist urban guerrillas. A political approach to the problem was hard for the military, even impossible, for on top of everything else their pride was wounded...[the officer said:] 'But if we exterminate them all, there will be fear for several generations...All...about twenty thousand people. And their relatives, too--they must be eradicated--and those who remember their names...Not a trace or a witness will remain.'"[181]

This remark indicates that the officers were quite consciously planning to utilize mass extermination and then the use of fear as a political weapon for some time to come.

As we have seen in this chapter, the national-security state of Onganía represented the first materialization of the ideological principles and tenets of the national-security doctrine. Military speeches, statements, and decree-laws demonstrated the central place of this doctrine in the thinking of the armed forces. It provided an organizational blueprint for a national-security state. The first national-security state imposed by the armed forces met with increasing social resistance, culminating in a political crisis. Simultaneously, resolution of Argentina's economic crisis, produced by the

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[180] Rock, op.cit., 366.

[181] Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981) 47, 50. Timerman himself was later disappeared, imprisoned and tortured by the military regime. He was finally released due to international pressure.

exhaustion of the import-substitution model, the internationalization of the economy, and various adjustment policies applied by the Economy Ministry, proved to be beyond the capacity of the military state. The splits within the armed forces deepened, and the emergence of armed guerrilla movements as well as a right-wing terrorist organization in the early 1970s further polarized Argentine society.

De Riz argues that the divisions within Argentine capital in the mid-1970s meant that all three fractions--agro-export-oriented, small- and middle-sized national capital, and transnationally-linked commercial and financial capital--were in a weak position *vis-à-vis* labor ("weak capitalists-strong unions").[182] Given this weakness, representatives of big capital (allied in the Permanent Assembly of Business Entities) staged various destabilizing campaigns and conspired with the armed forces to overthrow the government and repress the labor movement. That is, she argues that there were *class* reasons motivating the factors of power to impose the *Proceso*: to defeat the organized working class. The armed forces, at the same time, had their own national-security reasons for wanting to end the Peronist state and institute an even more extreme national-security state. The armed forces saw themselves as leaders of a crusade to root out all rebellious sectors ("subversion") and impose the order and values of national security. At this point, as in other moments in Argentine history, the interests of the major "factors of power" merged and a coup coalition was formed.

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[182] De Riz, *Retorno y Derrumbe...*, op.cit., 31.

CHAPTER 4

EL PROCESO DE REORGANIZACION NACIONAL

"God has decided that we should have the responsibility of designing the future."
Admiral Emilio E. Massera

"A terrorist is not just someone with a gun or a bomb, but also someone who spreads ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization."
General Jorge R. Videla

This chapter discusses the ideology, structures, and dirty-war methods instituted and consolidated by Argentina's second national-security state. During this period the national-security state profoundly penetrated society and entrenched a militarized system characterized by ideological conformity, terror and social control. The *Proceso* commanders actively sought to "transform the mentality of Argentines" through control of education, media and culture. The state used the method of "disappearances"--abduction of its perceived enemies by armed men--to terrorize the population at large and to eliminate particular victims, while denying official responsibility. The institutionalization of this practice left no legal recourse for the victims or their families.

Essentially, the armed forces now conducted the dirty war, begun in the early 1970s, equipped with the full resources of the state. They removed all liberal-democratic mechanisms designed to protect citizens from the power of the state. Because the *Proceso* sought to control and transform the very thoughts of the population, and removed all liberal-democratic protections from the citizens, it can indeed be said that the new state was totalitarian in its aims and more importantly, in its power. The armed forces sought to penetrate all realms of society and alter Argentina's historical course.

The system was based upon the armed forces' messianic vision of national security. Military

commanders intended this system to be permanent, even after a controlled transition to civilian government, as documented in the chapter through analysis of various military plans, statements, and decree-laws. This chapter also demonstrates how the compatibility of interests among members of the coup coalition began to erode after several years of the *Proceso* due to the refusal of the armed forces to relinquish their control of state enterprises, their mismanagement of the economy, and increasing incidences of military graft and corruption.[1]

The Malvinas debacle produced internal disarray and recriminations within the armed forces and a decision to withdraw from government. Yet, as shown through an analysis of events and internal military documents in this chapter, military commanders sought to protect the heritage of the *Proceso.* The armed forces controlled the 18-month transition to civilian government and sought to preserve key prerogatives in the future constitutional system.

The Coup Coalition and its Targets

On March 24, 1976, the armed forces implemented a joint, synchronized military operation to occupy Buenos Aires and take over the national government as well as all provincial and municipal governments throughout the country. The armed forces arrested President Isabel Perón and assumed total control of the state. Several official proclamations and acts were issued by the new *junta*--comprised by General Videla, Admiral Massera, and Air Force Brigadier Agosti--which made clear the all-encompassing political aims of the so-called *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (Process of National Reorganization).* Videla said this coup "represented more than the mere overthrow of a government...[but rather] the final closing of a historic cycle and the opening of a

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[1] The military-industrial complex benefited substantially during the *Proceso.* See Alejandro Dabat and Luis Lorenzano, *Argentina: The Malvinas and the End of Military Rule* (London: Verso, 1984) 64-68; see María Teresa Ronderos, "Attorney Molinas at Work," *Argentine News* (November, 1986) 16-18, for documentation of corrupt practices by high-ranking military officials during that time.

new one, whose fundamental characteristic will be manifested by the reorganization of the nation, a task undertaken with a true spirit of service by the armed forces."[2] This military regime was qualitatively different from all those before in Argentina, due to 1) the breadth of its aims to completely transform the Argentine state, economy and society, and 2) the systematic use of extermination and terror by the state.

The armed forces professed the conviction that the country was disintegrating and only they could stabilize the situation and impose order. However, as analyzed in the last chapter, the evidence strongly suggests that the fear of and hostility toward Peronism (both right and left variants) was a major factor for the coup. The military and other factors of power feared the organized working class, the left and its sympathizers (among Peronists, Radicals and others), who sought politico-economic change which reflected their interests. The liberal-rightist wing of the army also feared the potential threat to its military domination within the armed forces posed by the alliance of the nationalist-authoritarian sector with the right wing of Peronism.[3] However, the motivations for the coup went beyond military institutional interests. The liberal-rightist commanders of the armed forces sought to create a new state and society in their image, designed according to national-security norms and criteria. The coup and a more drastic national-security state were seen as mechanisms necessary to root out all vestiges of populist power and ideology and align Argentina with the Western, Christian world in the Cold War. Again, the *institutional* and *political* interests of the armed forces had become inextricably intertwined.

Essentially, the armed forces sought to eradicate the structures and ideology of populism and

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[2] Speech by General Jorge Videla, reproduced in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., eds., *The Politics of AntiPolitics*, second edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) 198-199.

[3] As discussed in Chapter 1, Alfred Stepan and Eric Nordlinger are two theorists who stress such institutional interests in their explanations of military behavior. See Stepan's *Rethinking Military Politics*, op.cit., and Nordlinger's *Soldiers and Politics: Military Coups and Governments*, op.cit.

the left, and conform the thinking and values of all Argentines to the liberal-rightist mold. Videla, for example, stated on May 23: "The day that those targets which are now those of the armed forces are taken up by all citizens of Argentina, will be the moment of the transfer [to civilian government]. The armed forces will have done their job then, a historic mission."[4]

The coup, and the goals of the armed forces, were supported by powerful political actors and social sectors, especially the dominant economic elites and foreign interests. Much of the leadership of the political parties and right-wing Peronist union leaders were not unhappy to see the armed forces crack down on "subversion" (orthodox union leaders felt threatened by increasing wildcat strikes and growing worker resistance within the union ranks). Most citizens seemed largely resigned to the coup; Isabel's government had lost almost all popular support. The coup coalition consisted of sectors linked to international commerce in agro-export, banking interests and big industrial businesses, as well as transnational corporations, behind the leadership of the armed forces.[5] The Ministry of the Economy was headed by José Martínez de Hoz, a free-market economist with links to both the oligarchy and industrial elites, and staffed with other like-minded civilians. Successive Ministers of Education were selected from right-wing, absolutist-Catholic groups. Informed sources reported to the *Buenos Aires Herald* that Washington knew of the coup in advance and presented no objections provided it would not be a bloody, Chile-style operation--since 1976 was a U.S. election year.[6] The U.S. government announced immediately that relations

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[4] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 23, 1976, 2. In 1991, former *Proceso* Economy Minister Martínez de Hoz affirmed that this ideological transformation had indeed occurred, as evidenced by society's apparent acceptance of Menem's neoliberal economic policies. See Chapter 9 on the early Menem years.

[5] Luis Mesyngier, "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional, 1976-1982", from *Sociedad y Estado en Argentina: Parte IV* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires [EUDEBA], 1990), 10. Some analysts suggest that only an autocratic government immune to public opinion could enforce the type of neoliberal restructuring demanded by the elite classes and the IMF for Argentina. See Lewis, "The Right and Military Rule," in Deutsch and Dolkart, eds., op.cit., especially 171-172 and 177.

[6] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 25, 1976, 1.

would be unchanged with the Argentine government, implicitly recognizing the military regime.[7]

There were also overt examples of support from the local management of transnational corporations. Some supplied lists of militant workers to the army and some acted in cooperation with military units that seized individuals on the shop floor.[8] In short, powerful foreign interests as well as domestic sectors encouraged and supported the armed forces both ideologically and financially.[9] On April 7, two weeks after the coup, the regime instituted a new labor code diminishing the power of unions, reducing pregnancy leave, and decreasing pay for women, among other measures.[10] Two days later 7 unions were taken over by the military, bringing the total to 27.[11] The *junta* suspended the right to strike as well. At the same time, Martínez de Hoz instituted a number of new economic measures favorable to foreign capital and private enterprise. The banks nationalized by Perón were returned to their former owners and discussions were begun with the IMF after the coup; Videla announced in 1977 that oil and petrochemicals would be open to foreign

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[7] Ibid., 1. This fact substantiates the analysis that Washington gave the armed forces a "green light" for the coup.

[8] In one 1992 judgment, the Supreme Court of Argentina ordered Ford Motor Argentina to pay $300,000 to an employee who was detained shortly after the coup in 1976. He was one of three union leaders seized by security forces on the premises of the company a few days after the coup. The management of Ford then dismissed them under Decree-Law 21,400, a de facto act sanctioned by the *junta* which allowed any worker suspected of "subversive acts" to be fired. *Página/12*, August 12, 1992, 8. In 1977, Ford's local subsidiary placed a full-page ad in the Argentine press saying: "1976: Argentina gets back on the right track. 1977: New Year of faith and hope for all Argentines of good will. Ford Motor Company and its staff pledge their participation in the efforts to fulfil the Nation's Destiny. Again Ford gives you more." Cited in Jimmy Burns, *The Land That Lost Its Heroes: Argentina, the Falklands and Alfonsín* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd., 1987) 14.

[9] Rodolfo Peregrino Fernández, a former aide to the *junta*, stated that such support was abundant. See testimony in SERPAJ, *Paz y Justicia*, May 1984, 7. For a useful chart showing the numerous foreign loans and grants to Argentina from 1976 to 1978 (mainly from the IMF and other banks and international lending agencies), see Julian Martel, "Domination by Debt: Finance Capital in Argentina," *NACLA Report on the Americas* (July-August, 1978), 33-35.

[10] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 25, 1976, 1.

[11] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 27, 1976, 1.

investment.[12] The *junta* eliminated Perón's restrictions on foreign investment, devalued the peso, implemented cutbacks of workers, and abolished special taxes on private income and production.[13] General Liendo, the Minister of Labor, made clear in his Mayday speech that the aim of the regime was to eliminate labor as a political force and completely transform and depoliticize the union movement in Argentina.[14] On May 27, officials of the IMF visited Argentina and held private meetings with the regime;[15] in August, the IMF granted $300 million to the regime, the largest credit ever granted to a Latin American country.[16] In June 1976, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger promised the regime the full backing of the United States at the meeting of the Organization of American States.[17] In August, Law 21,382 was imposed, granting foreign capital the same terms as local capital and reversing Peronist laws.[18] By October, Martínez de Hoz announced that some $1,300 million in credits and loans had been granted to Argentina; the Central Bank had doubled its reserves since the coup.[19]

It became clear over the years of the *Proceso* that the *juntas* sought to modernize the economy and thrust it into the world capitalist market by overturning fifty years of populism and governing the economy on the basis of "gradualist" monetarism and "comparative advantage."

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[12] See Martel, op.cit., 32.

[13] See *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 3, 1976, 1.

[14] See *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 3, 1976, 1.

[15] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 28, 1976, 9.

[16] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 7, 1976, 1.

[17] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 14, 1976, 1. See last chapter for Kissinger's role, representing the Ford administration, before the coup. When the *junta's* foreign minister, Admiral Guzetti, traveled to make a speech at the United Nations denouncing terrorism, he held a private meeting with Kissinger as well. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 10, 1976, column by James Neilson, 8.

[18] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 14, 1976.

[19] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 3, 1976, column by William Horsey.

Much of the productive apparatus of the country was virtually destroyed; transnational corporations pulled out as well, but finance capital and international banks literally flooded the market with easy loans, and bought up available capital.[20] Inflation and speculation became rife. The class coalition to which the military state responded became clear as almost every domestic socioeconomic sector--including former elite backers such as national entrepreneurs and right-wing rural classes--turned against the policies of Martínez de Hoz. The regime's main support was foreign capital and international organizations such as the IMF. Meanwhile, the working classes of Argentina--who had enjoyed a standard of living far superior to that of any other South American country--paid a heavy cost as jobs were eliminated, inflation rose unchecked, and social services were drastically reduced. Education was pared to a minimum; only the military budget (with enormous funds for arms purchases) and salaries for officers climbed during the *Proceso*. As Corradi summarizes: "The model was based on a charter myth combining the doctrines of national security and free enterprise. It had clear totalitarian elements, notably the recourse to terror, the attempt to pulverize old structures--albeit through market mechanisms--and the use of ideological controls to dissolve previous identities."[21]

In an official document[22] the army stated its official rationale for the coup and the dirty war, stressing its expansive definition of subversion and its fundamental aim to transform the

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[20] For example, by 1980 the Swift, Wilson and Anglo meat-packing companies had left as well as GM, Kaiser, Studebaker and Citrõen in the auto industry. British Air, Kraft Cheese and many others had left as well. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 8, 1980, William Horsey column. Meanwhile, Wells Fargo, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Chase Manhattan, Continental of Illinois and Barclays were among the big banks that came into Argentina during the same period. See Horsey, *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 14, 1980.

[21] Juan Corradi, "Military Government and State Terrorism in Argentina," in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., *The Politics of AntiPolitics*, second ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) 343.

[22]. República Argentina, Poder Ejecutivo Nacional, *Terrorism in Argentina: Evolution of Terrorist Delinquency in Argentina*, 1980. This "white book" by the Argentine army was officially translated into English and distributed during *El Proceso* as a means of countering growing international criticism of the *junta's* human rights violations. The English version is quoted here.

mentality of Argentines:

> "On March 24, 1976, the Armed Forces took over the political power of the Argentine Republic, together with the responsibility of curbing the progressive disintegration of the State. The widespread chaos and the conditions of extreme social defenselessness prevailing at that time, so as to subsequently redirect the country towards order, productive work, and progress under democracy [*sic*]...
>
> "From a methodological point of view, subversion is what attacks our national being and the basic principles of our socio-political order in its true historical and juridical frame. But subversion is something else: it is basically the counterpart of order. The concept of order as referred to is not that of any established order--which could only be an apparent order, actually really being only generalized disorder--or socio-political order; the work is aimed at the whole natural order through what men are or should be, in their own selves and realizations. The dignity of human beings, with their natural limitations, is proclaimed by natural order. Following this train of thought, we find education at the root of the problem. Education constitutes a process tending to the integral formation of man as a social element and as an individual, the harmonious development of all his potentiality, in order to achieve common welfare and his far-reaching destiny. The goal of education is man. Through education we shall be able to completely defeat subversion..."[23]

Clear from the pronouncements of the armed forces was their aim to totally change the mentality of Argentines by infusing society with the military world view, to transform the conditions which gave rise to the fierce political and social clashes of previous years, and to impose an authoritarian, military-style order on the perceived chaos of civilian life. To accomplish this, the *junta* felt drastic repressive measures were necessary; moreover, the implementation of these measures was seen to require clandestinity.

The Legal and Organizational Structures of the *Proceso*

The *junta's* "Acta para El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" included a number of immediate steps. The Act: 1) constituted the military *junta* as the supreme political power of the nation; 2) ended the mandates of the president, the governors and the vice governors of all the provinces; 3) dismissed all former government "interventors;" 4) dissolved the Congress, provincial

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[23] *Terrorism in Argentina*, op.cit., 1.

legislatures, mayoralties and other similar civilian governing organizations; 5) removed the members of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, and the superior courts; 6) suspended all political activity and all political parties; 7) suspended all labor union activities; 8) implemented a review of all foreign diplomats.[24] The *junta* announced that all private and public enterprises were considered military units; workers were ordered to report for work and cease their wildcat strikes or risk being punished under the Military Code of Justice.[25] The president, chosen by and representing the *junta*, was invested with the attributes of Congress and authorized to formulate laws.[26] The death penalty was instituted for crimes against public security.[27] Decree-Law 21,264 penalized any acts of disruption against transport, communication, water or gas, or other public services.[28]

In its "Acta Fijando el Propósito y Los Objectivos Básicos para el Proceso" ("Act Fixing the Proposition and the Basic Objectives for the *Proceso*") the *junta* stated its basic three-part proposition: "to reinstitute the essential values" of the state, eradicate subversion and promote economic development.[29] In its list of basic objectives, the *junta* resolved first, to create political sovereignty based on the national interest rather than any sectarian tendency or personalism; second, to promote Christian moral values, national tradition, and the Argentine essence; and third, to guard

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[24] Reproduced in Oscar Troncoso, *El Proceso de reorganización nacional/1* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina S.A., 1984) 109-110. The *junta* also had all the foreign embassies surrounded immediately after the coup in order to prevent requests for asylum by Argentines.

[25] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 25, 1976, 7. Many wildcat strikes had erupted after the drastic measures implemented by Economy Minister Rodrigo (a period of economic crisis popularly called the *rodrigazo*), despite the absence of official recognition by right-wing union leaders close to Isabel.

[26] In this manner the military government again usurped this constitutional function, enabling it to legislate in a quasi-legal manner. See discussion in Chapter 3.

[27] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 25, 1976, 9. The death penalty had been abolished in the civilian realm by the 1853 Constitution.

[28] Fundación Arturo Illia, *Defensa y Seguridad* (Buenos Aires: 1985) 8.

[29] *Acta...*, in Troncoso, ibid., 110.

the national security, eradicating subversion *and the causes that favored its existence* (emphasis added).[30]

The armed forces completely militarized the state. Only the Ministry of the Economy and the Ministry of Education were headed by civilians. Military officers ran virtually every institution in society: municipal governments, trade unions, public enterprises, sports organizations, even the Colón Theater in Buenos Aires.[31]

The Statutes of the *Proceso* were announced by the *junta* as an official governing charter which superseded the constitution. The *junta*--the supreme governing body of the state--was to consist of the commanders of each of the forces. This time, learning from the lessons of the 1966-1973 regime, the armed forces sought to avoid appointing a president to run the government individually; even another officer might not always represent their will. The army, navy and air force divided up ministries and areas of governance by thirds to insure equal control by all three forces. The *junta* also created a new body called the Commission of Legislative Assistance (*La Comisión de Asesoramiento Legislativo*, or CAL) made up of 9 superior officers (3 from each force) to serve as legislative advisers.[32]

According to a secret document from this era entitled "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Polítca de Unión Nacional" ["First Bases for the Political Proposal of National Union"],[33] the armed forces constructed the national-security state on the basis of a carefully conceived security

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[30] The Fundación Illia argues that this act sought to correct the ambiguity in the 1966 national-security law, 16,970, by clearly specifying the objectives of the *Proceso*. *Defensa...*, op.cit., 8.

[31] Emilio Mignone, *Derechos Humanos y Sociedad...*, op.cit., 42.

[32] Statutes, in Troncoso, op.cit., 113.

[33] Reserved armed forces document acquired by author, n.d., circa 1976. This document also quotes from another secret military document cited in the last chapter, "Bases para la intervención de las Fuerzas Armadas en el proceso nacional," indicating its authenticity and approximate time period. Its date is probably just prior to the coup, given the language basically justifying the imposition of a military state.

policy. This document merits lengthy quotation, for it clearly and candidly presents the non-public national-security objectives of the *Proceso*, which went far beyond defeat of the guerrillas:

> "1) Create the conditions to preserve the vital interests of the Nation, impeding the possibility that those interests be affected by internal disturbances or external interference...The basic lines of the institutional regime to preserve the national security must contain:
> a) Definition of the vital interests (population, territory, border areas, critical resources, etc.)
> b) Participation of the armed forces in the elaboration of the decisions that will lead to their active and conscious commitment to the determinations adopted by the political system.
> c) Arrange the necessary provisions to eradicate and overcome the internal disturbances or external interferences that might affect the National Security.
> d) Concretize the intervention of the armed forces as a positive support to the legitimacy and equilibrium of the political system.
> e) Creation in the citizenry of a spirit of national defense via:
>
> (1) The inclusion of security themes in all the levels of the educational system.
>
> (2) The intensification of courses in Superior Institutes for the ranks of Public and Private Administration...
>
> 2) To fuse the longstanding concepts of security and defense, encompassing all the levels and sectors of the national enterprise, through a system of integrated national security centrally conducted by the State, with the active intervention of the armed forces.
> 3) To assure for the State the monopoly of force, eradicating whatever group, whatever its ideological affiliation or political intention, which claims to dispute this monopoly.
> 4) To continue the wearing down of the remnants of the subversive organizations in order to accentuate their disarticulation and impede their resurgence.
> 5) To progressively invigorate the effective combined action of the armed forces."[34]

This document is crucial because it reveals several internal assessments by the armed forces, conflicting with their public pronouncements: 1) the broad concept of national security, encompassing every aspect of national life, was explicitly stated; 2) the 1966 definition of "national security," with its expansive role for the armed forces, continued to be utilized; 3) this expansive notion of national security led directly into a justification for the armed forces to overthrow the elected government and impose their own institutional regime, to protect the broadly-conceived "vital

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[34] "Primeras Bases...", 22-23.

interests of the nation;" 4) the population itself was seen as one such vital interest, which explains the focus of the military upon "changing the mentality" and winning the hearts and minds of the people; 5) the armed forces considered themselves necessary for the "equilibrium of the political system," or as a moderating force to constrain civilians; 6) the reference to the monopoly on force substantiates the analysis that the armed forces feared the development of both guerrilla groups and the Triple A, which disputed that monopoly;[35] and finally, 7) the document admitted that the guerrillas were militarily defeated even before the coup and only "remnants" remained. This document stands in contrast to military statements in the 1980s justifying the *Proceso* as necessary to prevent a terrorist takeover.[36]

The civilian legal and judicial systems were rendered virtually useless during most of the *Proceso*. All judges had to swear to uphold the *Proceso* statutes and objectives. CONADEP, Alfonsín's presidential commission set up in 1984 to investigate the disappearances, concluded that the judicial system became "a sham jurisdictional structure, a cover to protect [the state's] image."[37] First, the *junta* used the judiciary to provide legitimacy and endorsement of its policies. Second, defense of the rights to liberty, life and due process were removed from the jurisdiction of judges; the military state became judge, jury and executioner. Third, the military's clandestine and secret apparatus of disappearance, interrogation, torture and death constituted a parallel system which spared the armed forces any need to prove suspected "subversion" in court. Since the *ideas* of

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[35] Given that this objective was achieved during the *Proceso*, one may conclude that all the human rights abuses were the responsibility of the military-security forces.

[36] For example, in 1987 army chief José Dante Caridi said that the army's victory over subversion "prevented the destruction of the Republic and its institutions." Cited in Emilio Mignone, "The Military: What is to be Done?" *NACLA Report on the Americas*, V. XXI, No. 4 (July-August 1987).

[37] CONADEP, op.cit., 386-387. For a discussion of other legal-juridical ramifications of the *Proceso*, see Enrique L. Groisman, *Poder y derecho en el "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional,"* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales sobre el Estado y la Administración (CISEA), 1983).

suspects were sufficient to condemn them in the eyes of the state, recourse to the court system was avoided despite the fact that the state itself had appointed most of the court personnel. Indeed, the military courts, which were authorized to try civilians for subversion, accused only 365 persons of subversive acts between 1976-1979[38] while thousands were "disappeared." The state also considered lawyers or associates of suspected "subversives" to be suspect themselves. That is, attempts by lawyers to carry out their professional duties *vis-à-vis* victims of the state were seen to "prove" links between those lawyers and the same subversive organizations.[39]

The armed forces also consolidated their control over the massive machinery of repression to carry out the elimination of "subversion" and the "conditions that fostered it." A general now headed the federal police, which had been a force central to the repressive apparatus for years (and controlled by López Rega). According to a former police officer named Rodolfo Peregrino Fernández, who decided to go public in 1983, counterinsurgency organizations and structures were set up under the authority of various zone and sub-zone commanders of the three armed forces. He told the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in Geneva that he had worked directly under the authority of General Alberto Harguindeguy,[40] the Minister of the Interior

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[38] Alejandro Garro and Henry Dahl, "Legal Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Argentina: One Step Forward, and Two Steps Backward," *Human Rights Law Journal*, Vol. 8, Nos. 2-4, (1987) 299.

[39] One navy officer told me in 1992 the armed forces were suspicious of Alfonsín (who is a lawyer) partially because he had defended a "subversive" in the early 1970s. Interview with retired navy officer conducted by author, September 22, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[40] Robert Cox, former editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald* until forced to leave the country after death threats addressed to his youngest son, said that Harguindeguy "had made speeches promising to purge the police and armed forces of those guilty of 'excesses' (that was the euphemism used to describe torture, murder and other atrocities)—and had personally assured me that as many as a hundred members of the so-called security forces had been secretly executed for murder... Harguindeguy, who had never hidden the fact that he knew of the atrocities and was never good enough as an actor to disguise his relish for more murder and torture, laughed in my face [when told of the death threat against Cox's son]." From Cox, "High noon for Suárez Mason," *Argentine News* (February 1987), 8.

during the first *junta*.[41] Peregrino Fernández said that Harguindeguy spoke specifically of the dirty war methods to be used--that is, the physical elimination of "subversion"--thus confirming that the top leaders of the *Proceso* indeed planned and directed the repressive strategy.[42] He also revealed that SIDE, then headed by General Otto Paladino, prepared a detailed daily report for the Interior Minister and other top military leaders recounting all the operations undertaken that day, which force or *grupo de tareas* (task force or commando unit) carried them out, who had been detained, what their political history was, what the circumstances of the detentions had been and so on.[43]

Peregrino Fernández gave the names of those corps commanders and commanders of sub-zones in charge of specific *grupos de tareas*, explaining that GT1 (*Grupo de Tareas 1*) depended on the First Army Corps, GT2 on the air force, GT3 on the navy, and GT4 on the federal police; each had its own complex of clandestine concentration camps and torture centers. GT1 was headed by Division General Carlos Suárez Mason, commander of the First Army Corps, and Division General Santiago Omar Riveros, two of the principle authors of the anti-subversive campaign. General Ramón Camps, the first head of the Buenos Aires police under the *junta*, was part of this structure as well; lower ranking officers included Major Mohamed Alí Seineldín, who went on to become a leader of an extremist *golpista* faction of the army during Alfonsín's administration.[44] Peregrino Fernández insisted that there were records of each of the disappeared during those years, known to

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[41] SERPAJ, *Paz y Justicia*, Año 1, #1, May 1983. See also Rodolfo Peregrino Fernández, *Autocrítica Policial* (Buenos Aires: Fundación para la Democracia en Argentina, El Cid Editor, 1983).

[42] Peregrino Fernández, *Autocrítica...*, ibid, 23.

[43] Ibid., 27.

[44] Seineldín, whose ideology is extreme right, fundamentalist-Catholic, was also the liaison between the Triple A and the army, according to Peregrino Fernández. Ibid., 17. This was confirmed by Julio Villalonga, investigative journalist, in an interview with the author in Buenos Aires, October 2, 1992, and Duhalde, *El estado terrorista*, op.cit., 74. In 1983, Seineldín was called before a judge for questioning regarding his illicit ties with the Triple A; later he was also called to appear in the Giorgi case (Giorgi was a scientist abducted during the dirty war.) *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 1, 1983, 11 and January 4, 1984, 7.

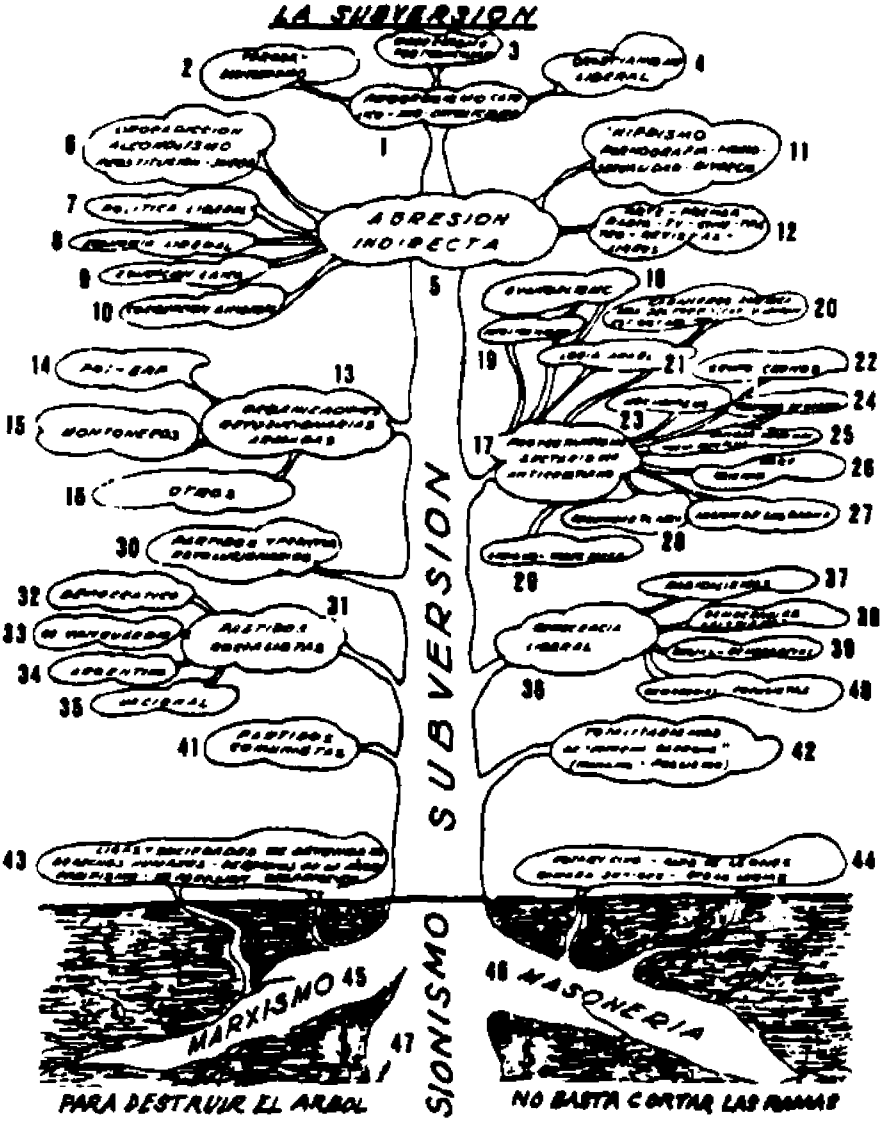


Figure 1

'It is not enough to cut the branches in order to destroy subversion.'

1 Progressive Catholicism – Neo-Catholicism
2 Third worldism
3 Modern Catholicism (post-Vatican II)
4 Liberal Christianity
5 Indirect Aggression Drug addiction, Alcoholism Prostitution – Gambling
7 Political liberalism
8 Economic liberalism
9 Lay education
10 Trade union corruption
11 'Hippie-ness', Pornography – Homosexuality – Divorce
12 Art – Newspapers – Radio – TV – Cinema – Theatre – Magazines – Books
13 Revolutionary Armed Organizations
14 Popular Revolutionary Army
15 Montoneros
16 Others
17 Protestants – Sects – Anti-Christians
18 Evangelism
19 Anglicanism
20 American Knights of Fire(?) Union of Argentinian Cultural Establishments(?)
21 Anael Lodge(?)
22 Cronos Group(?)
23 Mormonism
24 Jehovah's Witnesses
25 International School of the New Acropolis
26 Hare Krishna
27 Divine Light Mission
28 Brotherhood of the Ark
29 Snobbery (elitism) – Youth Power
30 Revolutionary Front Parties
31 Socialist Parties
32 Democratic party
33 Vanguard party
34 Argentine party
35 National party
36 Liberal Bourgeoisy
37 Radicals
38 Christian democrats
39 Social democrats
40 Popular demagoguery
41 Communist Parties
42 Extreme Right-Wing Totalitarian Systems – (Nazism – Fascism)
43 Human rights leagues – Women's rights – Pacifism – Non-aggression – Disarmament
44 Rotary club – Lions club Junior chambers – Other clubs
45 Marxism
46 Masons
47 Zionism

From John Simpson and Jana Bennett, *The disappeared and the Mothers of the Plaza* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985). Reprinted by permission of St. Martin's Press.

the successive *juntas*. This became a crucial point of contention in the 1980s, when the *juntas* denied knowledge of the victims of the campaign of repression.

Peregrino Fernández also informed the UN Working Group that one concentration camp, number 205, was created by the *junta* especially for pregnant women.[45] Although some 9000 citizens were officially documented as "disappeared" by Alfonsín's presidential commission (CONADEP) in 1985, many informed sources say the real toll was probably 15,000 to 30,000.

Other Decrees and Plans of the *Proceso*

In December 1976 the *junta* enacted a secret decree which acknowledged that the insurgency no longer existed as a military threat. Nevertheless, the document ordered: 1) No surrenders were to be accepted during seizures of suspected "subversive activists," 2) Leaders of popular demonstrations were to be assassinated, and 3) Children of suspects were to be detained.[46] The *junta* also implemented a secret *Plan de Acción Sicológica* (Plan of Psychological Action) which clearly stated that the armed forces believed "subversion" had penetrated every aspect of political, cultural and economic life in the nation[47] (demonstrating once again that for the ruling military "subversion" signified a much broader category than "guerrillas"). This plan was in the form of a

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[45] Many children were born in captivity, or abducted with their parents. These children of the disappeared were sold or given away to military or police families, with knowledge of their real antecedents hidden from them. This is one of the most tragic social ramifications of the dirty war, which still has painful effects today. The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo estimated that some 400 children were victims of such practices. In 1992, there were several cases of teenagers who discovered they were the sons and daughters of disappeared parents and that their supposed parents were actually in league with their parents' abductors or assassins. The Argentine film *The Official Story*, which won an Academy Award as Best Foreign Film in 1985, is a poignant story about one such case.

[46] Ordenes Secretas Antisubversivas, summarized in Asociación Americana de Juristas (AAJ), *Juicios a los Militares. Documentos Secretos, Decretos-Leyes, Jurisprudencia* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Americana de Juristas Cuaderno #4, 1988) 16.

[47] Reproduced in Enrique Vásquez, *La Ultima: Origen, Apogeo y Caída de la Dictadura Militar* (Buenos Aires: EUDABA, 1985) 264-269.

chart, with headings specifying "order number," "psychological target," "objective," "themes to develop," "methodology of execution," and "observations." Objective 2 stated: "To make known to the country that the intervention of the Army responds to a decision of the Executive Power, with the end of invoking in the population a favorable reaction to this intervention." To accomplish this, radio, television, the press, and other media were to be utilized. Order No. 6 had the objective of "achieving the adhesion of the population for the actions of the Army, thus facilitating their cooperation." According to the army's view, the "subversive enemy attacks the community. The collaboration of the population in the struggle against the subversion will permit the encirclement and defeat of the subversive enemy at the lowest social cost."

The *junta* made clear that all citizens were expected to collaborate with the armed forces; for example, General Nicolaides said on June 12, 1976: "Those who do not denounce extremists are aiding subversion."[48] In short, the armed forces sought to incorporate the population into its national-security ideology and organization through a vast operation combining psychological pressures and threats, utilization of the media, and the use of terror.

How effective was the psychological offensive of the armed forces? The record seemed mixed. On the one hand, there was a silent complicity, especially among the middle classes (a large proportion of the population in Buenos Aires, the political and cultural center of Argentina). The combination of terror produced by the visible spectacle of victims being seized and "disappeared" in large operations by armed men, and the constant politico-psychological barrage of the armed forces on all available media and in schools, with support from many priests and bishops of the Catholic Church,[49] had the effect of producing submission in many parts of the population. Some

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[48] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 13, 1976, 9.

[49] The hierarchy of the Catholic Church generally acted as a virtual ideological partner of the *Proceso* military. For a critical look at the complicity of the Church with the *Proceso*, see Emilio F. Mignone, *Witness to the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina, 1976-1983* (Maryknoll, New York:

relatives whose children disappeared, for example, accepted their fate, believing their offspring to be terrorists.[50] On the other hand, many other parents fought persistently to find their children, sparking the human rights movement (which was fairly small for most of the years of the military state) that helped undermine the *Proceso* and arouse the conscience of the world.

The *junta* also enacted a secret plan to monitor the universities, as well as workplaces. In a document dated May 2, 1976, a police intelligence officer ordered the Senior Dean of the National Technological University to implement a secret operation to uncover the names and histories of suspected subversives.[51] Intelligence teams were installed and *orejas* (literally "ears," or informants) placed in all the universities, public enterprises, and even apartment buildings where suspected "subversives" lived.[52]

The "Dirty War" System of the *Proceso*

The *junta* took care in organizing the apparatus of repression clandestinely partially as a result of political learning acquired from Pinochet's bloody 1973 coup in neighboring Chile.

Orbis Books, English translation, 1988). Archbishop Guillermo Bolati, for example, said in October 1976: "If this process which began in the country six months ago fails, the inheritor will be Marxism and the final outcome will have befallen our country." See *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 10, 1976, 3. The Archbishop of Córdoba, Raúl Primatesta, was accused of instructing all the parochial schools under his jurisdiction to send to the *junta's* police intelligence unit the names and vital data on all their teachers and students. See *Página/12*, March 10, 1992. In 1982, the military vicar, Monsignor Bonamín, described the 1976 coup as "an act of Providence." *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 25, 1982, 11.

[50] An American living in Buenos Aires during those years told me this story: "...I was in a taxi and we passed a demonstration about the disappeared near the Obelisk; the driver said, my son is one of those. I said, oh my God, or something. The taxi driver said, 'No; we went through his papers afterwards and found subversive literature. He belonged to a subversive organization.'" Interview with U.S. citizen living in Argentina conducted by author, October 11, 1992, Buenos Aires. During the marches of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, the mothers of the disappeared, in the early years, passers-by made comments like: "They should have taken better care of their children before they disappeared." *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 29, 1979.

[51] Documents reproduced in Vásquez, op.cit., 272-276.

[52] Conversations with Argentines, 1992, Buenos Aires.

Further, as the *Buenos Aires Herald*'s sources suggested, the Ford administration preferred an "invisible" (and rapid) military "anti-subversive" campaign. International outcries about the mass executions in 1973 in Chile had prompted a criticism from the Pope--which the fervently Catholic Argentine military sought to avoid at all costs--and international opprobrium.

Also at the root of the decision by the Argentine armed forces to violently obliterate "subversion" through unconventional means was, of course, the national-security ideology. In the view of the armed forces, Argentine society was sick, infected by subversion culturally and psychologically, addicted to vaguely socialist-style state welfare, and dominated by Peronist unions which were too powerful and too political, suspiciously like Argentine soviets.[53] Some sectors of the armed forces, especially those influenced by right-wing groups with ideologies close to Francoism or fascism, saw the root of the problem of subversion to be a Zionist-Marxist-Masonic conspiracy [see Figure 1 for a diagram used by instructors at the Air Force Academy].[54] Many right-wing officers linked Jews with Bolshevism, and believed there were "Marxist-Jewish conspiracies" to subvert Argentina and undermine Argentine nationalism. Such plots threatened "Western, Christian civilization," in the eyes of these sectors.

The armed forces, like their allies among the dominant economic elites and the Church, particularly thought the Peronist belief in "social justice" had been carried too far. The working class was too strong and the distribution of wealth so egalitarian that business interests and capitalist

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[53] Many statements by officers revealed this perspective. For example, Air Force chief Omar Graffigna declared in December 1979: "In a dangerously disoriented world, destiny has only given us one option: to be part of the spiritual reserve of the West, a spirit opposed to the non-concepts and non-values of demented totalitarianism and atrophying collectivism, which harm human dignity." *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 2, 1979, 2.

[54] Timerman's book, *Prisoner...*, op.cit., demonstrates the anti-Semitic nature of the *Proceso* armed forces; see also Senkman, op.cit. Historically in Argentina, and especially during the *Proceso*, there were many attacks upon Jewish cemeteries, schools and synagogues by anonymous assailants. Jewish prisoners suffered worse treatment at the hands of military-security forces during the *Proceso*. Virulent anti-Semitism ran through Argentina's many right-wing organizations and deeply influenced the right-wing nationalist current of the armed forces in particular. See Deutsch and Dolkart, eds., *The Argentine Right*, op.cit.

productivity and "efficiency" themselves were correspondingly weakened.[55] As General Videla put it, in the new Argentina being designed by the armed forces, "the Peronist Party as we have known it" had no place.[56]

The armed forces sought to "purify" the mentality of Argentines, root out ideas about social justice, working class solidarity, and the capacity of the poor to organize to change their situation--in short, to erase the overlapping ideals of socialism, populism and Peronism. The armed forces feared and opposed "mass democracy"[57] above all. The aim of the armed forces was to change these "conditions" so that never again would the armed forces be required to take over the government. The controversies over Argentina's future direction and form of political economy would be eliminated by eliminating those "subversives" or "useful idiots"[58] who challenged the authority of

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[55] For example, Deutsch and Dolkart argue in their "Conclusion," summarizing one of the key findings of the book, that the "fear that workers, inspired by one or more of these ideologies [stated earlier as anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, revolutionary Marxism, and Soviet communism] would attempt to overthrow the class hierarchy obsessed the right." Deutsch and Dolkart, eds., ibid., 181.

[56] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 16, 1979, cited in James Neilson column "Politics and Labor."

[57] For example, Buenos Aires' appointed mayor, an air force brigadier named Osvaldo Cacciatore, said in 1979: "We will not allow schools to be factories of mass men who lack personalities and are inclined to mediocrity and materialism." *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 14, 1979, 2. See also Inés González Bombal, "El Diálogo Político: La Transición Que No Fue," Documento CEDES 61 (1991) 15. Her analysis overlaps with mine in its emphasis on military plans for a controlled transition and a tutelary civilian government, as revealed in various documents and plans of the regime. However, González Bombal argues that the Malvinas defeat and then the trials of the *juntas* caused the collapse of the military's power. This analysis, on the contrary, examines the ways in which the armed forces sought to retain, increase and utilize their political power, and influence or coerce the civilian government throughout the entire Alfonsín administration.

[58] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires. The armed forces believed a Soviet conspiracy was at the root of Argentina's troubles, in which subversives, useful idiots and fellow travelers spread the ideas of communism to undermine Western, Christian values. This officer said: "I'll summarize to you what we learned and what we taught. We knew that the Soviets were bent on world domination. But not through conventional warfare. Rather, they had fifth columns throughout the world. It was an ideological war. And they had agents in civilian groups, religious groups, intellectual groups, and so on. They would impose their domination through ideological means. And these other people--we called them fellow-travelers, or useful idiots--these people made things easy for the Soviets. In 1962 there was a meeting in Havana, where an organization was formed called *Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad*. This was the name given it by the KGB. The KGB with this centralized control over all the guerrilla groups existing in Latin America at that time. And this whole plan was aided by the fellow-travelers, or useful idiots." Military journals in the 1980s described the same history and used the same language.

the state (more precisely, the military) and the dominant classes. As the *junta's* Agriculture and Livestock Secretary Mario Caderas Madariaga (a right-wing civilian) put it, "We will build a great nation, even in opposition to the great majority of the Argentine people."[59] The "subversives" would be removed with surgical precision by the military. Today, according to military sources, the bulk of the officer corps of the armed forces still believes the multidimensional "anti-subversive campaign" was dirty, but efficient and successful.[60]

How was this to be accomplished? The primary strategy devised by the military regime was a decentralized and deadly system of clandestine repression. Unlike Pinochet, who had commanded the open mass murder of thousands of Chileans in the national stadium and elsewhere, the Argentine *junta* projected a face of moderation and legality to the country and the world. Public statements were broadcast by General Videla, the commander-in-chief of the army and president of the first *junta*, assuring the population that only terrorists and "the corrupt" had anything to fear. Meanwhile, military spokesmen argued that counterinsurgent violence--even including the terrorist attacks of the Triple A before the coup--was healthy and justifiable. This was expressed by various officers quite openly. Admiral Guzetti, for example, the first Foreign Minister of the *junta*, stated: "Subversion or terrorism of the right--there is no such thing. The social body of the country is contaminated with a disease that corrodes its entrails and forms antibodies. These antibodies cannot be considered in the same way that one considers the microbe."[61]

The *junta's* decentralization strategy, as we have seen, consisted of delegating the operations

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[59] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 16, 1978, 2.

[60] Interviews with retired and active-duty army and navy officers by author in Buenos Aires, 1992. It should be noted that many Argentine civilians agree; the *Proceso* broke the power of the Peronist unions through terror and economic restructuring, destroying the industrial base of the country, and simultaneously eliminated many leftist intellectuals and disarticulated the organizational capability of the poor and working classes. Conversations in Buenos Aires, 1992.

[61] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 10, 1976.

aspect of the repression to corps commanders and sub-zone commanders, who were given broad responsibility for the repressive activities in their areas. While military intelligence bodies such as SIDE (the ostensibly civilian intelligence body), SIN (Navy Intelligence), SIE (Army Intelligence), and so on kept close track of the victims,[62] the *junta* leaders themselves could maintain the posture that in most cases, they had no idea of who was being disappeared, tortured and eliminated. Corps commanders and commanders of sub-zones in turn organized the infamous *grupos de tareas*, gangs of 5 to 15 members made up of police, low-ranking military officers, and sometimes rightist civilians, to carry out the kidnapping missions and bring the victims to military headquarters such as the *Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada* (a navy training school commonly called ESMA in Argentina) outside of Buenos Aires. ESMA was converted into a torture and murder center where some 5000 people met their deaths.[63] According to former torturers and survivors, these gangs of low-ranking officers actually kidnapped the victims and tortured them, while high-ranking intelligence officers most often conducted the interrogation of tortured victims. Tortures routinely included electric shocks with the *picana*, a cattleprod often used for sexual tortures, and near-drownings (*submarino*);[64] shocks were used to torture live fetuses inside mothers; ovens were used

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[62] To this day, military spokesmen argue either that a) no archives were kept on the disappeared, or b) all files were destroyed before Alfonsín took office. According to Peregrino Fernández and others, however, an extensive filing system did exist, and further, some archives are probably still in existence today, perhaps stored in another country. After the transition to democracy in 1983, the municipal government in La Pampa called an urgent press conference to show a nation-wide telex sent to all units by the Federal Police headquarters on November 11, 1983, instructing them to "immediately return for incineration" all records of the dirty war. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 3, 1984. The American Association of Jurists says that secret Decree No. 2726/83 (1983) ordered the incineration of all compromising official documents and proofs. See *Juicios...*, op.cit., 28, n.1.

[63] Human rights organizations have estimated this figure based on testimonies provided by survivors and by military operatives.

[64] See Frank Graziano, *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, and Radical Christianity in the Argentine 'Dirty War'* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992) for an analysis of the repression as a form of medieval Inquisition campaign, conducted by fundamentalist officers convinced that they were the warriors of Christ. For other accounts of the dirty war, which is only outlined here, see Martin Edwin Andersen, *Dossier Secreto*, op.cit.; Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (CONADEP), *Nunca Más*, op.cit.; Iain Guest,

to burn the bodies of the dead and not yet dead. Drafted conscripts were forced to clean the blood off the walls of the torture cells. According to one account, many of those who carried out disappearances ended up dead themselves.[65] According to an active-duty officer interviewed by *La Prensa* in 1984, more than one thousand people were thrown, dead or alive, from military planes into the Río de la Plata during the rule of the *juntas*.[66]

As Pion-Berlin and Lopez have demonstrated, a main target of state terror was the strategically important Peronist labor unions.[67] But the organized terror of the state went beyond this. Reflecting the conviction of the armed forces that ideas were a crucial battlefield in the ideological war, any dissident or critical sector was targeted, particularly intellectuals, students and professors, teachers, journalists, priests, and artists.[68] Soon, the orgy of violence extended to persons whose names were found in the address books of other disappeared victims,[69] relatives of targeted people, or colleagues, clients or patients of professionals. A number of victims were

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Behind the Disappearances..., op.cit.; Simpson and Bennett, *The Disappeared and the Mothers of the Plaza*, op.cit.

[65] These details were given by a former navy operative, Raúl Vilariño, who participated in the *grupos de tareas* that disappeared people. He decided to go public with his story in 1984 after being followed by some of his former comrades in an unmarked Ford Falcon (the cars used by the security forces to disappear their victims). In a series of articles published in *La Semana* in January 1984, Vilariño provided meticulous detail regarding grisly tortures and the methods of the *grupos de tareas*, suggesting that his account was indeed trustworthy. On the other hand, rumors persisted that his motives were mercenary, casting some doubt upon his credibility.

[66] *La Prensa*, January 24, 1984.

[67] David Pion-Berlin and George Lopez, "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979," *International Studies Quarterly*, 25, (1991).

[68] According to CONADEP, of the 9000 documented cases of disappeared people, 30.2% were workers, 21% were students, 17.9% were white-collar employees, 10.7% were professionals; other categories including teachers, journalists, low-ranking security forces or military draftees, artists and religious were 5% each or less. See *Nunca Más*, op.cit., 480.

[69] Conversations with Argentines in Buenos Aires, 1992.

disappeared or killed in cases of mistaken identity.[70] Thus, the specific operational strategy of the *junta*--to set the general policy and delegate responsibility to corps commanders and sub-zone commanders, who in turn unleashed the *grupos de tareas* to carry out the policy as their commanders saw fit--metamorphosed into a savage killing apparatus that deeply penetrated Argentine society. Remnants of this national-security apparatus continued to act intermittently in the 1980s.

Another important element that characterized the military disappearance-torture-murder system was the taking of "war booty" from the victims. The *grupos* early on began to seize the possessions of those abducted: automobiles, paintings, furniture, money, jewelry, typewriters, and other valuables. These were either divided among the members of the squads or sold on the black market, the proceeds used for the terror apparatus. This practice, which became institutionalized, also had far-reaching effects. These groups, created and used by the armed forces as part of the structure of repression, were able to sustain themselves autonomously and increasingly elude any control from above through such self-financing measures. They also kidnapped wealthy businessmen--preferably Jewish--and obtained enormous ransoms which were utilized to finance their activities; prostitution and gambling in some locations were also controlled by the torturers and their commanding officers.[71] Intelligence organizations also financed their activities through their own

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[70] Probably the most famous of these was the Dagmar Hagelin case. This young Swedish-Argentine teenager was mistakenly shot on the street by Alfredo Astíz, a navy officer and member of the infamous navy Task Force 3.3.2, based in ESMA. The young woman was brought to ESMA, where she eventually was killed. Inmates of ESMA who survived testified they had seen her there. Astíz also infiltrated the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in 1976, resulting in the disappearances and deaths of two mothers; he was accused of the torture-murder of two French nuns that same year. According to Raúl Vilariño, the former member of a disappearance squad, the Hagelin girl was misidentified by Astíz; commander-in-chief of ESMA Admiral Chamorro called in the *grupo de tareas* that carried out the deed and harshly chastised them, saying the Swedish Embassy was harassing the *junta* and the situation was very difficult. See *La Prensa*, January 24, 1984.

[71] Timerman, *Prisoner...*, op.cit., 152.

businesses, such as hotels and kiosks (news stands selling newspapers, magazines and small items).[72] Evidence has also come to light implicating military intelligence and these semi-autonomous *grupos* in drug-trafficking.[73] All these means of self-financing permitted these military terror groups--which began to resemble mafia or gangster organizations--to continue an independent life of their own after the transition to democracy.

The question of responsibility for the dirty war system--that is, for the design and institution of the repressive machinery which implemented "mass production" of disappearance, torture and assassination--became central to the political conflicts of the 1980s in Argentina. The *junta* commanders of the armed forces elaborated and authorized this policy of decentralization precisely to avoid government accountability and to preserve an appearance of legality. The regime could maintain official deniability via this strategy, while eliminating its perceived enemies. By not acknowledging the arrest of the accused, the regime could reject responsibility and avoid the legal system entirely. The civilian population was left vulnerable, with no legal protection against the power of the state. This conclusion--that the *junta* was ultimately responsible for the repressive apparatus and the system of terror--was reached by CONADEP, and indeed, the *junta's* "Institutional Act" of April 28, 1983[74] confirmed it. The CONADEP Report points out the hypocrisy of the

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[72] Interview with retired navy intelligence officer conducted by author, September 29, 1992, Buenos Aires. This practice and its effects are further discussed in Chapter 5.

[73] Carlos Suárez Mason and Leandro Sánchez Reisse were two officers involved in drug money-laundering to finance counterinsurgency operations. Jack Blum, who investigated drug-trafficking and political forces in Latin America in 1987-1988 for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, was told this by Sánchez Reisse himself. Moreover, the Argentine army was deeply involved in Bolivia's "cocaine coup" in 1980, which was financed by illicit narco-funds. Interview with Jack Blum conducted by author, July 30, 1993, Washington D.C. See also Chapter 7.

[74] The decree said all military operations were undertaken "in accordance with plans approved and supervised by the high commands of the armed forces," and further stated: "1) All operations against subversion and terrorism taken by the armed forces and by the security, police and penitentiary services under their operational control, in compliance with decrees 261/75, 2770/75, 2771/75 and 2772/75 were carried out according to plans approved and supervised by the armed forces and the military *junta* from the moment it was formed." Reprinted in *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1983, 1. This act is further discussed later in the

juntas' legal defense and public military statements after the transition, when the argument was made that only sporadic "excesses" had been committed in a legal campaign against terrorism. Rather, CONADEP argued, the repressive system of terror had been systematically planned, organized and implemented by the armed forces; there were no "excesses." This perspective versus that of the armed forces formed one of the core politico-ideological conflicts between the armed forces and democratizing forces in the 1980s.

Evidence that the high command indeed created and authorized the apparatus of state terror was also provided by the statements of high-ranking officers. General Camps, who commanded the Buenos Aires police during much of the dirty war, stated in a 1983 interview with a Spanish magazine that the armed forces were totally responsible for the "anti-subversive campaign." He emphasized that security forces in civilian clothes were in fact following military orders and were not death squad groups acting beyond the control of the *junta.*[75] When asked if the armed forces "fought terrorism using terrorist methods," Camps answered "Why not?" Similarly, General Omar Riveros told the Joint Inter-American Defense Board in Washington D.C. on January 24, 1980: "We conducted the war with doctrine in hand, with the written orders of the Superior Commands."[76] On February 12, 1980, he said that the repression was not carried out by rogue paramilitary units, but by units following orders, insisting, "We never needed these organisms, as they accuse us. This war of ours was conducted by the generals, admirals and brigadiers of each force. The war was conducted by the Military *Junta* of my country via the Chiefs of Staff."[77]

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chapter.

[75] See *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 29, 1983.

[76] Quoted in CONADEP Report, *Nunca Más*, op.cit., 8.

[77] Quoted in Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen, *Los Años Crueles* (Buenos Aires: Bruguera, 1983) 112 as well as in Emilio Mignone, *Derechos...*, op.cit, 56. This quote was included in the report of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in 1980.

A final aspect of military counterinsurgency operations is important. Military PSYOPS and counterintelligence operations sought, as a practice, to use deception to create confusion and misplace blame by attributing acts by the armed forces to guerrillas. Former *Buenos Aires Herald* editor Robert Cox explained in 1989 how the armed forces in the 1970s camouflaged their operations by making them appear like guerrilla actions:

> "I know from personal experience that one of the favorite tactics of military intelligence during the dirty war was to disguise their atrocities to make them appear that they were carried out by left-wing terrorists. In my own case, the infamous 601 Battalion planned to kidnap me, murder me, and then stage a shootout to make it appear that I had been abducted by the Montoneros. Two or three prisoners who had been members of the Montoneros were to be shot and left at the scene to give it credibility."[78]

Another example was the seizure and disappearance in 1977 of two French nuns who had worked with the mothers of the disappeared, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. The army claimed the Montoneros had committed the act,[79] although later navy officer Alfredo Astíz and a naval commando group were found to be responsible.[80] Another example was provided by the discovery that the concentration camp La Perla was the site of a printing press operation which created

> "'Montonero' flyers calling for strikes...[which were] disseminated in the context of an imminent job action to document subversive 'infiltration' and thereby 'justify' the violent repression of organized labor. The drama's last act consisted of removing a prisoner from a detention center and executing him or her in, as the government would report it to the press, 'a shootout between the forces of order and

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[78] Robert Cox, "Human rights: A non-partisan banner," *Argentine News* (February-March 1989) 6. These types of counterintelligence operations were suspected by many to have a role in the La Tablada attack in 1989. See Chapter 7.

[79] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 18, 1977, 1.

[80] In 1992, the navy announced a new promotion for Astíz, and admitted that under orders he infiltrated the Madres in order to entrap the nuns. However, the navy denied he tortured or murdered them. See Horacio Méndez Carreras, "Astíz: hasta 1977," *Página/12*, October 21, 1992. As mentioned earlier, Astíz--and notorious navy commando 3.3.2 of ESMA--were also responsible for the disappearance of Dagmar Hagelin. The Astíz case became a significant battle between military and civilian power during the Alfonsín administration in the 1980s. Astíz also had surrendered his troops without a fight during the Malvinas war, in April 1982. See *El Periodista*, No. 51 (August 30-September 5, 1985) 4. In December 1987, France issued a formal protest because Astíz was promoted. See *Clarín*, December 24, 1987.

a militant Montonero instigating a strike.'"[81]

Graziano notes that survivors interviewed by CONADEP frequently testified that fictitious shootouts were set up by military commanders of the camps. Prisoners would be cleaned up and fed before being executed and then placed in staged settings so that such stories would be more believable. In sum, the armed forces actually manufactured at least part of the "guerrilla threat" in order to justify the imposition of a military national-security state, and the dirty war.

The Ideology of the *Proceso*

The *junta* placed special emphasis on reshaping the educational system and the cultural foundations of Argentine society in order to impose "Western Christian values." The internal military document entitled "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Política de Unión Nacional" outlined, for example, a specific Education and Cultural Policy including the following:

> "2) To develop a Culture oriented by a Christian and national conception characterized by a creative and genuine essence, permitting intellectuals and artists to support the community with the fruits of their talent...
>
> b) Utilize the mass communications media in programs of information and culture, and incorporate artists and intellectuals...
>
> h) Foster film and television production highlighting the essential values of the national culture...
>
> 3) Culturally occupy the entire national territory and project our culture into the exterior...
>
> 4e) Support the mission of the family as the primary agent of education..."[82]

Military journals such as *Estrategia* regularly included articles on the importance of transforming the political culture of Argentina in order to control "cultural aggression" and promote

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[81] CONADEP, op.cit., 377, cited in Graziano, op.cit., 65.

[82] Note the repeated references to "Christian culture" in military statements inherently excluded Argentina's large Jewish community. "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Política de Unión Nacional," 24-26.

Western Christian values.[83] The Education Ministry instituted a course called "Moral and Civic Formation" in all public schools which sought to instill the values esteemed by the armed forces in schoolchildren and warn of the dangers of subversion. History classes in elementary and high schools omitted the entire period during which Perón was in power; indeed, his name was not allowed to be mentioned.[84] In universities, any reference to Marx or to theories of class struggle were completely eliminated from the curriculum. Regulations were passed forbidding long hair and beards on men, and teachers and students were warned that men with this appearance were subversives to be reported.[85] The "intervened" Buenos Aires universities instituted a new disciplinary code mandating one-year suspensions for "disobedience to lecturers or lack of respect," and five-year suspensions for "offending lecturers" or "not following the curriculum of studies."[86] Entire majors--sociology, philosophy, psychology--were eliminated from university curriculums;[87] in some cities, the "new math" was banned because some of its terminology sounded subversive to the local military command.[88] In short, the military's authoritarian system of values and ideology

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[83] See, for example, Raúl Máximo Crespo Montes, "La Política Cultural y las Bases Políticas," *Estrategia* No. 63 (March-April 1980), 27-33.

[84] Interviews with former students conducted by author, October 1992, Buenos Aires. Perón was referred to as "el tirano" or "el dictador."

[85] Interviews with former students, March and October, 1992. On May 4, 1976, the Mendoza police ordered a crackdown on beards and long hair, prohibiting identification cards to be issued to persons with such an appearance. *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 9, 1976, 9. On May 22, the Education Ministry issued orders prohibiting beards and long hair on men and excessive make-up on women and stated that these appearances would be considered punishable misconduct. *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 23, 1976, 9.

[86] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 27, 1976, 9.

[87] Timerman, *Prisoner...*, op.cit., 95.

[88] In Córdoba, the new math was denounced as subversive indoctrination; the local military governors were especially suspicious of the term "vectors." See *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 5, 1978, 11.

was imposed at all levels of education.[89]

The armed forces placed great weight upon the "ideological war," which was seen as equally if not more important than the armed struggle between the guerrillas and the military. General Camps said, for example, in reference to this war: "It is necessary to begin with a strategic global conception, since Argentina is nothing less than an operational battlefield in a global confrontation, a confrontation between Moscow and the United States; what the USSR seeks is not to destabilize Argentina but rather the U.S..."[90] General Galtieri explained: "The first world war was a confrontation of armies, the second of nations, and the third is of ideologies. The United States and Argentina must march together due to their common concerns and aspirations."[91] In the clandestine detention centers, military intelligence officers held mandatory classes on World War III for all the personnel, including torturers, abductors, and interrogators.[92]

The main target of military propaganda, however, was the general population. A 1984 document--drafted by the military to explain and justify the Argentine armed forces' assumption of state power and prosecution of the dirty war--explained: "The final aim of the Internal Counterrevolutionary War (ICRW) is to conserve, consolidate or reconquer the loyalty of the population to the ideology propounded by the Free World...*Certain tactical triumphs are of no value against elements of the subversion if the population is on the side of these elements*..."[93] [emphasis in original] Such theories of counterinsurgency clearly also represented a de facto justification for

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[89] Former students told me asking questions was discouraged in class; students were required to stand when teachers entered the room; classes were required to march in formation; punishment was applied for laughing or speaking out of turn. Conversations with Argentines, 1992.

[90] Cited in CONADEP Report, op.cit., 474.

[91] Ibid., 474.

[92] Timerman, op.cit., 102.

[93] Ejército Argentino, "Doctrina del Ejército Argentino en la Lucha contra la Subversión," unpublished document acquired by author (March 9, 1984) 12.

the armed forces to assume a central and permanent political role in the daily life of the nation. The *junta* and high-ranking officers continually issued public statements about the communist menace, the dangers of subversion and the cleansing mission of the military.[94] The state-owned television channels constantly broadcast military ceremonies and speeches by the *junta*[95] as well as everyday, apolitical entertainment designed to project the appearance of normality.

The armed forces avidly studied Gramsci (as shown below) and were thoroughly convinced that the revolutionary war--and therefore, the counterrevolutionary war--was being conducted in the *political* and *psychological* realms. Since "subversion" rooted itself in all aspects of human activity, its antidote--the military--was likewise required to insert itself into all aspects of human life. The official document called *Terrorism in Argentina*,[96] which was widely distributed to counteract the growing international isolation of the regime, stressed that during the "war against subversion" in Argentina in the 1970s, the struggle emphasized three arenas: political, economic and psychological. This book contains a section on education which is enlightening in terms of understanding the level of the military's threat perception and its hypothesis of conflict focused on the internal enemy. The report states that between 1973 and 1975, terrorism operated through certain channels in its attempt to take over the Ministry of Education, spreading Marxist ideology through teaching and non-teaching staff (amid passive reactions of administrators), student organizations, distribution of subversive literature, and use of "didactic methodology." According to the armed forces, the terrorists controlled the entire realm of education, introducing sinister campaigns to promote "new

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[94] In 1977, the *Buenos Aires Herald* political columnist James Neilson commented, "Preoccupation with the need to protect Argentines from the dread disease of Marxism is evidently a burning concern of many military officers...an unhealthy fascination for these men. They think about it all the time...If Marxism is so attractive that the population must be warned *against* it fifty times a day then it is a formidable enemy indeed." See *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 18, 1977.

[95] Burns, *The Land that Lost...*, op.cit., 19.

[96] *Terrorism in Argentina*, op.cit., 398.

student cafeterias, libraries, autonomy of the universities, unlimited attendance or registration, and more flexible behavior on the part of some professors."[97] In the eyes of the regime, activities such as students calling for discounted bus tickets were considered a signal of terrorist infiltration--and brutally crushed.[98]

The armed forces also moved immediately to silence the media. Threats against and abductions of journalists (over 100 disappeared) and warnings issued to the major newspapers were starkly effective for at least a year[99] and in many cases, several more. The *junta's* first instructions after the coup announced that only information released by the *junta* was permitted to be published.[100] The independent newspaper *Crónica* was closed down for violating censorship regulations on April 7, 1976; five provincial papers were closed down on April 8.[101] The police raided *Siglo Veintiuno,* a publishing house, and seized books considered subversive.[102] Book burnings were conducted in the streets.[103] Well-known intellectuals and artists were barred from

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[97] *Terrorism...*, ibid., 399.

[98] One event of the dirty war that had great repercussions internationally, and later domestically, was *"La noche de los lápices"* ("the night of the pencils"), when security agents abducted and disappeared a number of high school students in one night. All had been involved in earlier years in organizing for cheaper school bus tickets. All were tortured, and all but one killed. A book was written and a movie made in Argentina of this incident after the transition to democracy.

[99] The major dailies contained little or no news about politics in Argentina after the March 24, 1976 coup, for years. The main exception to this was the *Buenos Aires Herald*, an English language newspaper, which soon began to publish news of the disappearances and political acts of the regime, while beginning to voice criticism of human rights violations (although the editorial voice of the paper generally supported the economic policies of the regime until almost the end). The editor of the paper, Robert Cox, was forced to flee into exile after repeated threats; the next editor, Alexander Graham-Yooll, also was forced to flee. *La Opinión*, published by Jacobo Timerman, was also somewhat critical of the *junta* regime; it was eventually taken over by the military state and Timerman 'disappeared' (although he was later released).

[100] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 26, 1976, 1.

[101] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 8 and 9, 1976.

[102] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 3, 1976, 7.

[103] Conversations with Argentines, 1992, Buenos Aires.

the airwaves. Songs and music considered too political were banned as well.[104] In December 1976, Admiral Lambruschini said subversion utilized "the press, protest songs, cinema, folklore, literature, the universities, religion, and finally panic" to obtain its objectives.[105] The municipality of Buenos Aires created a "Morality Division" which confiscated transgressing magazines from the news stands.[106]

On April 8, 1976 the regime issued a 16-point list of guidelines for newspapers, including the following: avoiding sensationalist news; avoiding controversial topics; elimination of obscene or erotic topics; elimination of double meanings.[107] On April 23 the *junta* banned any mention of news on "subversion" including discovery of bodies, abductions and so on.[108]

In sum, the ongoing disappearances and torture of neighbors, co-workers, or relatives *while the regime simultaneously denied these occurrences* created an atmosphere of suppressed terror, disorientation, guilt and foreboding in the country.[109] The messianic and quasi-religious conviction of the armed forces, the verbal support of many priests and bishops of the Church, and the silent terror or complicity of most of the population blended to create a surreal and hermetic world where ordinary values and norms were suspended. One torture victim who survived said her torturer told her: "You are our best young people...valuable people, but...this is a holy war and you want to

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[104] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 11, 1976, 3.

[105] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 4, 1976, 9.

[106] On December 18, 1979, for example, the Morality Division confiscated all copies of *Siete Días* due to an offending interview with mayor Cacciatore. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 19, 1979.

[107] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 9, 1976, 9.

[108] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 24, 1976, 1.

[109] For analyses of the psychological repercussions of life under a terrorist state, see Graziano, *Divine Violence...*, op.cit.; Diana R. Kordon et al, *Psychological Effects of Political Repression* (Buenos Aires: Sudamerica/Planeta, 1988); and Elizabeth Lira and María Isabel Castillo, *Psicología de la Amenaza Política y del Miedo* (Santiago, Chile: Instituto Latinoamericano de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos, 1991).

disrupt the natural order...you are the AntiChrist...I'm not a torturer, I'm an inquisitor."[110] Because the dirty war endowed the armed forces with a perceived heroic role in saving the country from subversion, as well as literally making them the "lords of life and death," the officer corps as a body became deeply invested in the "rightness" of the dirty war.

Plans for a Controlled Transition to Civilian Government

Throughout the *Proceso*, the *junta* was acutely aware that its term in government should be limited. As we have seen, past military regimes had announced themselves as transitory. The 1966-1973 regime faced growing discontent from various social sectors which ultimately forced the armed forces to withdraw from government. Given this understanding, the *junta* leaders were engaged from the very beginning of the 1976 dictatorship in elaborating detailed plans for a controlled transition to a tutelary civilian government. Military advisers frankly posed the options for the military regime: either a long and repressive military dictatorship would be needed, or a restricted democracy, with crucial civilian support, could be gradually introduced, staffed by civilians loyal to the values and prerogatives of the military.[111]

The document cited earlier, "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Polítca de Unión Nacional," stated under a subhead called "Bases for the Plan of Political Action:" "Materialize the civil-military convergence structuring and consolidating a MON (movement of national opinion), above parties and sectors. Recompose the system of political parties. Normalize the republican institutions, of a

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[110] Testimony of Graciela Susana Geuna to the United Nations, March 6, 1984, in CELS files, 28 and 53, cited in Graziano, op.cit., 31.

[111] A later internal document prepared by an adviser to the army demonstrated that such planning continued even after the 1983 transition. "Situación Actual" ("Current Situation") dated February 14, 1984 (during the Alfonsín administration), said: "if the government weakens in the next years, the armed forces have two choices: a coup, which would lead to a civil war, or acting politically within the institutional mechanisms, without repeating old errors."

renovated and stable democracy, in a gradual form, *assuring the continuity of the Proceso.*"[112] [emphasis added] The document also stated: "The armed forces will end their intervention when the basic objectives of reordering and strengthening are achieved and *the continuity of the process is assured via the democratic path*"[113] [emphasis added] and asserted that a key aim was to "Give conceptual continuity to the *Proceso* and secure its future projection."[114] Clearly, the military sought to secure the *continuity* of its national-security values, structures, and ideology *within the institutional framework* after a transition to civilian government. That is, they planned a guardian model, a central thesis of this study.

An internal "Working Document" from October 1977 entitled "Considerations on the Process of Institutionalization of the Movement of National Opinion"[115] also discussed the aim of the armed forces to gradually return government to carefully chosen civilians. This document--apparently a policy document prepared by advisers to the *junta*--cited key aims from an armed forces document ("Bases para la Intervención de las FFAA en el Proceso Nacional"), including "To progressively transfer the government to civilians, while the armed forces maintain the power"[116] and "To support the constitution of a solid civic movement that makes its own the objectives of the armed forces and perpetuates them in the government."[117] The document warned that given the chaotic situation in Argentina under Isabel's regime, the military regime was initially seen as legitimate; but

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[112] "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Política de Unión Nacional," op.cit., 37. For other discussions of the MON, see Vásquez, *La Ultima...*, op.cit., and Gonzáles Bombal, *El Diálogo Político...*, op.cit.

[113] Ibid., 35.

[114] Ibid., 34.

[115] "Consideraciones sobre el Proceso de Institucionalización y el Movimiento de Opinión Nacional." Copy acquired by author, dated October 1977.

[116] "Consideraciones..." op.cit., 4.

[117] Ibid., 5.

the longer the *Proceso* lasted, the greater would be the building pressures for a new political opening.[118]

This document contained an extended discussion of the form of democratization or decompression envisioned by the armed forces in the early years of the regime. It candidly posed several alternatives: 1) an unconditional (or non-controlled) transition to civilian government (which if unsuccessful, "would clearly imply a new intervention by the armed forces in the political process"),[119] 2) a pacted transition between the military and selected political parties (however, the document warned that a risk of this strategy was that "the National Congress, once it is functioning, can be difficult to control"),[120] and 3) the conditioned alternative, in which the *Proceso* created its own civic movement and political party, imposing its choices of like-minded civilians in elected posts, and structuring elections "in order to assure success."[121] The document noted that the first alternative was politically inviable and had not worked previously in Argentina (that is, *vis-à-vis* the objectives of the armed forces); the best alternative was to implement a conditioned exit,[122] the final alternative. Clearly, the armed forces were planning for a guardian-style system early on in the *Proceso.*

The *Proceso junta* was plagued by internal ideological arguments, practically invisible to outside eyes, over the question of the future civilian government. "Hard-liners" such as Generals Antonio Bussi, Luciano Menéndez,[123] Ibérico St.-Jean and Ramón Díaz Bessone argued for

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[118] Ibid., 10.

[119] Ibid., 11.

[120] Ibid., 12.

[121] Ibid, 13.

[122] Ibid., 12-13.

[123] This far-right general led an abortive rebellion after the *junta* was forced to release Jacobo Timerman and send him into exile due to international pressure. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 30, 1979, 1.

continued military rule for the foreseeable future, and for a long transition process which would only very gradually introduce like-minded civilians into positions of public authority. Their views verged on fascism, extolling the military-ruled corporatist state. "Moderates" who tended to be located in the liberal-rightist current of the armed forces preferred to open a dialogue with sympathetic civilians and reinforce a veneer of legality and legitimacy upon the military-dominated state. Generals Videla, Viola, and Bignone fell into this latter category, and their views were dominant throughout most of the 1976-1983 *Proceso*.

In October 1976, the *junta* appointed General Ramón Díaz Bessone as Planning Minister,[124] clearly attempting to incorporate both sectors of the armed forces into the regime. James Neilson, political columnist of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, noted: "While the thrust of official policy so far has been to roll back the state...Díaz Bessone would seem to be enthusiastically in favor of more state intervention in the nation's life."[125] Díaz Bessone's ministry worked on a national plan which sought to institutionalize the *Proceso*'s aims and objectives and provide a design for a controlled transition to a tutelary civilian government. The plan was called "Bases Políticas para la Reorganización Nacional."[126]

The "Bases" declared that under any new civilian regime a Political Commission made up by military officers would be required to supervise politics, setting up an explicit guardian model. The high command of the armed forces would require the following powers: "1) capacity to partially or totally veto political platforms, 2) capacity to temporarily or definitively exclude citizens involved in labor or union activity, 3) capacity to remove elected legislators or executives, and 4) capacity

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[124] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 31, 1976.

[125] Ibid., in column "Politics and Labor" by James Neilson.

[126] "Bases..." is partially reproduced in Vásquez, *La Ultima...*, op.cit; copies of parts of the original document were also acquired by the author. According to Bignone, all three military forces drew up plans, which were incorporated into this document. See Bignone, *El Ultimo...*, op.cit., 85-87.

to designate personalities as national senators."[127] The high command, in short, was endowed with the right to remove any political figure "who demonstrated opposition to the principles contained in the fundamental documents of the *Proceso*."[128] Also to be banned from future political participation were movements advocating collectivism or "class warfare," while the state would promote "ever-growing levels of spiritual perfection."[129] However, the "Bases"--released in December 1979--was never enacted, and in fact the ministry itself was downgraded to a secretariat. The "Bases" was, by the time of its issue, widely seen as irrelevant and somewhat ridiculous by many civilians.[130]

Also in 1979, the *junta* imposed its new union law, Decree-Law 22,105.[131] This law, which abrogated Peronist law 20,615, abolished trade union federations like the CGT; barred unions from all political activity; removed control of social welfare funds from the unions (a source of considerable power in the past given that these funds were enormous); required that all union funds be deposited in state banks, to be controlled by the Minister of Labor (an army general); abolished compulsory union membership; and declared that no dues would be required from non-union workers.

The armed forces faced growing political and economic crises by 1980. First, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo and other human rights organizations--important new social movements ignored by the traditional parties for the first few years--were gaining increasing international and domestic

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[127] "Bases Políticas..." author's copy, 39.

[128] Ibid., 40.

[129] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 23, 1979, Neilson column.

[130] See, for example, commentary in the *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 23, 1979.

[131] *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 16, 1979, 1. For a detailed, day-by-day account of the *Proceso* regime, including all the laws and decrees of the *juntas*, see Andrés Avellaneda, *Censura, autoritarismo y cultura: Argentina 1960-1983/1 y 2* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Política Argentina, Centro Editor de América Latina SA, 1986).

support. There was also increasing pressure from politicians, labor unions, and parts of the press and the judiciary to open up the system, curb the disappearances and assassinations, and schedule elections. Second, the economy was in shambles;[132] bankruptcies were at all-time highs, imports flooded the economy, speculation was rife, the cost of living was escalating, hundreds of thousands of workers were unemployed[133] and salaries had been drastically reduced. Consumer prices rose 255,000%, inflation increased to an annual rate of 1000%, and the foreign debt ballooned from $8 billion to $40 billion under the *Proceso*.[134] Argentina's per capita income, which had been 8th in world ranking in 1930 and 27th in 1971, dropped to 65th in 1980.[135] (Military officers, however, made high salaries, provoking bitter resentment; also, the military budget skyrocketed.)[136] The policies of Martínez de Hoz were increasingly seen as destructive of the national economy and baldly biased in favor of foreign interests;[137] this caused internal tensions in the armed forces as well, discussed below.

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[132] For example, long-time military ally Alvaro Alsogaray said in 1981 that economic disorganization was the worst since 1930. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 13, 1981. 1600 businesses went bankrupt from January to September 1981 alone.

[133] Between 1976 and 1981 36,000 auto workers lost their jobs as most auto companies went out of business; some 500,000 workers in the metalworkers union lost their jobs as well. William Horsey column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 7, 1981.

[134] Gregory Shank and Olga Talamante, "Introduction" to Nora Strejilevich, "Terror in Argentina," *Crime and Social Justice*, No. 30 (1987) 104.

[135] William Horsey column in *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 24, 1982.

[136] James Neilson column in *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 3, 1982 and William Horsey column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 14, 1982.

[137] For treatments of the economic policies of the *Proceso*--a crucial dimension which is not the primary focus of this study--see the following: Daniel Azpiazu, M. Khavisse, & E. M. Basualdo, *El Nuevo Poder Económico en la Argentina de los Años 80* (Buenos Aires: Hyspanamérica, Editorial Legasa, 1986); Juan Corradi, *The Fitful Republic*, op.cit, and "Military Government and State Terrorism in Argentina," in Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., eds., *The Politics of AntiPolitics*, op.cit.; William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

Third, international criticism was heightening. Under President Carter, criticism of Argentina's human rights record became policy; Congress cut off military aid in 1977.[138] (However, military-to-military contacts continued despite this;[139] further, the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires discouraged applying pressure to change the Argentine "tactic of disappearances" and echoed the rationales of the armed forces in secret cables.)[140] In 1979, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights visited Argentina and interviewed hundreds of families of the disappeared, who waited on long lines outside a temporary office set up for the Commission's use. These people were subject to intimidation by the intelligence apparatus which included men who ostentatiously photographed the people on line. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, an Argentine human rights advocate who had been tortured by the regime, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980, and the United

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[138] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 24, 1977, James Neilson column.

[139] Burns, *The Land...*, op.cit., 33. Burns says the Argentine military continued receiving sensitive military materiél, including nuclear material. Relations with the Inter-American Defense College continued; for example, a 90-officer delegation headed by a U.S. general spent a week in Argentina in 1979. *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 11, 1979, 9. Kissinger continued pressuring for greater U.S. support for the *Proceso*. In 1978 he said the United States should show greater understanding for the recent tragic phase of Argentine history. *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 25, 1978, 11. The generals celebrated the advent of the Reagan administration; General Galtieri became a U.S. favorite in the early Reagan years. He, along with intelligence officers Alberto Valín and Mario Menéndez, travelled to Washington to meet with U.S. officials in November 1981. *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 3, 1981, 11. In this era, Argentine officers secretly joined forces with the U.S. to train counterrevolutionary forces in Central America. See Monkman, "The Institutionalization..." op.cit.

[140] One such confidential cable, from the Embassy to the Secretary of State in September 1980, stated in part: "Disappearance is still the standard tactic for the Argentine security forces in dealing with captured terrorists [*sic*]. The military's commitment to this method is profoundly rooted in elements that range from effectiveness through expediency to cultural bias. We doubt whether international sanctions and opprobrium will, in themselves, cause the government to change the tactic...At the political level in this government, our contacts, even among the military, recognize these [political] costs and express their hope that eventually disappearances will cease..." Then the Embassy lists four military arguments (in sympathetic language) as to why the armed forces find this tactic useful. First, "It worked.", second, "It continues to be effective." and so on. Most revealing, the Embassy states: "Forcing the security forces to abandon this tactic could involve confrontation between the political level of the government and very powerful elements in the security forces. The potential costs of such a confrontation make it a very unattractive alternative to a government which must count on a military institution that is more or less unified." The Embassy recommended that the armed forces be encouraged to use a system of military justice to try civilians--hardly a solution amenable to promoting democratization. From confidential U.S. Embassy cable, reproduced in Guest, *Behind the Disappearances...*, op.cit., 430-435.

Nations began monitoring the case of Argentina in that year as well. Human rights and the dirty war were becoming central issues in world opinion.

The growing discontent in Argentina intensified the internal conflicts both within and among the three forces. Retired officers openly attacked Martínez de Hoz; former *junta* member Admiral Massera denounced the economic policies as contrary to the original goals of the *Proceso*.[141] Retired army General Acdel Vilas said the neoliberal policies would cause "the progressive and permanent re-establishment of subversion...",[142] reflecting the "old" national-security doctrine which believed "development" necessary to prevent the growth of insurgency. In short, an oblique internal struggle developed within the armed forces, along the lines of the traditional liberal-rightist versus nationalist split; important sectors of the air force, the navy, and the army turned against the neoliberal policies of the government. These internal divisions could be detected by the shifts in the *juntas* over the years of the *Proceso*.[143] These internal divisions, as well as rising social protest, were the compelling motivation for the *junta's* ill-taken decision to invade the Malvinas in 1982, thereby engineering its own military and political defeat.[144]

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[141] *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 19, 1978, Neilson column. Massera sought to build a career as a neo-populist politician after he retired from the navy.

[142] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 3, 1978, 9.

[143] Viola's brief term as president represented a turning away from neoliberal policies, a gradual opening, and a drift toward populist policies; he was overthrown in an internal coup by hard-liner Galtieri, the general supported by the Reagan administration.

[144] Interview with Adolfo Pérez Esquivel conducted by author, September 1, 1992. Pérez Esquivel, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, believes that the invasion--which took place several months earlier than originally planned--was prompted by the growing social resistance manifested by the massive demonstration on March 30, 1982 by labor, students, and party activists protesting the dictatorship and the situation of poor salaries, closing of factories, and repression. This demonstration was violently repressed, and three days later, on April 2, the armed forces launched the invasion. For analyses of the Malvinas war, see *Informe Rattenbach: El Drama de Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Espartaco, 1988) (a secret internal assessment by the armed forces leaked to the press); Alejandro Dabat and Luis Lorenzano, *Argentina: The Malvinas and the End of Military Rule* (London: Verso, 1984) [original Spanish edition published 1982]; Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba Stonehouse, *Signals of War: The Falklands Conflict of 1982* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

The Malvinas and the Failures of the *Proceso*

General Leopoldo Galtieri, then head of the *junta*, believed he had the implicit support of the Reagan administration for the invasion. The Reagan administration had sought the assistance of the Argentine armed forces in its clandestine war against the revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.[145] After the disaster of the war, the regime imploded: the navy and the air force left the *junta* due to disagreements with the army concerning precisely the schedule for a controlled transition to civilian rule.

In short, the Malvinas defeat made the case of Argentina unique among the Latin American transitions to civilian rule in the 1980s. In Argentina, structures of the national-security state were weakened before civilians took office due to the internal wrangling and loss of will to govern within the armed forces after the defeat. However, the armed forces--particularly the army--had no intention of relinquishing their *political* power or many objectives and prerogatives of the *Proceso*, despite the generally accepted necessity to return governing to civilians. One key internal document, "Bases y Antecedentes para la Polftica Militar del Gobierno Constitucional"[146] ["Bases and Antecedents for the Military Policy of the Constitutional Government"], analyzed the current situation in November 1982 in this manner:

> "(1) The political and military defeat (Malvinas) of the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (PRN)* implies the virtual exhaustion of the scheme of military power of the corporative type implemented since March 1976, structured upon the basis of the supreme power of the Military *Junta* and the egalitarian participation of the three

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[145] The Argentines trained and helped supply the Nicaraguan *contra* (counterrevolutionary) forces for about two years, until the Malvinas war, when the U.S. government backed the British. The *junta* was also instrumental in training and directing right-wing military forces in counterinsurgency and coups in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Galtieri angrily withdrew most Argentine forces from Central America after the Malvinas war.

[146] Document acquired by author, dated November 1982. This important document, cited earlier, seemed to be essentially the views and "suggestions" of the army as presented to key civilians, in negotiations to determine the policies of the future civilian government. For example, it counsels civilians to "avoid the subject of the disappeared" on page 35.

> forces...(2) Especially, *the military defeat in the conflict with Great Britain*--which derives essentially from an error of strategic-political conception--has brought to light the failures and anachronisms of our military structure, in aspects specifically military, which signify the necessity of 'revising' the bases and norms upon which our Armed Forces are organized. (3) In spite of this, and although the present failure implies the Armed Forces will not return to the exercise of political power in the next years, it is undoubtedly true that, as is the case in the developing countries, in particular the Latin American nations and most especially in Argentina, given the evidence of the political history of this century, *the Armed Forces are going to have an important presence in the institutional scheme as a factor of power*."[147] [emphasis in original]

The same document assessed the internal crisis in the armed forces in a revealing section:

> "(5) In these moments, it can be affirmed that *the officer corps of the Armed Forces find themselves in a profound crisis of an ideological type, characterized by three factors:*
> a) The *re-evaluation of the international policy* which the conflict with Great Britain has implied, which has signified a revision of the military alliance policy regarding the West and in particular with the U.S., in wide sectors of the officer corps, sparking a renewed appreciation for the possibilities of the "third position."
> b) *The failure of the liberal economic policy* represented by Martínez de Hoz, which has meant the reassessment of the dogmas and indoctrination imposed upon the officer corps since 1976...
> c) *The possibility of the revision of what occurred in the struggle against subversion vis-à-vis* the campaign on the theme of the disappeared, which also produces an important ideological impact, and some sectors fear that the existence of a democratic system implies automatically the prosecution of military men who struggled against subversion, which in fact has been almost all of the officer corps given the 'rotating' system implemented since 1975 in the completion of functions of this type.
> d) Finally, it is crucial to highlight that *the theme of the corruption of the higher ranks*, accentuated by the diverse denunciations in recent weeks, as well as the growing and clear loss of prestige of the military institutions before public opinion; this has provoked a profound crisis in wide sectors of the younger officers, which has become in many cases a real crisis of vocation, resulting in numerous requests for retirement.
> (6) Despite all these antecedents, *the Constitutional Government will find itself at the end of 1983 with a military structure with a great quota of power within the global structure of the state...*"[148] [emphases in original]

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[147] "Bases y Antecedentes para la Política Militar del Gobierno Constitucional," ibid., 1-2.

[148] Ibid., 2-4.

Clearly, the internal military crisis centered around the implicit and explicit assumptions of the national-security doctrine. First, the military that esteemed its ties with and professed defense of the Western Christian world had been defeated by an alliance of those very nations. There was no way to explain this through the dichotomous anticommunist prism of the East-West struggle. Second, the armed forces had performed generally badly in military combat (the air force--also the least involved in the dirty war--had returned the most credible performance). This realization raised doubts as to the wisdom of the policy of internal repression and the key hypothesis of conflict: the counterrevolutionary war. Third, the policies of Martínez de Hoz, which had caused the *Proceso* to lose support from many of its original domestic backers, including the rural oligarchy, national business, and some of the right-wing union leaders, had also troubled sectors of the armed forces. This was the internal struggle between the "old" national-security doctrine, which had stressed security and *development*, and the "new" national-security doctrine, with overriding weight placed upon the "struggle against subversion." Clearly, the *Proceso* leaders had sacrificed "development" in an effort to remake the economy and obtain quick cash and foreign backing through the international banks and the IMF, opening Argentina's economy to cheap imports and many sectors to international capital as well.

However, the bulk of the state enterprises linked to the military continued--and even grew--under the *Proceso*. For example, liberal-rightist General López Aufrank, who headed Acindar Steel in 1981, said that the failure of the state to get out of business was the reason why the dollar was currently worth 8000 Argentine pesos.[149] Almost as a response, a nationalist general, Juan Trimarco, said a few days later that the army was firmly linked to the productive apparatus and

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[149] Column by William Horsey, *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 5, 1981. Horsey said there were 800 state enterprises at that time, more than the number at the beginning of the *Proceso*.

would help to increase production.[150] Martínez de Hoz regarded the armed forces' nationalist sectors as a major roadblock to his privatization and restructuring plans;[151] as Ames puts it, "...neoliberals were rarely interested in investing in domestic industry. Moreover, technocrats like Martínez de Hoz considered the military and its economic interests to be a major obstacle to their plans to shrink the state."[152] Clearly, the neoliberal measures of Martínez de Hoz clashed with the developmentalist views still persisting in the military. The "security and development" ideology still aroused sympathies within wide sectors of the armed forces. The old military idea that national power resided in national control of strategic industries and resources still commanded support. In other words, although the liberal-rightist wing of the army was clearly dominant in the regime, there was growing discontent with the free-market economic policy throughout the officer corps.

Given the reluctance of the armed forces to relinquish their hold on state enterprises, it was clear that the interests of the military institution as a whole did not always converge with (or "express") the interests of its liberal-rightist backers (both domestic and foreign banking- and finance-linked interests). This point supports the analysis discussed in Chapter 1 that the previous *confluence* of interests between the armed forces and some of its former allies (mainly dominant economic elites with transnational links) was evaporating. In theoretical terms, this development belies an instrumentalist view of the military state; the relationship between the state and its supporting coalition of class and social forces was more complex.

The Malvinas war obliterated whatever vestiges of acceptance remained for the dictatorship

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[150] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 11, 1981, 9.

[151] For a succinct treatment of the military's economic power during the *Proceso*, see Burns, *The Land...*, op.cit., 15-18. He argues that the military conglomerate DGFM owned significant stocks in 22 leading companies, only 9 of which were military-related; and that the massive arms purchases of the armed forces also undermined the neoliberal program.

[152] Barry Ames, "Military and Society in Latin America," *Latin America Research Review*, No. 2, (1988) 167.

from all social sectors. Many elements of the popular classes were openly bitter and angry and many elite sectors had come to regard the armed forces as unreliable, indeed irrational, partners. The three forces engaged in mutual blame while most states in the international arena treated Argentina as a pariah. Yet despite all this, *the armed forces controlled the timing and unfolding of the transition process, which occurred gradually over a 18-month period*, imposing new statutes regulating political parties and new electoral rules, issuing various statements about what would and would not be permitted by the civilian government, and tightly restricting the media. Further, a new wave of high-visibility disappearances and murders began, ostensibly by "forces out of control" of the military regime, "disciplining" the population with new terror. Internal coup threats and plots by hard-line sectors of the army opposed to a civilian transition abounded, and were discussed openly by the press as the *golpistas* approached civilian sectors for support. In official statements, the army made clear that the dirty war would be off-bounds as far as civilian investigation or justice after the transition. In sum, the transition was *not* precisely a "transition by collapse" as O'Donnell argues,[153] in my view. Rather, despite its defeat by a First World power and the absence of domestic or international support, the Argentine armed forces retained substantial power *vis-à-vis* civil society.

New Attempts to Institutionalize the Objectives of the *Proceso*

Beginning in 1981 and especially after the 1982 Malvinas defeat, the regime and its advisers stepped up their planning for the expected future civilian government in order to insure the protection of key military values, prerogatives and interests. A series of documents and demands were issued in succession, which revealed the overriding concerns of the armed forces (particularly

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[153] See Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Various Crises, and Problematic Democratizations," paper presented at conference "Democracia, Mercados, y Reformas Estructurales en América Latina," Buenos Aires, March 1992.

the army). In 1981, internal documents still sought to construct a "movement of national opinion;"[154] this objective was evidently abandoned after the Malvinas defeat. In August of 1981, the major parties formed a confederation called the *Multipartidaria* with the blessings of the armed forces. This was the entity which participated in conversations with the *junta* and accepted the concept of the "military-civilian convergence" route to civilian government.[155] However, by 1982 the parties, the unions and other sectors--following the lead of the human rights organizations--began to act more defiantly.

In February 1982, high military sources leaked to journalists that the new Parties Statute being prepared by the *junta* would require a ban on investigation of the dirty war in exchange for democratization.[156] In March, the banned CGT called for a mass demonstration to protest the denationalization policies and speculation of the *Proceso*. On March 30, the demonstration took place and constituted the largest and most militant gathering since 1976. It was violently repressed, and three days later, the armed forces invaded the Malvinas.

In August 1982, General Reynaldo Bignone--then acting president, after the *junta* of the three forces disintegrated--announced that the Party Statute would significantly upgrade the requirements for parties to be authorized to participate. Membership lists had to be re-started from scratch; national parties were required to have 36,000 members and the ceiling moved up from a base of one

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[154] For example, one such confidential working document called "Movimiento de Opinión Nacional (MON)," dated February 18, 1981, said the armed forces intended to select the president for the period 1984-1987. It analyzed in depth all the political forces in the country--the union movement, the Radical and Peronist parties, and stressed that the armed forces needed to continue "to foment the divisions" in Peronism and support the "most 'moderate' sectors of the Radicals" (page 9), while also "maintaining the divisions within the union sector" (page 8). Document in possession of author.

[155] *Buenos Aires Herald* political analyst James Neilson noted in August 1981 that this entity was much more conciliatory that the individual parties had previously been, and that the friendly attitude of the military generated widespread suspicions that there had been a pact between the *junta* and the *Multipartidaria*. *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 9, 1981.

[156] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 26, 1982, 11.

million voters (as specified in the previous legislation instituted under Illia) to two million. Additionally, the new Statute established that the current heads of the parties--who were negotiating with the military regarding the "military-civilian convergence"[157]--were required to organize the internal elections of the parties,[158] giving them a decided edge. Only six parties out of Argentina's 16 met the requirements of the new Statute.[159] The military government was moving to establish a guardian-style system, restricting and constraining the civilian democratic forces.

In October, General Bignone asserted that the state of siege would be maintained in Argentina, and the holding of elections would depend on "conditions," adding: "The state cannot permit any means which in a direct or indirect way may help a return to the anguish suffered by the nation not so long ago."[160] Also in that month, General Antonio Bussi said that the armed forces would make "reasonable" concessions to allow civilian government, but insisted that the military wanted guarantees that there would be no parliamentary investigation of the dirty war.[161] Antonio Cafiero, a Peronist party leader, announced in October that the Peronists were drawing up a five-year plan based on "national reconciliation."[162] In October, five months after the Malvinas defeat, the military floated a proposed pact with the parties, whose driving force was Bussi;[163] it demanded

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[157] Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was approached by both the Radicals and Peronists in this period, who tried to incorporate him into a campaign to "put the human rights issue behind us" and "negotiate the policy of human rights" in order to speed the transition to democracy. He refused, insisting that human rights were not negotiable, and demanded that justice be applied. Interviews with Adolfo Pérez Esquivel conducted by author, June 19 and September 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[158] George Hatch, "Statutes to Foster Stronger, Fewer Parties?" *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 6, 1982.

[159] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 4, 1982, 1 and August 5, 1982, 11. *Convicción* reprinted the entire law on August 28, 1982.

[160] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 1, 1982, 11.

[161] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 10, 1982, James Neilson column.

[162] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 3, 1982, 13.

[163] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 17, 1982, James Neilson column.

that civilians accept military conditions *vis-à-vis* the judicial system, universities, the future role of the armed forces, labor union legislation, wages and unemployment, economic policy, the moral state of the nation, foreign policy, and the dirty war.[164] In November, the reconstituted *junta* issued a document entitled "Military *Junta's* Directive to the National Executive Power for Concertation" which consisted of a total of 25 conditions to be agreed upon before a civilian transition, dealing with continuation of the state of siege, the struggle against terrorism, agreements regarding the disappeared, the foreign debt, the Beagle channel dispute with Chile, the 1984 budget, education, guarantees of the "constitutional presence of the armed forces in the next national government,"[165] and so on.

At this stage, Raúl Alfonsín, who headed a dissident wing of the Radical Party opposed to the conciliatory policy of party head Ricardo Balbín, was the only prominent politician taking a firm and ethical stand against negotiations on human rights and a pact with the military. On October 30, 1982, he stated, "The regime has not abandoned power; it has abandoned terrain and is entrenched in its last line of defense, from where it is preparing to counter-attack."[166] As hundreds of unmarked graves near military garrisons were discovered in this period, support for the human rights organizations was growing and coup rumors increased. On November 20, the *Multipartidaria* shocked the *junta* by rejecting its pact.[167] In December, 100,000 people marched for democracy in the Plaza de Mayo--the biggest demonstration since the pre-Malvinas gathering--and again the *junta* fiercely repressed the march with heavily armed riot police.[168] One demonstrator was killed

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[164] *Buenos Aires Herald*, ibid.

[165] *Clarín*, November 12, 1982.

[166] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 31, 1982.

[167] *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 21, 1982, James Neilson column.

[168] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 17, 1982, 1.

by a gunman in a Ford Falcon; the police blamed the Montoneros.[169]

In April 1983 the armed forces attempted to close the increasingly volatile issue of human rights and the dirty war by issuing its "Final Report on the War against Subversion and Terrorism" and its Institutional Act. The "Final Report" was a long justification for the dirty war methods of the *Proceso*, stating that Argentina had been "the target of terrorist aggression" and that only God, or history, could judge the armed forces. The document argued that the 1975 constitutional government had authorized the war against subversion (despite the fact that the armed forces overthrew that government) and affirmed that all of the "disappeared" had been terrorists, or had gone into hiding or exile. Under its subhead "Final Considerations," the *junta* warned:

> "The victory obtained at such a high price counted with the consensus of the citizenry...Through this attitude of the population it is clear that the wish of the entire nation is to put an end to this painful chapter in our history and to begin, in unity and freedom, the definitive constitutional institutionalization of the republic...Those who have given their lives to fight the terrorist scourge deserve our eternal homage of respect and gratitude...Reconciliation is a difficult beginning to an age of maturity and responsibility...The information and explanations given in this document are all that the armed forces are prepared to give to the nation concerning the results and consequences of the war against subversion and terrorism...The actions carried out by members of the armed forces in the operations conducted in this war shall be considered acts of service; the armed forces took action and will do so again whenever it is necessary to carry out a mandate from the nation's government..."[170]

The document met with outraged responses from the general population and increasingly bold politicians. For example, Christian Democrat Néstor Vicente said, "The statement is irresponsible, one-sided, grotesque. It is the first time in the world's history that a genocide is recognized by the very people responsible for it. It is as though Hitler, in a press conference, had announced the extermination of six million Jews."[171] On May 4, the Pope condemned the "Final Report" before

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[169] Ibid.

[170] "Final Document," reprinted in *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1983, 9.

[171] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 2, 1983, 3.

60,000 people in Vatican Square;[172] other governments, especially in Europe, issued strong condemnations as well. In Buenos Aires, thousands of Argentines demonstrated against it.[173] The Reagan State Department, however, took two weeks to issue a weak statement expressing "disappointment."[174]

Simultaneously, the military government issued an "Institutional Act" which stated that all military operations were undertaken under orders by the high command and the constitutional government of Isabel[175] to insure that any alleged crimes would be investigated by military and not civilian courts.[176] The government and its advisers were also secretly negotiating with key party leaders regarding the coming transition and the form of civilian government. The document mentioned earlier, "Bases y Antecedentes para la Polftica Militar del Gobierno Constitucional"[177] of November 1982, was apparently a policy document outlining the preferred approaches for the civilian government to take regarding the military. It suggested, for example, that in the area of "Security and Intelligence, it appears convenient to maintain an adequate presence and military control, to avoid the possibility that the armed forces are unaware of a resurgence of

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[172] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 5, 1983, 1.

[173] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 12, 1983.

[174] For an overview of the Final Document, the international response, and a criticism of the United States response, see Americas Watch, "The Argentine Military *Junta's* 'Final Document': A Call for Condemnation," May 20, 1983. The Reagan administration's statement read, in full: "We share the sense of disappointment others have expressed that an occasion has been lost to begin the resolution of this question. It is an issue which the Argentines themselves must resolve. We have consistently encouraged the authorities to provide as complete a report as possible on the fate of the disappeared." Cited in Americas Watch Report, 10.

[175] *Supra* note 74. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1983, 1. The decree was specifically aimed to justify the dirty war as a legal and constitutional act, thereby heading off judicial investigations under the new civilian government.

[176] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 24, 1983, Dan Newland column.

[177] Document acquired by author, op.cit., November 1982.

subversion..."[178] It also recommended that retired officers be appointed to head the various intelligence organizations[179] under the democratic government. This issue--control of the vast intelligence apparatus--also became a major conflict between the armed forces and the democratizing forces in the 1980s.

In April Alfonsín and other Radicals began denouncing an emerging "military-union pact" which was aimed at exchanging immunity for the violations of human rights for a Peronist win in the elections.[180] Alfonsín accused Lorenzo Miguel, right-wing Peronist union leader, Herminio Iglesias, another right-wing Peronist, and others of plotting with Generals Nicolaides, Trimarco, Suárez Nelson and possibly others.[181] This criticism by Alfonsín, and his presentation of himself as the only presidential candidate who would hold the military accountable and reinstitute ethics and human rights in government, were widely seen as the elements that resulted in his victory. On May 2, 1983, Alfonsín stated that regarding the alleged crimes by the military, "[these] will not only have to be judged by history, but also tried by regular civilian courts."[182] Later, however, he reversed himself on this issue, prompting speculation that he had arrived at some sort of agreement with the military.[183]

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[178] "Bases y Antecedentes..." 35.

[179] Ibid., 24.

[180] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1983, 13 and May 2, 1983, 7.

[181] It should be recalled that Suárez Nelson was named by an admitted Triple A member as the operational chief of that organization after López Rega's ouster.

[182] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 3, 1983, 1.

[183] Another issue that sparked suspicions of an Alfonsín agreement with the military in the press and the public was the 1983 *Ley de Ministerios*, Law 23,023. This law was negotiated between aides of Alfonsín and General Bignone after Alfonsín won the election. Alfonsín requested that the military government announce the 1984 budget in order to avoid a Congressional showdown with the Peronists after the transition. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 2 and 10, 1983. A top Radical aide stressed the importance of this law: he said that without this agreement, the new government would have been under the tutelage of the armed forces. Key articles were 7 and 12; before these changes the armed forces were "lords of war and peace;" without

In May, 1983, rumors circulated that the military government was preparing a self-amnesty law called the National Pacification Law.[184] Two leftist Peronists were abducted by security forces that same month in Rosario--in plain sight of witnesses--and reappeared dead; the police insisted they had been killed in a shoot-out despite signs of torture.[185] This was another in a series of high-profile killings, bearing the marks of the disappearances of the worst years of the dirty war, carried out in this period. By now, however, large sectors of civil society had become mobilized in the cause of human rights; 30,000 people marched in protest a few days later.[186] The *junta* also claimed the Montoneros were planning a major campaign to murder union leaders and infiltrate organizations, a statement met with contempt by most Argentines.[187] It was clear the armed forces were manipulating the fear of terrorism or a "subversive resurgence" to justify an enduring military

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these changes, they would have controlled an economic empire and a massive intelligence apparatus. Interview with José Manuel Ugarte, Radical aide, conducted by author, October 26, 1992, Buenos Aires. The question remained: what did Alfonsín exchange for this agreement and these concessions by the outgoing regime? *Many--including Ugarte--suspect that Alfonsín agreed to limit the trials of the military for human rights violations.* In another interview, he said: "...before this law, the armed forces controlled a very important part of the country. Internal security, intelligence, a number of enterprises; all this was controlled by the armed forces. And with this law, which came from the consensus of Alfonsín and Bignone, all this disappeared. With simple mechanisms. First, it eliminated the commanders-in-chief of the three forces. And it established that the president assumed all the functions that corresponded to these chiefs. With a stroke of the pen. And all the organisms, enterprises, that depended on them, would now depend on the Minister of Defense. First. And second, it superseded the requirement that everything outside the military sphere would be under the control of the armed forces; that is, all posts not specifically within the structures of the armed forces would be eliminated from their control. From the position of Secretary of SIDE, to other important leadership positions within SIDE, the presidency of the *Centro Nacional de Inteligencia*, to the chief of the federal police, to the post of chief of the Federal Penitentiary Service--to mention only a few examples--had to be vacated by the armed forces. The same was true for officers in charge of various state enterprises. All this disappeared. It was a big concession, which certainly had to have corresponding concession from the other side...because in politics, there is never a concession without a counter-concession, no? This is something I could never know; I wasn't in these negotiations. I have an idea, an opinion, a conjecture--good or bad--an opinion without proof..." Later he told me he suspected an agreement on limiting the trials. Interview with José Manuel Ugarte conducted by author, October 9, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[184] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 26, 1983, 11.

[185] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 18, 1983, 1.

[186] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 21, 1983, 1.

[187] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 21, 1983, 8.

presence and cow the increasingly militant population.

On May 29, on Army Day, General Nicolaides said in a warning speech: "Subversion is reorganizing itself to recover lost ground, using subtle methods of infiltration and political training."[188] In June, the *junta* issued a new Electoral Law[189] which stated that the mayor of Buenos Aires would be appointed, not elected, and instituted a system where the electoral college vote--not the popular vote--determined the winner of a presidential election.[190] These mechanisms were clearly aimed at reducing the impact of popular participation and installing the framework for a guardian model. Retired general Onganía was one of many hard-line officers who made a public statement which seemed to call for a coup to prevent the transition to democracy, saying "...there are times in the history of a people when it is the duty of all men of good will--and certainly of military servicemen--to place the defense of the nation's physical and moral well-being above legal considerations."[191]

In July, with four months until the election, Alfonsín announced his human rights policy. He presented his concept of "three levels" of responsibility when judging human rights abuses by the military: distinguishing between those who gave the orders, those who carried them out, and those who committed excesses.[192] The *100 Medidas* (*100 Measures*), the platform of the Radicals

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[188] Quoted in *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 30, 1983, 7.

[189] *Clarín*, June 17, 1983

[190] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 29, 1983, 1 and James Neilson column.

[191] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 17, 1983, 11.

[192] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 2, 1983, James Neilson column. Prior to the election, Alfonsín also appointed a working group of three retired officers sympathetic to the Radicals and three civilians, to prepare a draft military policy. This group recommended a major military reform, including a complete restructuring/streamlining, a new military mission, revamped education, and drastic reduction of the military budget. They stressed the danger of allowing the army to persist in its present form, referring to its excessive size, deployment, and ideological mission. However, Alfonsín never followed this advice. Interview with Col. Gustavo Cáceres (ret.), a member of the group, conducted by author, October 19, 1992, Buenos Aires.

for the presidential election, was issued that month as well. It contained extensive policy plans for reinstituting ethics in government, holding the armed forces accountable, demilitarizing society and the state, and many other issues.[193] Meanwhile, Italo Luder, the Peronist candidate, said publicly that any self-amnesty by the military would "have juridically irreversible effects."[194] Luder's message was that the Peronists would not attempt to hold the military accountable for human rights violations.[195]

The U.S. Embassy clearly preferred the Peronists to Alfonsín, whose social-democratic ideas and pledges to hold the military accountable made him suspect to the Reagan administration. According to political columnist James Neilson of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, the State Department "had put its money on the Peronists and is going out of its way to woo them...the Peronists...seem to have made the U.S. Embassy here their favorite clubhouse..."[196] This changed U.S. attitude toward the Peronists was similar to that of key sectors of the Argentine military, which now preferred their old Peronist opponents to Alfonsín for similar reasons.

On August 9, army chief Nicolaides told his troops not to comply with any civilian summonses to appear before civilian courts without submitting them first to the military command "for study."[197] Finally, on September 23, 1983, the *junta* issued the National Pacification Law,

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[193] Partido Unión Cívica Radical, *100 Medidas*, July 1983.

[194] See *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 7, 1983, James Neilson column.

[195] There was a significant component of self-interest in this decision. As we saw in Chapter 3, the Triple A was created by right-wing Peronists, under Minister of Social Welfare José López Rega; moreover, union leaders and the Peronists in general had never been known for their respect for human rights. In the trial of the *juntas*, right-wing union leaders (who had maintained good relations with the *Proceso*) testified that they had not been aware of disappearances of rank-and-file workers, sparking outrage in Argentina. See press reports from June 20 and 21, 1985.

[196] See *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 10, 1983.

[197] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 10, 1983, 11.

its self-amnesty law covering the period from May 25, 1973 to June 17, 1982.[198] Four days later, the *junta* issued an anti-terrorist law (Law 22,928) with the Orwellian name of "Law for the Defense of Democracy."[199] This law permitted police to search homes without warrants, tap phones and open mail, and take other extra-legal measures. These attempts to install a guardian system increased the outraged outpouring of rejection by all sectors of society.

On October 10, 1983, the country's elections were held. Soon it became clear--to the astonishment of many--that Alfonsín had won.[200] His victory prevented the transition to a much more militarized civilian government, similar to the cases of Chile or Brazil, for example. If the Peronists had won there would likely have been no process of justice to hold the military accountable (given candidate Luder's attitude), and the presence of the military in government would undoubtedly have been significantly greater. As one retired general said, "As far as the army is concerned, the very worst possible candidate has won...A Peronist government would have been an offshoot of the regime."[201] This was precisely why Alfonsín won the election, in the eyes of many analysts. He took office on December 10, 1983.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the second national-security state utilized ideologies, structures

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[198] Note the beginning date was 1973, the year civilian government was reinstated and three years before the 1976 coup. *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 24, 1983, 1.

[199] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 28, 1983, 1.

[200] As we have seen, the Justicialist, or Peronist, Party had frequently been proscribed by the military. When Peronists were allowed to vote and the party was not proscribed, the Peronist Party had won every free election after 1943. This time there was significant Peronist electoral support for Alfonsín, largely because PJ candidate Luder was seen as too linked to the traditional right-wing union-military corporate alliance, and less than committed to human rights. The women's vote, interestingly, was solidly for Alfonsín. See electoral analyses by Cecilia Kaplan and Susana Pérez, explained in "Por qué perdió el peronismo," *Gente*, Año 18 No. 954, (November 3 1983), 88-90.

[201] The general was not named. *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 3, 1983, 1.

and counterinsurgency methods based on the military's national-security vision in order to drastically reshape Argentina's society. The armed forces intended for the national-security state to be permanent, although they expected to eventually allow civilians to take office. That is, *the documentation provided in this chapter shows that the armed forces themselves were perfectly aware of the distinctions between state, regime and government.* They recognized the fact that permanent structures of the national-security state and military control of the state would insure military guardianship over any civilian government. The armed forces intended to keep the relations of domination intact, through control of the political power embodied by the state, while permitting civilians to replace them in governmental positions. This lends support to the core hypothesis of this study regarding the political impact of persisting structures of the national-security state.

The Malvinas defeat and the human rights atrocities of the *Proceso*, as well as the regime's failed economic policies, set into motion a complex wave of events the armed forces were unable to completely control, despite their attempts, and resulted in the defeat of most of their plans for the transition. As we saw in this chapter, the most crucial factors in this lack of control were the increasing internal incoherence of the armed forces and growing social rejection. These factors meant that civil society gained leeway in 1983, opening the political space for the civilian regime to impose reforms *without* pacts greatly favoring the interests of the armed forces. In short, developments in Argentina meant that the armed forces were unable to implement their detailed plans for a controlled transition and an extended tutelary civilian government, or guardian system.

Argentina's transition was thus different than that of Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and Guatemala (among others) because it was not a "pacted transition" nor a "transition by imposition" in the sense used by Karl and Schmitter. However, from the first days of the civilian regime, it was clear that Alfonsín intended to try to placate the armed forces, despite overwhelming popular and international support for major transformations in the militarized state and society. The Radicals insist to this day

that no agreements were made with the armed forces, yet there is evidence that "bargaining" was in progress even before Alfonsín took office. This method of dealing with the armed forces became more pronounced during Alfonsín's term. Bargaining, however, tended to limit the democratization process by allowing military prerogatives to remain or be restored, thus perpetuating certain structures and ideologies of the national-security state. As the next chapters demonstrate, the strategy of bargaining actually encouraged the most intransigent and extremist sectors of the armed forces, centered mainly in the intelligence and commando units, to become more resistant and more bold in their struggle to confine the democratization process.

part II

the democratic transition: the alfonsín and menem administrations

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

In Chapter 1, we noted that the core hypotheses of this study generated four expectations, essentially regarding the degree of continuity of military national-security ideology, structures, and "dirty war" methods after the democratic transition, and the level of military political intervention. Part II of this study provides evidence to test the validity of the continuity formulation. That is, the next five chapters examine the continuity of national-security ideology (Chapter 5); the persistence of core national-security structures and organizations (Chapter 6); the continuity of dirty-war methods (Chapter 7); and the ways in which military officers intervened in politics to achieve their aims (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 assesses the continuity of these trends in the first years of the Menem administration. Each chapter examines the effects of these four elements upon the democratization process. While a division among the four categories above has been made for the purposes of analytical clarity and organization, in reality they overlap and intertwine. For this reason, each chapter builds upon the evidence in previous chapters in a cumulative process of documenting the argument.

The first expectation was that the national-security values and ideology of the armed forces would persist after the transition to civilian government, reflected in military doctrine, statements and hypotheses of conflict, which would continue to highlight national-security themes. Such themes would include "ideological war" between "subversion" and the armed forces; views of various civilians or social sectors, particularly those posing a political challenge to military values and prerogatives, as "subversive;" and a focus on *internal* enemies and the necessity for domestic intelligence as key military missions.

The second expectation was that military counterrevolutionary and repressive structures and organizations would persist in the state after the transition to civilian government. These national-

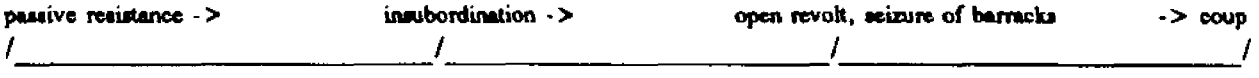
security structures had been created by the militaries in Latin American states in order to conduct the struggle against "subversion" on military, political and ideological levels. These structures included counterinsurgency organizations, national-security bodies, internal security systems, intelligence apparatuses and informant networks, clandestine prison, torture and execution systems, and internal security laws and decrees which institutionalized the political and tutelary role of the armed forces in the political life of the nation. Enduring national-security structures, according to the expectation, would continue to act beyond the control of the civilian government after the transition. Furthermore, we would expect the armed forces to resist civilian downsizing or dismantling of their national-security and intelligence structures.

The third expectation was that similar counterrevolutionary methods and/or terrorist operations by the armed and/or security forces (or politicized sectors thereof) would continue after the transition. What I have characterized as "dirty war methods" in this study refer to two broad areas. The first is right-wing terrorist practices such as bombings, politically-motivated attacks, torture or disappearance; repressive or counterrevolutionary activities; and intelligence-related operations such as the use of infiltration, provocation, disinformation and/or deception (e.g., PSYOPS). The second broad category includes abusive methods used by the military and security forces in their treatment of conscripts and the civilian population.

Clearly, then, *dirty war methods* as used here are closely linked with *ideology* and *structures*. While the *ideology* of national-security provides a political-strategic orientation and set of beliefs, and national-security *structures* provide the machinery necessary to implement them, *methods* in this sense consists of the concrete operations undertaken in practice. Therefore, such methods employed by the military and security forces provide evidence of the persistence of both national-security structures and ideology.

The fourth expectation was that the armed forces or sectors thereof would attempt to pressure

civilian government by means of various extra-legal mechanisms to retain or expand their political influence and control. The expected results of this would be that a) the interests and demands of the armed forces would be reflected in public policy, beyond military and defense issues, and b) armed forces' involvement would continue in civilian functions. That is, in this study the term "political intervention" has a particular meaning. It is defined here to mean *open, extra-legal, intrusive and/or coercive means* of affecting the configuration of power or imposing the will of the military upon the civilian state and society. Forms of political pressure *within the system*, such as the pressure exerted by the chiefs-of-staff in the Senate debate on the Defense Law, are not subsumed under this definition; this form of political lobbying by the military is common in all countries. Also, *political intervention* as used here is distinguished from dirty war *methods* by the fact that the latter tend to be characterized by abuses of the right to life and other human rights. The former is openly intrusive and coercive and aimed to obtaining increased political power. The uprisings by the *carapintadas*--insurrectionist officers known by their camouflage paint--are the key example. Forms of political intervention as used here may be conceptualized along a graded scale from passive resistance to civilian orders, to rejection of those orders via insubordinate statements or activities, to open revolt or seizure of barracks, as in the *carapintada* uprisings, to the extreme action: a coup.



All of these methods are considered means of *political* intervention because they utilize extra-professional and extra-legal methods to gain political advantage, assert the interests and values of the armed forces or a faction thereof, and induce civilian authorities to accept the military's perspective or prerogative. This study presents evidence to demonstrate that while the uprisings by

the *carapintadas* certainly represented a struggle for power within the military, they were also aimed at achieving *political* objectives. These objectives included reversing policies of the civilian government, narrowing the political opening, and attempting to mold the democratic system to conform to a tutelary, guardian model in which the civilian political authorities were forced to respond to military demands. Further, the high command of the armed forces, while opposing the methods of the *carapintadas*, often acted to support their *goals*, thus trapping the Alfonsín administration in a political pincer movement, pressed by both "extremists" and "loyalists."

CHAPTER 5

CONTINUITY OF NATIONAL-SECURITY IDEOLOGY AFTER THE TRANSITION

"Here we enter the third variable of the trilogy [subversion] which, responding to various ideological signs and using various procedures--from open ones, to armed organizations, to the level of more insidious ones--attempts to take over political power from the state under attack. Because it will use any means, it cooperates with everything serving to agitate, corrupt, dissolve or destroy those societies structured in accord with traditional American canons."

Argentine Army Chief-of-Staff General José Caridi, addressing the secret XVII Conference of American Armies, 1987

"The doctrine of the Proceso is still included in the [military academy] curriculum, and the 'destruction' of the armed forces is explained as a maneuver of the traitorous enemy that has lodged in sectors of the constitutional government and is now taking advantage of the fledgling democracy...considerable parts of the military sector still nurture hopes for a coup."

From a book by CEMIDA officers, 1987[1]

This chapter examines the continuity of the national-security doctrine after the transition to civilian rule with the election of Alfonsín in 1983. Events are outlined, and statements, speeches and writings of leading military officers and clandestine *comando* groups are analyzed over the time period, in order to assess whether or not the military mission, national-security doctrine and hypotheses of conflict began to change. We examine three key issue areas: 1) the struggle over the historical memory of the dirty war, and the military campaign to vindicate and achieve acceptance and praise for it, 2) military views regarding the infiltration of "subversion" in the civilian government and transition process itself, and 3) evidence of a continuing independent and parallel policy-making capability carried out by the armed forces. The evidence demonstrates that military voices continued projecting national-security themes such as the "ideological war with subversion"

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[1] CEMIDA, *Centro de Militares para la Democracia Argentina* (Center of Military Men for Argentine Democracy) is an organization of retired officers formed in 1984, opposed to the *Proceso* and the national-security doctrine and in support of democracy. See José Luis García, Horacio Ballester, Agusto Benjamín Rattenbach, Carlos Mariano Gazcón, *Fuerzas armadas argentinas, el cambio necesario: bases políticas y técnicas para una reforma militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1987) 136-138.

throughout Alfonsín's term, and that national-security ideology continued to orient dominant sectors of the Argentine armed forces through the end of Alfonsín's term in office.

Further evidence is presented demonstrating that the armed forces sought to narrow the democratic opening due to their perception that national-security considerations took precedence over--and were endangered by--liberal-democratic freedoms. Through various means, key sectors sought to promote a form of democratization conforming to a tutelary "guardian" model in which the military would continue to be a key political actor and military values and interests would remain politically predominant. Military leaders made clear that they preferred civilian participation to be restricted and controlled. Moreover, they sought to insure a type of democratization where civilian power would not have the capability to narrow their perceived prerogatives and functions, or subordinate them to civilian rule.

An important way that politicized sectors of the armed forces tried to influence the democratization process was through the legal and legislative systems. Efforts were made by high-ranking officers to incorporate national-security ideology and values within the constitutional system through the Defense Law and the Internal Security law, as shown in the chapter.

Among the military's core values and interests in the 1980s were a) to ensure public acceptance of the legitimacy of the dirty war and the military's vision of national security, b) to guarantee the perpetuation of the military internal security and intelligence roles, and c) to secure public acceptance of a politically autonomous role for the armed forces, as "factor of power" with a voice in government decisions. That is, the armed forces still perceived their proper role in state and society to be *political,* as preferably an equal governing partner, and not solely "professional" in terms of concern with strictly military-defense issues. They sought to secure this role during the 1980s and into the 1990s.

Clearly, the likelihood is that the years immediately after the transition would exhibit the

most continuity. That is, common sense suggests that the armed forces certainly would not change their mission and doctrine immediately after the transition to civilian rule. But was there a change during the years of Alfonsín's term, that is between 1983 and 1989? Was there a gradual linear development over a period of years, where key political actors--including the Argentine military--become accustomed to the new rules of the game and adjusted to the new system?

Alfonsín's Policy of Caution and Deference

The Alfonsín administration confronted the monumental task of democratizing the state and society in 1983. This task was made somewhat easier given the defeat of the armed forces in the 1982 Malvinas war with Britain; civil society was stronger in relation to the internal division and disarray of the armed forces.[2] Alfonsín took a number of steps upon entering office. Among his strongest measures, he decreed trials for human rights abuses for three of the four military *juntas* that had led the *Proceso* (balancing this by decreeing trials for top guerrilla leaders as well). He cut the military budget, sent a bill to Congress annulling the *junta's* self-amnesty law[3] and submitted a bill for the protection of the constitutional order and democratic life.[4]

However, other measures taken by Alfonsín indicated a policy of seeking compromises with the armed forces and ways to give them the benefit of the doubt. For example, he appointed a presidential commission, via Decree 187, to investigate the massive disappearances of the 1970s.

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[2] However, the organizations of civil society had also been profoundly disarticulated by the *Proceso*, as we have seen. Unions, parties and other organizations had been weakened or destroyed.

[3] This bill, which became law 23,040, was announced by the new president along with other reform measures on December 13, 1983. In a speech to the nation, Alfonsín argued: "The past somberly shadows our future: the extremely aberrant violations, for which terrorism and repression were responsible, of those rights that determine the essence of human dignity. This form of terrorism cannot remain immune. Such impunity would mean to surrender the most fundamental ethical principles, endangering the prevention of future violations..." From Argentine Government, *Discursos Presidenciales*, "Mensaje del Sr. Presidente de la Nación, dirigido a todo el país el día 13 de diciembre de 1983," 1984.

[4] This became law 23,077.

The demand for a *presidential* rather than a *Congressional* commission of inquiry, as we saw in Chapter 4, had been made by *Proceso* leaders in 1983. The human rights organizations, some legislators, and much of Alfonsín's constituency were dismayed by this action, because a Congressional commission would have had greater legal power. A presidential commission, unlike a parliamentary one, could not subpoena witnesses or military records, secure entry into military garrisons, nor request indictments from the judiciary. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel declined to join the presidential commission because the government would not guarantee that the cases of human rights violations would be heard by civilian courts.[5] Second, the plan to restructure and reform the *Proceso* armed forces, drafted by retired Colonel Gustavo Cáceres (an officer separated from the Superior War College during the *Proceso* due to his contacts with the Radicals) and other advisers, was never adopted by Alfonsín.

A third example was Alfonsín's reform of the Military Code of Justice,[6] submitted during the early days of his administration. The bill abolished separate military jurisdiction for common crimes (including human rights violations). This historic advance was tempered, however, by other features of the bill: 1) the cases from the dirty war would be first sent to the military court system (an action responding to a key demand of the armed forces, which argued that their "natural judges" were their military peers), 2) civilian judicial review of military court decisions was instituted, but this was to be decided by the military prosecutor,[7] and 3) Alfonsín's concept of the "three levels," incorporating the concept of "due obedience," was established for cases of human rights violations.

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[5] The Peace Prize laureate cautioned the government that military courts would not sanction fellow officers, a prediction which proved true over the next years. Interview with Adolfo Pérez Esquivel conducted by author, June 19, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[6] This was eventually passed as Law 23,049.

[7] However, Congress strengthened the original bill by making civilian review of military court decisions *automatic* and removing this decision from the discretion of the military. Garro and Dahl, "Legal Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Argentina..." op.cit., 310.

The "three levels," again, was Alfonsín's distinction among those who gave the orders, those who carried them out, and those who exceeded the orders and thus committed excesses. By legalizing his concept of the three levels, Alfonsín intended to restrict the trials to the first and third levels, thereby exempting the great majority of accused lower-ranking officers from prosecution. Through this combination of mechanisms, Alfonsín sought a compromise with which to balance the demands of civil society for accountability and justice with those of the armed forces for the application of military standards and proceedings. He aimed to resolve the explosive issue of human rights by ensuring a trial of the *juntas*, with its symbolic meaning, while allowing the bulk of the armed forces to avoid prosecution.

What drove the government's policy of conciliation? First, the administration regarded the armed forces as the primary threat to democracy and to the survival of the administration itself, despite the overwhelming support rendered the government by the population and the international community. The government tended to place more stock in the ability of the military to overthrow it than in the ability of the government to withstand such attempts. The government feared that if no limits to the trials were set, prosecutions would multiply and create a situation of extreme hostility within the military. Second, the administration was completely unfamiliar with the military world, and feared attempting any major reforms or interfering within the terrain of the armed forces.

Third, Alfonsín himself, and other more conservative elements of the Radical Party, sought to win the support of the military as an institution through bargaining and offers of concessions. Alfonsín hoped to win over pragmatic or "democratic" sectors of the officer corps in hopes that they would triumph over recalcitrant sectors. Moreover, the Radicals feared potential opposition from the Peronists and from the left (including the Intransigent Party, which made important gains in the 1985 elections) as well as the armed forces. The administration wanted to balance all its adversaries without creating excessive hostility. Fourth, Alfonsín sought to allow the military to "cleanse itself"

to make the political point that the government was fair and non-biased toward the military.[8] Fifth, the government argued that while there was complicity within the armed forces toward the dirty war, there was also much complicity among civilian sectors such as the Church, the Peronists, union bureaucrats, the press and other sectors. To punish only military officers would exceed the bounds of fairness, according to this view.[9]

The views of the government were controversial from the beginning; many sectors called them hopelessly naive. As events unfolded, it became clear that Alfonsín's strategy was seriously flawed. The president's policy of taking pains to exhibit respect toward the armed forces was not reciprocated and furthermore, it alienated the civilian sectors that had elected him. Cáceres explained the administration's reluctance to restructure the *Proceso* military in this way:

> "After the elections, the new president Alfonsín had absolute power. He could have done whatever he wanted. The only thing he couldn't do was leave the armed forces the way they were...I think he was convinced of the necessity to change the armed forces...When we explained to Alfonsín the reform we had in mind, he realized that we didn't think the same--the military men and civilians on his [special defense] commission. We three military men were much more convinced than the civilians about reforming the military, because we were much better informed than the civilians!...Alfonsín had doubts. But what really happened was that after winning the elections, he began to consult with his future ministers, and went to Chascomús to meet with them. And there he talked to his closest allies, and I wasn't part of this, I never heard exactly what they said, he never told me, but I imagine that it's what we hear today...they said no. We're not going to last 3 months if we try this reform. Raúl Borrás [the first Defense Minister] told me this later. If we do what you all suggest, we aren't going to last 3 months. And I said, I thought it was hardly probable, very unlikely, that this would produce a reaction. But if it did produce a reaction, it would be welcome. If this happens after 3 months, we would have the power to suppress it. But after 6 months, many old fears would return, no? Because public opinion would not tolerate anything more from the armed forces...
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> "And internationally this was also the case, there was great support. To his assistants, [Antonio] Tróccoli, [Juan] Pugliese, the old conservatives, and the younger ones, like Borrás, [Dante] Caputo--Caputo said frankly he didn't understand any of this. And Borrás

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[8] Mark Osiel discusses this argument and others offered by officials of the Radical government in "The Making of Human Rights Policy in Argentina: The Impact of Ideas and Interests on a Legal Conflict," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 18 (1986) especially 149-155.

[9] Ibid., 150.

> said no, you're crazy, they're going to overthrow us...here in Argentina, nobody has the slightest doubt that we have an agrarian policy, an economic policy, an oil policy, but when we started talking about the necessity of a military policy, they laughed. The politicians said, this doesn't exist. What is a military policy? Not only had they lost the ability to control the armed forces, but they also couldn't even see it should exist..."

As Cáceres points out, the Alfonsín administration perpetuated the traditional civilian tendency to allow the military realm to function autonomously. The armed forces were regarded as a power to be bargained with rather than commanded. This approach, however, undermined the goal of establishing civilian control of the military and failed to discern the *political* interests, prerogatives and ambitions of the military, embodied in the national-security ideology. The national-security doctrine, as we have saw in preceding chapters, rejected liberal democracy as well as "communism" and led the military to attempt to install guardian systems, institutionalizing national-security values, norms and structures, to limit and monitor civilian politics.

Cáceres also argued that the government should dismiss known human rights violators from the armed forces and appoint new officers to the military high court, the Superior Council of the Armed Forces (*Consejo Superior de las Fuerzas Armadas*). These were other steps not taken by Alfonsín.

> "...We had the list of all the *jefes*, the officers--the *juntas* apart, no?--that had committed excesses in the repression. We knew it very well. We didn't have to know all of them. We knew 20%. And what should we do with the 20%? Get rid of them, directly. Put them in the street, like in 1962, 1963, like with the *azules* and *colorados*. Retire them. If later, justice wants to try them, let them be tried...But don't try them as the *Consejo* is composed now. How I wanted to reform it! Because this is how the *Consejo* was composed by the enemy!...But Alfonsín never did modify this. He said, how am I going to manage the country if I don't change the Supreme Court? And I said, right, and how are you going to manage the armed forces without changing the *Consejo*?...He had the political force to do it."[10]

Other allies of Alfonsín among the human rights organizations pointed out that potential

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[10] Interview with Gustavo Cáceres (ret.) conducted by author, October 19, 1992, Buenos Aires. As Cáceres notes, purges of the armed forces had antecedents. After the second 1955 coup, literally thousands of Peronist officers were dismissed from the army. After the 1962-63 conflicts, hundreds of *colorados* were purged from the three forces.

military *golpistas* lacked allies in civil society, and that the policy of the United States–long a decisive actor in the region–was clearly opposed to coups at this time, key factors in favor of a bold policy toward reforming the military.[11] However, while Alfonsín sought to re-establish the autonomy of the civilian realm from military control, his policies simultaneously reflected a reluctance to enter the military realm. Promised policies in the Radicals' electoral platform to restructure military education and military intelligence made little headway, and most major military units and deployment were left in place.[12] In short, Alfonsín was unwilling or unable to "reconvert" the armed forces as part of his "civilianization" campaign or restructure the military's mission, doctrine and organization. He did retire many top army generals (others requested retirement) and reduce budgetary funds for the armed forces to pre-*Proceso* levels. The military budget was reduced from 4.2% of the GNP in 1983 to 2.8 in 1984, and stayed at 2.5% from 1986 to 1988.[13] (These figures may be misleading, however, given the variation of the GNP. In fact, in 1984 the Argentine government spent more per capita on the military budget than Italy, France, Spain and Australia.[14]) This method of exerting civilian control became known as the "starving elephant" approach in some circles.

Finally, using what came to be called "double discourse" or "doubletalk," Alfonsín showered

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[11] One such Alfonsín ally was Graciela Fernández Meijide, interviewed by author July 20, 1992 in Buenos Aires.

[12] Although the First Army Corps was deactivated, its troops were simply redistributed. Education reform and intelligence restructuring were strongly resisted by the armed forces. One frank assessment of the administration's record, written by a Radical *Gendarmería* officer in 1989, noted: "...the Defense Minister was in practice avoided or eluded by the respective chiefs of the Joint Chiefs, who would recur directly to the President, thus effectively acquiring the status of Ministers...military intelligence never accepted civilian control...many units continue to be oversized..." From internal working paper for self-evaluation meeting of the Radical party, dated September 23, 1989, acquired by author.

[13] Eduardo E. Estévez, "Relaciones Civiles: Militares y Política en la Argentina de Alfonsín a Menem" (conference paper presented in Sintra, Portugal, January 1991) 2.

[14] Fundación Illia, *Lineamientos...*, op.cit., 23.

praise on the military as an institution while decrying the human rights abuses of the *Proceso*. Another aspect of the "double discourse" was that while Alfonsín insisted in public on his commitment to the rule of law and punishment of human rights violations, he privately assured military commanders that only top *Proceso* leaders would be tried. Alfonsín issued a series of policies designed to exempt from trial the majority of military men accused of abuses (explained in detail in Chapter 8). However, the judicial system escaped the control of Alfonsín as families brought hundreds of cases against lower-ranking officers. The combination of these developments and Alfonsín's "double discourse" soon created hostility, fear and hatred within the military while simultaneously allowing the "dirty war" units, *comandos*, intelligence apparatuses and counterinsurgency structures to remain intact and warn darkly of "subversive forces" within the government itself attempting to destroy the armed forces.

Civilian Opposition to Alfonsín's Approach

After Congress approved the Military Code reform, the cases already in court of suspected human rights violations by military men were transferred by civilian judges to the military court system. There was substantial public opposition to this aspect of the reform, despite its passage by Congress. Moving the cases to the military courts was seen by many Argentines as doomed to failure, a policy driven by the dubious assumption that the *Proceso's* armed forces would be impartial and "cleanse" themselves of those who had committed criminal acts.[15] Peronist deputies and senators protested the concept of "due obedience" in the Military Code reform; Senator Vicente

[15] For detailed accounts of the human rights trials and the Alfonsín administration's efforts to restrict them, see Horacio Verbitsky, *Civiles y Militares: Memoria Secreta de la Transición*, second ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Contrapunto, 1987) and Americas Watch, "Truth and Partial Justice in Argentina," Americas Watch Report, August 1987.

Saadi called it "a concealed amnesty for 98% of the criminals."[16] One of the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo, commenting on the three levels of responsibility, commented that the killers were as responsible for murder as those who gave the orders. Indeed, a key Radical policy adviser, who was instrumental in the creation of the policy to restrict the trials to only the top leaders, was self-critical several years later. He wrote,

> "...in all likelihood the government failed to choose the best criteria for defining criminal responsibility. It probably lost the initiative at an early stage when, three days after being sworn in, the President as commander-in-chief of the armed forces decided to prosecute army commanders-in-chief [*sic*]. Had he ordered the trials of 60, 80 or one hundred renowned officers instead of 12, the trials might have been more effective."[17]

Saadi and Deputy Augusto Conte, a Christian Democrat, called for a *Congressional* rather than a presidential investigating commission, as did the human rights organizations. A number of lawyers as well called for the cases to be tried by civilian courts rather than military courts, arguing that human rights violations were not military transgressions (the exclusive jurisdiction of the military courts) but crimes against society and civilians.[18] Indeed, Alfonsín himself seemed to have changed his position on this issue: on May 2, 1983, as a candidate, he had stated in a speech, "...Irregularities or excesses committed by the *Proceso*...will not only have to be judged by history, but also tried by regular civilian courts."[19] In the Senate, an amendment was added to strengthen Alfonsín's Military Code reform, excluding from the "due obedience" defense those guilty of

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[16] "President views military code," *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 31, 1984, 1.

[17] Jaime Malamud-Goti, "Trying Violators of Human Rights: The Dilemma of Transitional Democratic Governments," paper presented at the Aspen Institute, November 1988, 8. Malamud-Goti is incorrect on one point: the first three *juntas* were tried (the commanders of all three forces, not just the army). This self-criticism--which was a view widely shared in Argentina, by military officers close to the Radicals as well as civilians--is poignant. If Alfonsín had indeed purged the armed forces of the known criminals, history might have been quite different in Argentina.

[18] Interview with Horacio Méndez Carreras, a lawyer who participated in the trials, conducted by author, September 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[19] "Alfonsín names four union men in 'pact,'" *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 3, 1985, 1.

"aberrant or atrocious crimes."[20] The Chamber of Deputies added a six-month deadline for the military court to try cases before they were transferred to civilian courts. Even despite tougher measures added by the opposition parties in both houses of Congress, the moderate columnist of the *Buenos Aires Herald* called the reform "remarkably lenient" toward the armed forces.[21]

However, Alfonsín's political capital was enormous and his popularity high in early 1984; there was cautious criticism, but generally great support and great expectations among most of the citizenry. Alfonsín's repeated promises to restore ethics and morality to Argentine politics and government were perhaps his strongest appeal. Gradually, however, speculation and suspicion about some sort of "arrangement" between the Radical administration and the military grew more widespread.

In line with the new reform of the Military Code, the cases of the nine *junta* members were sent to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces [the *Consejo*], the highest body of the military's parallel judicial system. However, it soon became apparent that the Council had no intention of obeying the presidential decree asking for legal sanctions against the *juntas*. The Council basically stalled, requesting several extensions of the original deadline. This was the first indication of *institutional resistance* to the civilian government and the demands for accountability by civil society. The demand for accountability was society's explicit rejection of the national-security state and the national-security doctrine, which the armed forces were not willing to tolerate. At the same time, military unrest was surfacing in the form of clandestine pamphlets hostile to the government, open warnings and threats, bombings and other forms of sabotage (discussed as dirty war methods in Chapter 7).

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[20] "Sapag amendment: Bill now says only those not at 'decision-making levels' and no one guilty of 'atrocious crimes' will be allowed to plead following orders," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 2, 1984.

[21] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 5, 1984.

In the political-ideological realm, influential military officers warned of a resurgence of "subversion" or made veiled threats of military coups or insurrections in order to influence policy. In the very first month of civilian rule, January 1984, one of the army's retired nationalist-authoritarian generals, Luciano B. Menéndez, stated "We are being bombarded by the voices of the rear guard of subversion, the mothers and relatives of those defeated by the armed forces and rejected by the Argentine people."[22] At the same time, the press reported secret meetings by members of the first two *juntas* to decide on a common strategy to avoid prosecution for human rights violations. *Proceso* officers summoned by civilian courts for civil cases brought by the families of victims refused to appear. By mid-1984, dozens of clandestine military *comando* groups made their presence known, issuing death threats to civilian judges and political figures; bombings of offices, synagogues, radio and television stations, and homes occurred. In 1987, the resistance to civilian rule came aboveground with the first *carapintada* revolt during Holy Week (which became known as the *Semana Santa* uprising).[23] These "low-intensity" operations are examined in Chapters 7 and 8.

Growing Conflict between the CONADEP View and the Military View

In July 1984, after months of investigation and gathering testimony, the CONADEP Report by Alfonsín's presidential commission was released, with its devastating indictment of the *Proceso* for utilizing systematic human rights violations as a pillar of the national-security system led by the *juntas*. The night the report (called *Nunca Más*) was aired on television, a powerful bomb exploded

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[22] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 16, 1984.

[23] *Carapintadas* means "painted faces," referring to the camouflage paint the insurrectionists wore on their faces. They were largely authoritarian-nationalist officers--many from counterinsurgency, intelligence and dirty-war units--who challenged both their own commanders and the civilian government.

in the broadcasting station.[24] Several weeks later, another bomb badly damaged the home of one member of CONADEP.[25] Reporters and media offices began receiving death threats for their coverage of the dirty war. Defense Minister Raúl Borrás admitted there was great military unrest as a result of the documentary. Interior Minister Antonio Tróccoli, in a clear show of government backtracking, appeared both before and after the documentary with a statement that essentially voiced the justifications of the military for the repression, echoing the "Final Document."[26] In an ironic refutation of the credibility of the president's own commission, Tróccoli stated that the documentary showed only one side of the violence and went on to discuss the "subversive war."[27] This was bitterly criticized by the Madres and the Abuelas [Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo], who said the statements "mirrored those made by the armed forces to justify state terrorism" and "served to support, to some extent, what was done by the armed forces during the repression."[28] As one of the Madres explained, the "theory of the two demons" made the false assumption that all the disappeared and killed were subversives, when they had no possibility of defending themselves, and also falsely portrayed systematized torture of men, women and children as "combat" or war.

Despite the government's official disclaimers, the Report stunned the nation with its meticulous documentation of the carnage and the horrors committed during the dirty war. Comparisons to the Nazis appeared in the press. The human rights organizations, one of the new

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[24] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 5, 1984.

[25] The CONADEP member, Rodolfo Barraco Aguirre, said, "This could be the beginning of a new outbreak of the repressive methods of former times. It is a demonstration that the repressive apparatus is still intact." See *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 5, 1984, 1.

[26] See Chapter 4.

[27] Florencia Cortés Conde, "Linguistics: What people say and how," *Argentine News* (July 8, 1985) 41.

[28] "Mothers Slam Tróccoli: TV Show on 'Dirty War' Criticized," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 6, 1984, 11.

social movements demanding accountability and a more participatory form of democracy,[29] gained great public esteem at this time, as their long struggle was vindicated by the Report. In September 1984, after the third deadline granted to the Council of the Armed Forces, the military court released a ten-page document endorsing the *juntas'* prosecution of the dirty war and declaring that no crimes had been committed. This was widely interpreted as an act of defiance in response to the CONADEP Report. Two months later, the officers of the Council resigned *en masse* in a clear continuation of their institutional act of resistance to the civilian government and civilian demands for accountability.[30] The federal appeals court took over the cases of the *juntas*, as established by the Military Code of Justice reform.

The armed forces were profoundly wounded by and fearful of the new climate of hostility. Many officers argued that they had played a crucial role in the defeat of an organized subversive movement, a movement which was poisoning the country and destroying its values and identity with the Western Christian world. Beneath this professed belief in the rightness of the dirty war was fear of the loss of the traditional social status, prerogatives and prestige of the armed forces. As we have seen, the armed forces as an institution had come to perceive themselves as uniquely suited to politically lead the nation and embody its highest values.

Furthermore, many officers feared they would be held individually accountable for acts of torture or murder; according to military sources, the officer corps were "rotated" so that all would be involved in the repression in order to secure institutional cohesion in the face of civilian

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[29] For a discussion of these new social movements, see Elizabeth Jelín, "The Movement: Eclipsed by Democracy?" in *NACLA Report on the Americas*, V. XXI No. 4, (July-August 1987) 28-36.

[30] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 18, 1984.

justice.[31] There were also fears that the military institution itself would be severely reduced, removed from its traditional role as national arbiter, or even abolished in the environment of an outraged and mobilized civil society, led by a president who had defended human rights. Indeed, in an opinion survey published in February 1985, 22% of those surveyed believed the military should be abolished. Only 36% thought a new coup was not possible and 56% thought the armed forces could well stage another coup. Only 2% of the population felt the government was doing a "very good" job controlling the armed forces, 23% said "good," 21% said "bad," and 16% said "don't know."[32]

Early on, then, in Alfonsín's administration the policy of moderation and relative leniency for the armed forces was established. Almost immediately, a testing of strength between military and civilian power emerged as the administration tried to neutralize military hostility with a policy of praise and concessions. This approach failed to satisfy intransigent factions of the armed forces, which organized three large-scale military rebellions (one in 1987 and two in 1988; another occurred under Menem in 1990). These rebellions, the tug-of-war between military and civilian power, and their political impact upon the democratization process are examined thoroughly in Chapter 8 on political intervention by the armed forces. Suffice it to say here that the continuing pressures by the armed forces and clandestine terrorist groups resulted in an incremental retreat by the civilian government, exemplified by the *Punto Final* law, passed in December 1986, which set an absolute time limit for new human rights cases; and the Due Obedience law, of June 1987, which released from indictment hundreds of suspected (and usually documented) military torturers and assassins.

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[31] It is difficult to confirm this point. It appears that some officers continued their professional duties and tried to avoid becoming involved in the dirty war machine. CONADEP provided Alfonsín with a list of about 1300 officers implicated in human rights abuses (which the government never made public).

[32] A & C Agency poll published in *Somos* (Argentine news magazine), cited in "Most Argentines feel coup possible," *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 1, 1985, 7.

By the end of his term, Alfonsín's stirring words of December 1983--"...this form of terrorism cannot remain immune...Such impunity would mean to surrender the most fundamental ethical principles, endangering the prevention of future violations..."--stood in stark contrast to his actions.

Whose Version of the Dirty War?

A secret military document of September 1985 revealed the strategy of the army to reverse the public perception of the dirty war.[33] The army document analyzed a flyer dated August 7, 1985 by a group called "Movement for the Common Good." (Attached to the army analysis was a copy of the flyer, called "A prosecutor of the *Proceso* and the commander-in-chief of democracy," written by two civilians under the letterhead of "Movement for the Common Good"). The army document, like the flyer, harshly criticized the chief prosecutor in the *juntas* trials, Julio Strassera, who had been a prosecutor under the *Proceso* but who now was a passionate defender of democracy and accountability for military human rights violators. The military was clearly interested in this civilian expression of support for the *Proceso*. The army document evaluated the level of support among civilian sectors for a counterattack against the policy of civilian trials.

Under the section entitled "Action Proposed: Objectives," the document provided a blueprint for such a strategy. The key point to be made here is that the document outlined a *political strategy and political objectives for the period of democratic consolidation.* These objectives included the nullifying of the CONADEP Report and the public perception of horror toward the dirty war. More globally, the document included a plan to justify and even promote the military's intervention in politics (including the implementation of the dirty war) in the context of the "political underdevelopment" of the country. The analysis expressed two central aspects of the national-

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[33] Unpublished "reserved" document acquired by author entitled "Asunto: Análisis del documento 'Un fiscal del Proceso y el comandante en jefe de la democracia,'" September 23, 1985.

security ideology: the view that the armed forces were the natural leader of the nation, representing its essence, unlike political parties or elected civilians, and the permanence of the "struggle against Marxism and subversion," requiring the permanence of a counterinsurgency military. The document is worth quoting at some length for these reasons:

> "Objectives:
> 1. To internalize within public opinion in general and internal publics[34] the idea that the evidence shows that the period of instability existing in the Republic for decades was not owed to the participation of the armed forces in politics, but rather the contrary: that participation is due to more profound causes originating in the situation of political underdevelopment of the country.
> 2. To achieve in public opinion the acceptance of the concept of common responsibility in which all the sectors of the national community (unions, Catholic Church, politicians, etc.) were those who produced events or adopted positions which impacted in a negative way on the political life of Argentina.
> 3. To fix within the community the basic idea that the armed forces were compelled to intervene in politics to fill the institutional vacuum produced by successive ineffective and corrupt governments, or those which abandoned the order enshrined in the National Constitution...
> 5. To clarify to public opinion in general and internal publics that the extreme situation in the political-social order made it necessary to adopt a type of unconventional struggle to annihilate terrorism, following the orders of the constitutional government.
> 6. *To achieve in public opinion the implantation of the concept of the permanent and limitless struggle we find ourselves engaged in with international Marxism, and the transcendental importance of the preservation of the armed institutions for the consolidation of the democratic system...*
> 8. To achieve in the briefest time the termination of the trials, with sanctions which do not signify a blow to the honor and prestige of the armed forces.
> 9. To protect the rest of the members of the Force from judicial actions in the processes related to the struggle against subversion, securing in this manner the preservation of the image of the Argentine armed forces.
> 10. To internalize in public opinion the concept that in the Malvinas the Argentine armed forces struggled with honor, with precarious means and deficiencies of instruction, before an enemy manifestly superior in means and combat capacities."[35] [emphasis added]

The document concluded with the assertion that the response of the armed forces during the dirty war was *institutional*, not the decision of individuals--a point, as we have seen, diametrically

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[34] This seems to refer to segments within the armed forces themselves which were increasingly questioning the authority of the high command.

[35] Ibid., 3-4.

opposed to Alfonsín's strategy of punishing individuals while attempting to win the support of the military institution. The document argued that this institutional response, while brutal and ruthless, was positive, not negative, because the *Proceso* maintained individual liberties and freed Argentine society from the terrorist threat, thus allowing democracy to eventually return. *This was the key line of argumentation* repeated by the armed forces in the politico-ideological sphere for the next years: that the armed forces, rather than destroying the institutions of democracy with the imposition of the national-security state, had prepared conditions for those institutions to flourish. Finally, as highlighted in point 6, the armed forces sought to install a guardian model, with a permanently vigilant counterinsurgency military, within the framework of democracy. To the armed forces, a guardian model based on national-security norms was justifiable, and indeed, the best form of state for Argentina.

It is interesting that in the section of this document entitled "Implementation," the report suggests organizing a special commission within each general staff of the military forces to orient "a campaign of AS" in the short and medium term to be executed by each force.[36] While "AS" is not defined, it undoubtedly refers to "acción sicológica"--psychological action, or PSYOPS in counterinsurgency language.[37] This document's call for an organized propaganda campaign by the armed forces was certainly carried out in practice over the next years. Military spokesmen consistently sought to make hegemonic their interpretation of the dirty war and their justification of the political role of the armed forces. The political purpose for doing this clearly seemed to be not

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[36] Ibid., 5.

[37] Contemporary articles in public military journals also emphasized the importance of PSYOPS. See, for example, Diego Alfredo Magallanes, "Estrategia Psicosocial y Opinión Pública," *Revista de la Escuela Superior de Guerra*, No. 473 (Oct./Dec. 1984) 45-68. He argues, "Psychosocial strategy must conquer Public Opinion, but knows this is not an easy task..." Ibid., 49. Another article in the same issue of this official journal of the army was by José Alberto Ruiz Palacios, entitled "Estrategia General: El Conflicto en la Maniobra Interior," ["General Strategy: Conflict in Internal Operations"] indicating the continuing military preoccupation with internal security.

only to vindicate the past, but also to preserve such capabilities in the present and future.

Political Statements Regarding "Subversion in Government"

In the context of growing tension during the first years of the Alfonsín administration, a number of flyers and pamphlets by clandestine military squads were dropped on military bases and in public areas. One such pamphlet, disseminated in September 1985 by a navy group, expressed well the prevailing views in the armed forces toward the civilian government and the democratization process in general. Entitled "Objective: Destruction of the armed forces,"[38] the flyer sharply attacked "the smokescreen" created by the government and CONADEP regarding the dirty war, and argued that the attempt to destroy the armed forces was being carried out by persons who ranged from being "suicidally innocent" to those "complicit with international Marxism." The document methodically attacked various reform proposals in the Radical platform of 1983, including the proposals for a professional army (abolishing the draft), substitute civil service, the new defense bill, the Beagle Channel agreement,[39] the rejection of an internal role for the armed forces, the separation of the security forces from the control of the army and navy, the CONADEP Report and the trials, and so on. The pamphlet concluded by warning that such policies sought to "disarm the nation" and that "the left had infiltrated all levels of political power."[40] Such declarations clearly represented a political attack on the civilian government and the democratization process. They served to alarm the population, which had experienced such expressions of military hostility in the

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[38] "Objective: Destruction of the armed forces," September 1985; copy of flyer acquired by author.

[39] The Beagle Channel had long been a subject of territorial contention and conflict between Argentina and Chile; indeed, during the *Proceso*, the two nations almost went to war. This dispute was resolved only with the intervention of the Pope. Alfonsín and the Radicals proposed to settle the issue via an agreement with Chile; this was violently opposed by the armed forces.

[40] "Objective: Destruction of the armed forces," op.cit.

past as indications of coming coups.

As early as February 1984, in the second full month of the Alfonsín administration, high-ranking army officers expressed worries about rising hostility and insubordination in the ranks. One internal document written by a high-ranking army officer discussed "various lodges forming which might be the germ, within a few months, of the formation of a subterranean structure to defend the people who participated in the anti-subversive struggle."[41] This officer noted that Mohamed Alí Seineldín seemed to be the leader of this movement and that he had "pledged to support any officer under the rank of colonel who had to appear before the civilian courts." The writer of the report, in a revealing analysis of the nucleus of the *carapintadas*, noted that this movement attracted "fascist sectors of our army" and that it was suspected in the bombings of synagogues, the Curia and the Cathedral in recent months, adding that the extremist magazine *Cabildo* expressed their ideas.[42]

In February 1985, retired Rear Admiral Horacio Zarategui warned that although most military men did not support a military coup now, this might change if certain policies were not changed.[43] In March 1985 the press reported that retired *Proceso* officers had attended a meeting organized by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church in Paris to discuss the rise of Bolshevism and how to stop it.[44]

In September 1985, a secret military document called "Study of the Situation Number 15/85" analyzed the policies of the Radical government, and particularly the role of the first Defense

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[41] Reserved military document entitled "Military Situation," February 29, 1984, to which the author gained access in Buenos Aires.

[42] *Cabildo* was known for its anti-Semitic positions; once it editorially called for the "removal" of the large Jewish population of Argentina, a proposal with chilling connotations given the recent past.

[43] George Hatch, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 3, 1985.

[44] One plan, allegedly favored by ex-Minister of Planning Díaz Bessone, was to assassinate Fidel Castro. James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 3, 1985.

Minister, Raúl Borrás. The tone and content of the document, which resembled a top-level intelligence report, were inherently and deeply political, and again revealed the intense interest of the armed forces (or a sector thereof) in maintaining and increasing their political power *vis-à-vis* the Radical government. It noted first, that the new economy policy of the government, the Austral Plan, was directly contrary to the electoral platform of the UCR. It also noted the importance of the upcoming parliamentary elections, which "will be analyzed profoundly by the next study of the high command from the perspective of their influence within the armed forces."[45] This again demonstrated the *political* concerns of the armed forces and their surveillance of civilian politics, in line with a guardian model.

The document undertook a psychological profile of Borrás--who recently had died suddenly--in the next section, noting that his passing "marks a stage from the point of view of the Political Power and its relation with the armed forces." It acidly noted that Borrás sought to "exploit the rivalries among and within the forces" in order to maintain an "unstable equilibrium," and offered various accounts of manipulative practices. It characterized him as a "conflicted personality" with "a lack of confidence and almost pathological aversion toward all things military"[46] and summed up his term as resulting in "the disarming and demobilization of the armed forces...In the case of the Army, with the collaboration of the bureaucratic military apparatus." This document also noted the seriousness of the total lack of confidence held by the junior officers toward the high command, given the latter's perceived lack of concern for officers subject to civil cases of human rights violations. The high command of the army, it noted, maintained "a control which is solely formal over the force [the army]."[47] Clearly, the disarray within the army was beginning to coalesce into

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[45] "Estudio de Situación Nro. 15/85", 1.

[46] Ibid., 2.

[47] Ibid., 6.

an insurrectionist movement hostile to the civilian government, civil society, and the commanding officers, who were seen as too close to the government and disloyal to the armed forces.

Throughout 1985, the "psychological campaign" by the military and its civilian allies intensified. Right-wing Senator Alvaro Alsogaray--an old ally of the armed forces--stepped up his demands for amnesty for accused officers and said the Madres were supported by international Marxism.[48] He told reporters in one press conference that they were "on file" and being watched, in a clear threat. Such threats obviously sought to stifle a free and critical press and restrict democratic participation--goals of the armed forces as well. Alsogaray, now the head of a new right-wing party called Unión del Centro Democrático (Ucedé), also said the CONADEP Report was false, point by point, and the disappeared had "died in combat."[49] Several days later, Cardinal Aramburu--another long-time military ally--called for "reconciliation."[50] Many high-ranking Church officials expressed hostility toward the Alfonsín government and described the new democracy as "pornographic" and "corrupt." La Plata Archbishop Antonio Plaza called the trials "the revenge of subversion," echoing military language, and practically called for a coup.[51] In August 1985 a priest named Father Treviño called for "spiritual and material arms" to be used to defend the country, in a clearly *golpista* (coup-mongering) attempt.[52] In October 1987, Father Manuel Beltrán said, "The military saved us from Marxism...[this anti-military campaign] has been carried to all parts of the country...it is a well-orchestrated campaign and the instigator, basically,

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[48] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 3, 1985.

[49] Pablo Giussani, *Los Días de Alfonsín*, second ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1986) 46.

[50] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 7, 1985.

[51] Giussani, op.cit., 121.

[52] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 20, 1985.

is Marxism and Zionist Masonry."[53]

Bombings, threats and proclamations from clandestine commandos about the infiltration of international communism created growing public anxiety in 1985; fear was generalized. Former president Frondizi, who had become a close ally of the military despite the fact that he had been overthrown in a coup, made repeated *golpista* statements. In April he said that "subversion is already fanning out in strategic areas of the country, especially Tucumán, and ready to begin its operational phase."[54] Many Argentine analysts were convinced that the wave of terror in 1985 was directly related to the start of the civilian trials of the *juntas*. The *golpistas* seemed to be trying to show that civilians could not hope to hold the armed forces accountable to their standards of justice without paying a cost--which might be the termination of democracy. That is, various factions of the armed forces, via actions and words, sought to make the point that the institution could not be questioned or criticized, much less made subordinate to civilian power as in liberal democracy.

Another "reserved" document,[55] circulated by the Organization of the Argentine Army for Resistance in April 1986, demonstrated that insurrectionist factions of the army *planned to implement a strategy of destabilization of the government*. The document identified the "enemy forces" as Alfonsín, army chief-of-staff Héctor Ríos Ereñú and most other government leaders. It accused these "enemy forces" of a "full offensive since December 10, 1983, to achieve the following objectives: 1) moral and material fracture of the armed forces, 2) neutralization of all effective

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[53] "FAMUS: Que Alfonsín nos defienda de los marxistas y los judíos del gobierno," *La Razón*, October 4, 1987. The alliance between the right-wing Church hierarchy and the military is well-documented in Mignone's *Witness to the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina, 1976-1983*, op.cit, where he shows how Church representatives acted virtually as an ideological arm of the *Proceso*.

[54] "2200 witnesses for junta trials," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 18, 1985, 1. Pablo Giussani pointed out that he made exactly the same kinds of statements two decades before to help bring down Illia. Pablo Giussani, op.cit., 67.

[55] Organización del Ejército Argentino para la Resistencia, "Fuerzas enemigas," April 1986, "reserved document" (made available to author in Buenos Aires, 1992).

organic leadership of the army, 3) adhesion of the high command--whether in a conscious manner, unconscious, or by cowardice--to the objective of destroying the armed forces..." This group, which was an early manifestation of the *carapintadas*, went on to issue a plan of operations to resist this "offensive."

The plan included three phases: Phase I was the period of *organization and recuperation of combat capability* (April to May 1986) inspired by the "ideals represented by Tucumán and the Malvinas;" Phase II was called "Toward the new order," in which small teams or individuals were to execute limited offensive and propaganda actions to weaken the enemy, including anonymous declarations, *direct actions against specified targets, elimination of select targets,* active resistance of illegitimate orders, and *active organized resistance* to the threat of detention of fellow officers "under the pretext of trials or plotting during the war against subversion."[56] The very name of Phase II indicated that the *carapintadas* had political goals: expressly to change the political order.

Phase III--the "general offensive"--presented three contingency plans: white, orange and red. The first hypothesized the possibility of a spontaneous social explosion, which the parallel army would exploit; the second two were unclarified situations in which adherents were directed to "follow orders." This quasi-official document indicated that serious planning for a coup or at least a campaign of destabilization against Alfonsín was taking place among seditious sectors of the army. These groups seemed to envision a classic-style military *golpista* movement, as in 1943 or 1962, which would overturn both the civilian government and their current commanders. This document also demonstrated the hostility felt by the lower ranks toward the commanders who had given them secret orders during the dirty war. Lower-ranking officers resented--after the fact--the decision by *Proceso* commanders to give clandestine orders so as not to be responsible for signing death

[56] Ibid. [emphasis added] The language of the document clearly implies a campaign of violence.

penalties. Now, they were being called to trial, while their commanders escaped responsibility.[57]

More importantly, this document, and subsequent statements and actions by these sectors, indicated their *political* (and not merely institutional) goals. Many of the *carapintadas* were of the nationalist-authoritarian current of the armed forces; many had participated in commandos carrying out counterinsurgency operations[58] and human rights abuses. In other words, they represented enduring structures and organizations of the national-security state. This lends support to my hypothesis that enduring national-security organizations formed the epicenter of resistance to civilian rule.

Open Criticisms by Military Spokesmen

Openly critical and hostile statements were not restricted to clandestine military groups. While stopping short of directly accusing top government officials of being subversive, high-ranking officers insinuated such sentiments in declarations that merged into insubordination on some occasions. Such statements continued until the last months of Alfonsín's term, in 1989. In April 1986, army chief-of-staff Héctor Ríos Ereñú made political speeches reflecting the national-security doctrine, announcing on two occasions that "groups have abandoned subversion and armed struggle and have now infiltrated the political field and all mediums of national activities" and were

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[57] Signing such penalties would have made executions legal. However, the commanders preferred to avoid all responsibility for the massive number of deaths during the dirty war, probably recognizing that these would never be accepted even with legal paperwork. The *carapintadas*, most of whom were combat officers, also detested the bureaucrats of the senior ranks who were excessively concerned with their own comforts.

[58] Aldo Rico, one *carapintada* leader, became a specialist in commando operations in 1968. In 1975, he instructed army commandos and police in "anti-subversive techniques." See Hugo Chumbita, *Los carapintada: Historia de un malentendido argentino* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1990) 43-44. Mohamed Alí Seineldín, the senior leader of the *carapintadas*, was a commando instructor who led counterrevolutionary operations in the Tucumán counterinsurgency campaign in 1975. Fundamentalist-Catholic, he inculcated national-security ideology and a "mystical warrior" spirit among his students in all three forces, the police, and an elite unit of the *Prefectura*. Ibid., 102-104.

obstructing "reconciliation."[59] His comment was criticized more strongly by some retired opposition officers than the government itself. Members of the Center of Military Men for Argentine Democracy (CEMIDA)[60]--an organization of the relatively few officers (all retired) committed to democracy--decried the statements, while the Secretary of Defense, Horacio Juanarena, declined to do so. CEMIDA member José Luis García commented, "There are many ways to pressure, and the presence again in the political arena of military voices could perhaps be taken as an alert of things that seemed to be forgotten"[61] and cautioned that the remarks were timed to coincide with the close of the *junta* trials.

In March 1987, on Navy Day, chief-of-staff Admiral Ramón Arosa publicly vindicated the role of the navy during the dirty war,[62] joining a growing chorus of retired and active-duty officers to do so. He, and the other top commanders of the armed forces, nominally accepted the authority of the civilian courts, while insinuating that the charges against officers represented a continuation of subversion in Argentina.[63] In June 1987, army chief-of-staff (replacing Ríos Ereñú) José Caridi defended the dirty war and said "the army had been attacked as an institution...there is a colossal psychological campaign against military institutions."[64] He also called for a "solution" to the trials, echoing the demands of the *carapintadas* in an implicit show of support for the insurrectionists by

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[59] "R. Ereñú firm on left 'infiltration,'" *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1986, 9.

[60] After CEMIDA first organized itself in 1984, a powerful bomb destroyed its office almost immediately. Various members were arrested by the army on various occasions for making insubordinate statements. The organization was never very large, but it had considerable influence.

[61] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1986, op.cit.

[62] Armando Torres, "'Full-stop' boomerang?" *Argentine News* (March 1987) 6.

[63] Ibid.

[64] "Army wants credit for dirty war," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 27, 1987.

the army-as-institution.[65] Caridi's speech was met with alarm by many democratic sectors; Ricardo Molinas, chief of the National Administrative Investigating Bureau, said it was "a serious threat to civilian power, in the sense that we either glorify the armed forces for their brutal repression, or there will be more rebellions against the government."[66] Julio Strassera, the prosecutor, rejected the claim that the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1970s were a "war," and pointed out that an amnesty was unthinkable, since "all political blocs from the right to the left annulled the self-amnesty law created by the military government on the grounds that atrocious crimes were, by nature, not subject to an amnesty."[67] The human rights organizations and various Congressional representatives also decried the speech, but significantly, Juanarena (now Defense Minister) and the Vice President defended Caridi.[68]

Top officers openly called for amnesty for the accused officers (in forthright opposition to the functioning of the civilian justice system) and warned of spreading subversion in clear attempts to influence policy. With such statements, high-ranking officers also sought to placate their rebellious lower ranks, but the statements clearly reflected concepts of national security and identification of the enemy still shared by all sectors of the armed forces. Top active-duty military commanders also met with the Defense Ministry to press their views that the extreme left was advancing in Argentina, in order to bolster demands to halt budget cuts and fortify the military institution.[69]

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 28, 1987.

[68] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 29, 1987.

[69] Ibid.

The Permanent Ideological War

During the civilian trials of the *juntas*, the defense lawyers for the *Proceso* commanders presented numerous arguments justifying the dirty war and the national-security state. Retired general Osiris Villegas, defending Ramón Camps, argued that there was a permanent war against subversion--and implied that journalists, unionists, politicians and so on were currently acting in the interests of subversion. Second, he called it absurd to talk of "excesses" in a war since nothing was illegal in such a situation. As journalist Pablo Giussani countered in a newspaper column at the time, this logic--implicit to the national-security doctrine--led to the conclusion that if war were permanent and there were no law, torture and assassination must be legitimate at any moment in defense of national security. In other words, permanent lawlessness justified the permanent national-security state[70]--and permanent military vigilance and guardianship of the exercise of democratic rights, posing an obstacle to the consolidation of liberal democracy.

Viola's lawyer, Andrés Marutián, made a similar argument, insisting that "in a revolutionary war you cannot speak about the word excess."[71] When asked in an interview whether Argentines lived in fear during the *Proceso*, he said, "...if you hadn't anything to do with subversion, you were afraid of nothing...it was very free here. You could walk the streets even at three o'clock in the morning and nothing would happen. But if you had some connection with subversion, I think yes, you were afraid."[72] During the trial, the defendants (such as Viola and Massera) made direct threats before the judges, warning that the armed forces were capable of returning.[73]

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[70] Giussani, op.cit., 339.

[71] David Whelan, "The Juntas Trial," *Argentine News* (May 7, 1985) 12.

[72] Ibid., 13.

[73] Finally, after months of testimony by survivors and various experts, the sentences were declared by the federal appeals court: General Videla, for example, was found guilty of 16 counts of homicide, 306 counts of false arrest, 93 counts of torture, and 26 counts of robbery. Admiral Massera, who was sentenced to life

Other military declarations demonstrated a continuing belief in "the permanent ideological war." In December 1987, *Revista Militar* published a paper by retired general Díaz Bessone[74] in which he stated:

> "The revolutionary, inspired by Marxist ideology, continues in Argentina, awaiting the opportunity to obtain power. He will do it with violence disguised as democracy and with the Orwellian language that he uses, or with the violence of arms, as he did in the decade past. His hope is to achieve the new heaven and the new earth in Argentina, in Latin America, in the Third World and in the world...His action contributes to the Apocalypse. To Christians, and in general to non-communists, there are left only two choices: to turn the other cheek and to accept martyrdom and slavery, or to struggle or even to combat."[75]

The suspicion that democracy disguised and encouraged subversion, explicit in the above passage, was a clear expression of the national-security ideology. Such a view implied that a guardian system (at minimum) was required to ensure national security. Bessone, who represented the right-wing and nationalist sector of the army [see Chapter 2 for a discussion of military ideological currents], published a number of such articles in the 1980s. In another, he described the continuing "ideological war" in the following terms:

> "The guerrillas were annihilated in 1978, but the war continued and continues in the political realm, following Lenin's phrase...The most important means, propaganda, engages in a massive brainwashing. I won't speak of this because [the readers] have direct and personal knowledge...Silence is complicity. It is necessary to defeat the revolutionary war, or the Argentina of the blue-and-white flag will lose her face."[76]

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imprisonment like Videla, was convicted of three aggravated homicides, 69 unlawful deprivations of freedom, 12 counts of torture and 7 counts of robbery. The air force commander of the second *junta*, however, was acquitted, as was the third *junta*. The court basically accepted the prosecution's argument that the strategy of covert repression was a deliberate policy executed by the *juntas*, albeit in a decentralized manner. See Americas Watch, "Partial Justice..." op.cit., 36-37.

[74] Ramón Genaro Díaz Bessone, "Esperanza y Guerra Revolucionaria," *Revista Militar*, No. 718 (September-December 1987), 6-22. This journal is the official publication of the *Círculo Militar*, an organization of the army, including active-duty and retired members, which was dominated by the authoritarian-nationalist faction and former *Proceso* functionaries in the 1980s.

[75] Ibid., 22.

[76] Ramón Díaz Bessone, "Guerra Revolucionaria en la Argentina 1959-1978," *Revista Militar*, No. 719 (January-March 1988), 7, 19, 20.

In another article in the same issue of the *Revista Militar*, retired general L.B. Menéndez claimed: "Subversion, then, has not disappeared in our Fatherland...especially in the areas of education (to enter the minds of youth) and of culture and media (to influence the thinking of all), where they [*sic*] utilize these to destroy our religious convictions and foment materialism...distance us from the West and commit us to communist countries."[77] A colonel named Pascual Tozzi, in December 1988, argued openly that the current enemy, as during previous times, was not just communism but classical political liberalism as well.[78] Attacking "solidarity organizations," he argued that one of their objectives was to "Invalidate forever whatever intent by the armed forces to assume a political role in Argentina" while whitewashing the conduct of "terrorist delinquents."[79] The logic of this line of argument leads to the conclusion that anyone opposing a political role for the armed forces is subversive. This campaign to infiltrate the politico-cultural realm, Tozzi asserted, was inspired by Antonio Gramsci.

Tozzi's article concluded with a revealing chart: in one column, headed "What We Must Defend: Principles and Truths of Western, Christian Civilization," were listed items such as Church, Fatherland, Family, State, Property and Armed Forces. In the opposing column, headed "Liberalism: The set of negatives that undermines the pillars of our civilization," were listed: "1) Protestant reform, 2) Negative criticism of the philosophy of being (Descartes-Kant-Hegel-Marx), 3) Criticisms of Roman Christian law; political revolution, 4) Social revolution and revolutionary war..."[80] Clearly, extremist versions of the national-security doctrine--tracing "subversion" to the

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[77] Luciano Benjamín Menéndez, "El Plan de Guerra de la Subversión," *Revista Militar*, No. 719 (January-March 1988), 23-24.

[78] Pascual C. Tozzi, "Guerra contra la Subversión," *Revista Militar*, No. 720 (April-December 1988) 31-40.

[79] Ibid, 34.

[80] Ibid., 40.

emergence of Protestantism and political liberalism--still found a ready military audience in 1988.[81] These articles demonstrated the fact that anticommunist officers rejected both *liberal* and *participatory* models of democracy. This mentality, still prevalent in the army in the 1980s, saw only a guardian model as an acceptable political system.

Examples of similar sentiments by active-duty commanders abounded. Caridi, speaking at a 1988 memorial ceremony commemorating the 13th anniversary of the counterinsurgency campaign in Tucumán, again vindicated the dirty war and said those waging the psychological campaign against the armed forces were "the subversives themselves, their accomplices, their supporters and their domestic and external accessories after the fact...in this retrospective assessment of events that occurred in 1975, it is possible to pinpoint heroic attitudes and moral, clear and determined conduct which were always characteristic of the Argentine soldier...[the army continues] to preserve national integrity, the fundamental norms of the Republic..."[82] Despite such statements, the *carapintadas* demanded Caridi's ouster, for being insufficiently independent of the government. The day after this speech, an active-duty army captain named Martín Sánchez Zinny announced he was joining the *carapintadas* and going underground to fight Marxists "wherever they are and whatever mask they are hiding behind." He also accused the current high command of being incapable of facing the current stage of the revolutionary war.[83] Sánchez Zinny later predicted a coup for 1990. Military sources estimated that some 40% of the armed forces supported the *carapintadas*.[84]

The next month, a clandestine group calling itself the Armed Forces Commando interrupted

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[81] For an example of the *carapintadas*' perspectives in English, see Ernesto Barreiro, "If Menem Falters in Argentina," *New York Times*, Op-Ed page, March 23, 1990.

[82] "Caridi vindicates dirty war role," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 10, 1988, 1.

[83] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 11, 1988.

[84] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 11, 1988, and Joe Schneider, "La Tablada: The Enemy Within," *Argentine News*, (February 3, 1989).

a radio broadcast to announce "the decision to fight against Marxist infiltration in the government and administrative corruption."[85] Soon afterward, a new spate of bombings and telephoned threats rocked Buenos Aires; public places such as theaters were hit. The former Joint Chiefs head under the Alfonsín government, Lt.-General Fernández Torres, joined the military chorus of criticism, demanding that the government "carry out the proper plans [to attack] political subversion, particularly infiltrators, before open guerrilla war appears...in the current stage, violence will be eliminated, stressing aggression in the other sectoral strategies, particularly in the areas of culture, education and manipulation of the mass media."[86]

Given the virtual absence of any evidence of a guerrilla threat (ironically, the only open subversion by this date had been two armed military rebellions by the *carapintadas*), these statements from all political factions of the armed forces suggested the continuity of the national-security doctrine and ideology. The doctrine's Manichean vision of a permanent international communist conspiracy tended to exaggerate "normal" dissent and the exercise of liberal-democratic freedoms (as well as the activities of small anti-system groups) into major national-security threats. That is, such declarations demonstrated the continuity of the longstanding fear and alarm held by the armed forces toward critical political expression and press reporting, and political participation common in free societies. The upsurge in bombing attacks in 1988 was probably timed to influence the final debates in Congress regarding the new Defense Law, according to observers; the law passed that year, still excluding the armed forces from an internal-security role except in "exceptional" cases. Also, the press was growing increasingly critical[87] and the population was gradually losing the fear

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[85] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 25, 1988.

[86] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 29, 1988.

[87] Church representatives echoed military attacks on the press, which they said was infiltrated by subversion. For example, a priest named Aníbal Fosbery declared in October 1988 that two critical and leftist journals, *El Periodista* and *Humor*, were "in the service of the cultural revolution" and "attacked all the

that permeated the first years after the *Proceso*.

Demands for a Continued Internal-Security Role

In August of 1986, the chiefs-of-staff testified before the Senate regarding the Defense Law, which had already passed the lower house. Each of the chiefs argued strongly against the law's exclusion of the military from internal security and intelligence, implying that the hypothesis of conflict held by the armed forces still centered on *internal enemies*. During their presentations to the Senate, the various chiefs-of-staff made impassioned arguments warning of new subversive uprisings and infiltration, and justifying a military role within the domestic domain. These perspectives illustrated that the national-security ideology still predominated within the military institution, providing a rationale for a guardian role for the armed forces. Navy chief Arosa submitted a 26-page critique of the Defense Bill and argued that "it is necessary to foresee all the possible forms of internal aggression in order to have the appropriate antidote ready."[88] Air force head Crespo submitted a 28-page critique, and stated that "national defense should include operations against terrorism, drug traffic, organized crimes and ideological infiltration in the educational and cultural fields."[89] He, like the other chiefs, objected to the ban on military participation in internal intelligence.

Army chief Ríos Ereñú insisted that the armed forces needed the authority to intervene in "any sort of attack or circumstance that threatens national security," arguing that the Constitution

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fundamental institutional values and the family." He accused the government of "being social democratic, of a Gramscian inspiration." See Ana Bolomo, "Fray Aníbal Fosbery: El exorcista," *El Periodista*, No. 213 (21 to 27 of October, 1988), 24-25.

[88] "Urges greater intervention rights; Arosa leads drive to tip defense bill," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 15, 1986.

[89] "Crespo insists on bill reform," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 22, 1986, 11.

allowed this in cases of "war or internal upheaval."[90] He continued that the armed forces must intervene in "every type of aggression...against the security of the nation, whatever its origin might be."[91] He also suggested that the word "exterior" be eliminated in cases of aggression, to leave open the possibility of military intervention in domestic strife.[92] Joint Chiefs head Teodoro Waldner also testified, and reiterated the demand of the armed forces for authorization of military intervention in internal conflicts and a domestic intelligence role.[93]

The army chief, apparently with the approval of the armed forces, in fact presented a "counter-project" or alternative bill for the Defense Law[94] which called for the centralization of intelligence under a body which included the military intelligence agencies, and also included a role for the armed forces in the suppression of "social commotion." This proposal was largely rejected by the civilian forces in Congress (although later, as we shall see, Alfonsín acquiesced to both demands). However, the armed forces did win at least two concessions. First, although the final Defense Law excluded the armed forces from internal conflict, the Congress agreed to prepare a separate Internal Security law to spell out various possible threats and types of responses in more detail. Second, the Radicals--under heavy pressure from the armed forces--introduced the "firepower clause" into the text of the Defense Law. This clause permitted the armed forces to intervene in internal conflicts if the police and security forces were inadequate to handle the job.[95]

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[90] "R. Ereñú sends mixed message," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 28, 1986.

[91] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 31, 1986.

[92] *La Prensa*, August 28, 1986.

[93] "Waldner expuso sobre la ley de defensa," *La Razón*, August 1, 1986.

[94] This "counter-project" was reproduced in *La Prensa*, a major Buenos Aires newspaper with close ties to the military, on September 2, 1986. However, the air force denied that this was a substitute project, arguing that it was simply comments on the executive proposal. See *La Prensa*, August 22, 1986.

[95] "Polémica por el proyecto," *La Razón*, August 1, 1986; Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 3, 1986.

During the subsequent debate on the Internal Security law in 1991, the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented another draft bill which established a military role to suppress a wide variety of domestic incidents. The political climate had changed by then; after the bizarre La Tablada incident (discussed in Chapter 7), where a group of leftists attacked an army base, Alfonsín and Congress were even more vulnerable to military pressures and recriminations. Longstanding military warnings of a resurgence of terrorism seemed to have been vindicated.

In Article 3 of their draft bill on internal security, the Joint Chiefs called for "the creation and ordering of competent organs and institutions and the process of elaboration and application of plans and actions intended to prevent or solve internal conflicts, internal aggressions, and...disasters..."[96] These conflicts and *internal* aggressions were spelled out in the project's Annex A, divided into four levels of conflict: localized social conflicts, generalized social conflicts, internal aggression, and military aggression.[97] Under the first level of conflict, the military would be authorized to intervene in: "1) Disturbances-vandalism-seizures and kidnappings; 2) Obstruction of secondary roads and bridges. Strikes declared illegal. 3) Occupation of public buildings and/or factories..." Under the second level, several options were added: "1) Obstruction of national and provincial routes, and navigable waters. Civil disobedience. Occupation or interferences in transmissions of radio and television...2) General strikes..." Under "Internal Aggression," the military proposed intervention in "1) Seizures and/or kidnappings with indications of political ends (sabotage). Contraband of propaganda and equipment. 2) Uprising or insurrection. Demonstrations of illegal organizations...3) Terrorism (urban), guerrilla (rural)."[98] The document also called for intelligence, planning and operations geared toward a hypothesis of internal conflict, as well as the

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[96] "Anteproyecto de Ley de Seguridad Interior," reserved document acquired by author, n.d.

[97] Ibid., 13.

[98] Ibid., 12.

authorization of military zones commanded by military officers during emergency situations.

Clearly, this document--which was circulated during the Congressional debate on the Internal Security law--gave substantial evidence of the continuity of the national-security ideology on several levels *in 1991*. First, the armed forces continued to insist upon an internal security role and a domestic intelligence function fraught with political overtones. The "enemy" was still defined as striking workers, demonstrators, and other citizens whose activities are normally protected under democratic regimes. The blending of police functions and military functions remained in evidence. Overall, the tone of suspicion and hostility toward manifestations of "the threat from below" was reflected in this document, as was the concept of the armed forces as the permanent judge and jury of the state and society. In short, the bill envisioned a guardian system where politics and labor activity were supervised by the armed forces.

The controversy over the Defense Law and Internal Security Law is further discussed in the next chapter, as an example of the *structural foundation* for a guardian-type of polity. However, it is appropriate to note here that the statements and draft laws by the chiefs-of-staff clearly revealed the determination of the military institutions to maintain their surveillance and tutelary capacities *vis-à-vis* civil society, their guardianship of politics and civilian political activity.

The National-Security Doctrine and Parallel Policy Functions

The secret minutes and documents leaked to the press from the XVII Conference of American Armies, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 1987, provided incontrovertible proof that a major military hypothesis of conflict continued to be the battle with "the International Communist Movement" and internal subversion.[99] The proceedings of the Conference

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[99] According to one internal document, the previous 1985 XVI Conference of American Armies, held in Santiago (then under Pinochet's national-security state), had agreed on a "system of interchange on the subversive problem." Argentina reactivated its Centro de Comunicaciones (a communications and intelligence

demonstrated the continuity of the national-security doctrine as well as the military's parallel and independent policy-making role.[100]

As we saw in Chapter 2, U.S. military commanders originally initiated the Conferences, which became an inter-American national-security structure informed by anticommunism and counterinsurgency doctrines. The 1987 Conference, as always, was held in strict secrecy, and convened top military commanders of the United States and most of the Latin American countries, as was customary. Cuba and Nicaragua were excluded and Mexico did not attend. The documents--which have been widely judged to be authentic--were leaked to the Argentine organization *Movimiento Por la Patria* (Movement for the Fatherland), an organization espousing human rights and working-class organizing. This was the same group that later stormed La Tablada. There is, in fact, a theory that these documents were leaked deliberately to these people by army intelligence as a maneuver to gain their confidence[101] in order to utilize them in the future (further discussed in Chapter 8).

The documents allow civilians a glimpse into the secretive world of military executive sessions in which political and social analyses were presented and discussed, summaries of leftist and organized socially-oriented activities in each country were circulated, and resolutions were passed

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headquarters) in the Villa Martelli garrison after this, which was its liaison with the other intelligence services of the continent. It had been closed since the Malvinas war. The army also sent General Francisco Gassino, chief of army intelligence, to the United States for consultations on the "subversive problem." Ríos Ereñú signed the agreements at the XVI Conference, and they were ratified by Alfonsín in February 1986, according to this document. If accurate, this would be an example of a secret government agreement in conflict with its public policy on a military internal security role. From reserved internal document made available to author in Buenos Aires, written by an army adviser and entitled "La Situación Militar," August 26, 1986.

[100] The author obtained copies of the documents (marked secret), in Spanish. These confidential minutes and reports are not published publicly. They include minutes from the meetings of the Conference of American Armies and the Conference of Intelligence of the American Armies.

[101] This theory is held by Emilio Mignone, for one, who knew one of the members of the group, as well as other prominent Argentines. Interview with Emilio Mignone conducted by author, September 12, 1992, Buenos Aires.

on 15 subjects. Most of the discussions, in other words, were highly *political* and beyond the strictly military. The agreements reached essentially formulated supra-national as well as internal policy--sometimes contradicting domestic law--on such subjects as influencing the media, organizing continent-wide intelligence-sharing and coordination, and undertaking domestic psychological and counterinsurgency operations.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the documents is that the army delegates continued to regard liberal democracy as a system thoroughly penetrated and manipulated by subversion, its institutions targets or fronts for the International Communist Movement (ICM).[102] They remained highly suspicious of the "vulnerabilities" of liberal democracy, such as a free press, the rights to freedom of speech and assembly, and so on, as susceptible to subversion and therefore embodying permanent threats to national security. The documents included an analysis of the thinking of Gramsci positing the importance of the political-cultural realm in the conquest of power. One major topic of discussion was manipulation of the media, with presentations such as "Psychological operations and the communication media in the War against terrorism," "Importance of psychological operations in the war of counter-subversion" (presented by the armies of El Salvador and the United States jointly), and "How the communication media favor Subversion directly and indirectly."[103] Another topic was "Strategies of the ICM in Latin America via new courses of action"[104] presented by Argentina. In the minutes, it can be seen that the Argentine delegate emphasized that among the modes of action utilized by "the International Communist Movement" were "political subversion"

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[102] This term was used so regularly it was abbreviated to MCI (Movimiento Comunista Internacional) in the documents.

[103] XVII Conferencia de Ejércitos Americanos, secret conference documents, agenda of session, November 1987, 12.

[104] Ibid., 15.

and "armed subversion,"[105] again erasing the distinction between legal political activity and armed insurrection.

The analysis presented by the Argentine army delegates throughout the Conference demonstrated beyond a doubt that *a major hypothesis of conflict continued to be internal subversion*. This was despite public denials and the ongoing debate on the Defense Law occurring in the country, a law which strictly forbade such planning and preparation. Despite the return to democracy in most Latin American countries, virtually all of the Latin American armies still saw their main role as fighting subversion.[106] As it had for decades, the perceived communist threat provided the Argentine military with a justification for an expansive role in society, monitoring and judging domestic politics, and a permanent and exalted military mission.

The "accords" agreed upon by the American armies (including the United States, represented by General Carl Vuono, Southern Command chief Fred Woerner and others) evidenced the continuation of a conspiratorial, paranoid view of the Americas as the permanent target of the International Communist Movement.[107] The resolutions and secret intelligence reports on the leftist

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[105] Ibid., 73.

[106] In a wry report, journalist Alan Riding noted: "The delegate from the Chilean army saw drugs as a weapon used by international Communism to destroy society. 'Without a doubt, all the scourges that afflict humanity and Latin America in particular, such as narcotics trafficking, subversion, homosexuality, promiscuity and disinformation, are tactics that form part of a strategy of world domination,' he reportedly said. Though couched in less drastic language, many of the conference resolutions also seemed to reflect a consensus that Latin America remained the target of a permanent and well-organized Communist conspiracy..." See Alan Riding, "Latin Military Still Seems to Stress The Role of Fighting Communism," *New York Times*, October 3, 1988.

[107] It is crucial to recall that many members of Reagan's national-security establishment shared the ideological views of the army delegates (as had many U.S. policy-makers since the 1950s). The "Reagan Doctrine" promoted a policy of counterinsurgency and "roll-back" of socialism and communism worldwide. Earlier in 1987, a Pentagon research team said nine Latin American nations were threatened by foreign-supported guerrillas and new Vietnams were possible. One officer, using the same language as the Latin armies, said "World War III has already started, and its outcome will determine, more than any other war, what the shape of our world will be like." See Richard Halloran, "U.S. Officers in Panama Study Guerrilla War," *New York Times*, March 8, 1987. See also the Santa Fe Committee's documents of 1980 and 1988. These policy-oriented books had a major impact upon the Reagan administration; Lewis Tambs, the editor of

opposition in each country showed that the tenets of the national-security doctrine were intact in every attending Latin American army.[108] In the Conference, Argentina submitted a proposal calling for joint anti-subversive operations--a plan directly antagonistic to the Defense Law. (Previous internal documents in Argentine military circles, however, had argued that since the new law was not yet officially passed, the 1966 Onganía national-security law was still in place.)[109] Other major topics of the meeting were the linkage between narcotics-trafficking and subversion,[110] and the overriding concern of the United States to line up support for President Reagan's counterinsurgency war in Nicaragua.

The "obligatory theme" of the Conference was "Methods to combat terrorism in America, utilizing the military as well as legal experiences of the countries of the world affected."[111] Three committees on Narcoterrorism, Operations and Intelligence, and Economic, Social and Cultural affairs (this last, by definition, evidence of the continuing role expansion of the armies) offered draft

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the first document, became the Ambassador to Costa Rica (1985-1987) and was directly involved in Iran-contra, the secret operations to direct and finance the Nicaraguan counterinsurgency irregulars (the *contras*). Santa Fe I warned that the Caribbean had become "a Marxist-Leninist lake." Santa Fe II begins: "The Americas are still under attack. We warned of this danger in 1980. The attack is manifested in communist subversion, terrorism and narcotics-trafficking." Their alarmist national-security language parallels the language of the militaries of Latin America. See Committee of Santa Fe, "A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties," 1980, and "Santa Fe II: A Strategy for Latin America in the Nineties," 1988.

[108] For example, Brazil's army intelligence claimed that 30% of the special assembly that drafted the nation's new constitution were "militants or sympathizers of subversive organizations" who had tried to narrow the army's political role. See Riding, op.cit. It is interesting to note the mild disagreements offered from time to time by the U.S. delegate. Nevertheless, he signed on to all the accords. Conference of American Armies documents, op.cit.

[109] Copy of reserved document "La Situación Militar" acquired by author, August 26, 1986. Rosendo Fraga also made this claim (regarding the continued applicability of the 1966 law) in an article for *Ambito Financiero* on June 8, 1986.

[110] In the late 1980s, the United States began supplying funds, advisers and equipment to the armies of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru to fight drug-trafficking. These operations were often indistinguishable from counterinsurgency operations.

[111] "XVII Conferencia de Ejércitos Americanos," *Revista Militar* No. 718 (September-December 1987), 28.

resolutions which were discussed and put to a vote. Among the 15 accords that were finally approved were the following:

"Accord No. 4: Objective: To analyze the most appropriate methods to combat terrorism *on the basis of national policy and existing juridical norms,* keeping in mind *the permanent threat* for the existence of the state whatever form of aggression exists on the part of terrorist or criminal organizations that intend to govern or control the government or people of a country....given the continuing *incremental growth of ideological penetration by the ICM,* to propose actions and recommendations, fundamentally military *and juridical,* to impede their purposes...It is resolved: 1) To formulate at the level of the international American community *a policy against terrorism* to serve as a basis to begin, in a combined form, efficient action to annul it. 2) *To promote the establishment or improvement of legislation*...to augment the security of the established political system..."[112] [emphasis added]

In other words, the armies were planning how to implement their accustomed counterinsurgency functions within new civilian systems with very different norms and rules. They were evidently grappling with the problem of maintaining their national-security structures and operations within societies struggling to open their political systems and establish new rights and freedoms often in direct opposition to national-security norms. In short, they were planning how to create guardian models in the developing democratization processes. The armies were also proposing a role for themselves in shaping existing legislation in their respective nations (as occurred in Argentina). Here also was the proposal for a coordinated, continental counterinsurgency policy--essentially an independent foreign policy--which also recalls the shadowy Operation Condor of the 1970s (refer to Chapter 3).[113]

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[112] XVII Conference of American Armies, resolutions approved, 188.

[113] In 1993 there was an uproar in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay when the press reported that a Condor-like operation was still secretly functioning within the three countries. A Chilean scientist named Eugenio Berríos, an agent of the former Pinochet regime, had invented a lethal nerve gas called "serin" which resulted in (and resembled) cardiac arrest. The Chilean military, in coordination with the Uruguayan military, spirited him out of Chile after civilian president Patricio Aylwin came to power, to protect him from legal charges in the case of the Orlando Letelier assassination (carried out by Chilean agents in Washington D.C. in 1976). News accounts said the network--called Condor--was composed of "followers of the doctrine of national security, which reigned in the region in the decades of the 70s and 80s." See Raúl Ronzoni, "Uruguay: Acuerdo con militares chilenos para ocultar científico," InterPress Service, June 11, 1993; "Secuestro del chileno provoca grave crisis," *El Diario/La Prensa* (New York), June 11, 1993; Raúl Ronzoni, "Political Tension Mounts over Secret Army Operation," InterPress Service, June 12, 1993; and "Uruguay: Gobierno

"Accord No. 6. Resolution. Considering: a) That the ICM acts at the world level *with marked political and ideological centralism, taking advantage of the vulnerabilities* of the Western world with the end of *destabilizing democratic governments*...It is resolved: To approve the analysis of the situation of joint intelligence elaborated by the CIAA [Conference of Intelligence of the American Armies] as an instrument of an informative character that reflects the situation and probable evolution, both general and particular, of the continent..."[114] [emphasis added]

Here the armies endorsed the view that an international communist conspiracy was acting in order to exploit the weaknesses of the Western world. Liberal-democratic freedoms were regarded as vulnerable to this communist conspiracy. Here the armies also expressed their consensus with the analysis of the intelligence apparatuses of each country, whose reports for the Conference detailed the activity of "subversion" in the political, social, economic and religious spheres in each country.

"Accord No. 14. Theme: Psychological operations and the communication media in the war against terrorism. *Objective.* To establish courses of action to enable the American Armies, within the system of security they integrate, to *participate actively* in reducing or annulling the advantages that subversion obtains of the communication media in the struggle against subversion...*Resolution:*...c) That the manipulation of the communication media by *the legal face of subversion* permits a form of apologetics for subversive acts and *the discrediting of counter-subversive actions.* d) That the unrestricted liberty of the press established constitutionally to serve the national interests of a country *is manipulated directly or indirectly by subversion in order to weaken the foundation of society,* in its clear intention of destroying it and replacing it with another presumably more just...e) That it is necessary to be conscious of this psycho-social reality with the aim of *planning actions in this field, from the national level to the planning of psychological operations in support of operations against terrorism.* f) That it is necessary to rely on personnel trained to achieve greater efficiency in *psychological operations...* "[115] [emphasis added]

Accord No. 15: "Scope: a) The ICM continues being *the common and principal threat* for all the American countries and therefore, must be combatted, particularly via unified and common procedures among all the American Armies. b) The security and defense of the American continent against the ICM must consider, *beyond measures in the strictly military realm, actions in the rest*

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transfiere a jefe de inteligencia militar," InterPress Service, June 14, 1993.

[114] XVII Conference of American Armies, op.cit., approved resolution, 195.

[115] Ibid., 205. In the minutes there is an interchange between the U.S. delegate and the others during the discussion of this point, in which the former says he would support the creation of an organization to analyze the psychological operations of the enemy, but within the central Centro de Informaciones; he adds that the proposed "psychological actions" aimed at the media could be dangerous if this meant a program designed to orient the press, which could be "counterproductive." Ibid., 149. Nevertheless, this is the final approved version.

of the spheres of power..."[116] [emphasis added]

In another place, the document made clear that the other "spheres of power" were "political, economic and psycho-social."[117] In this accord, the armies openly state that the major hypothesis of conflict continued to be communist subversion, with an emphasis on internal enemies, and *without borders*; the entire continent was considered to be a battleground in the war. In other words, the national-security concept of "ideological frontiers" rather than territorial borders was still operative. Moreover, the role of the armies was still seen to encompass every sphere of national life "beyond...the strictly military realm," in political, economic and "psycho-social" spheres, and including manipulation of the media.

Throughout the documents, there was little distinction made between legal political activity, terrorism, subversion and communism. In fact, activity such as student organizing, education reform, solidarity work, church social work, union organizing and so on were regarded as inspired or manipulated by subversion or international communism.[118] One of the main pillars of the national-security doctrine--the necessity for permanent counterinsurgency armies due to the permanent threat posed by such "subversion"--was clear in such statements:

> "The objective of the Marxist-Leninist infiltration by the ICM in South America is a fact in the armed forces, in the Church, in the organizations of workers and students. All the social realms are within the plans of subversion. South America is certainly the part of the Continent most affected by subversion directed from the exterior. A common denominator in all the countries is the struggle with the Bands of Terrorist Delinquents supported with training, armament, and finances by international communism from localized bases outside the area."[119]

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[116] Ibid., 207.

[117] Ibid., 87.

[118] See, for example, Conference of Intelligence of the American Armies, "Desarrollo de la Apreciación Combinada para la Conferencia de Inteligencia de Ejércitos Americanos sobre la Subversión en el Continente," (secret) 1987, Tema I, 60-61.

[119] Ibid., 15.

Clearly, the conspiracy-mindset in this ideology creates an unsolvable paradox: every sort of reformist or change-oriented activity can be classified as inherently subversive. Therefore, there can be no such thing as genuine movements for change, reform or social advance; all such movements are manifestations of subversion or naive complicity by "useful idiots." According to this view, any individual or group advocating a narrowing of the role of the army is by definition subversive, since only the armed forces are able to counter subversion and the international advance of communism. Liberal-democracy is itself suspect because it is naive about the manipulations of a Machiavellian "International Communist Movement," which uses liberal freedoms to advance its strategy of world domination. Finally, individuals or groups not sharing these views become themselves suspects or enemies. In short, the national-security ideology expressed in the Conference leads to the conclusion that only a guardian model, controlled by the military, is an acceptable course.

The detailed report by Argentine army intelligence on domestic groups in Argentina demonstrated beyond a doubt that internal intelligence operations and surveillance were still in effect in the country, despite public denials by the army. The report asserted that parties carrying out electoral and human rights work--such as militant *("combativo")* Peronism, *Partido Obrero, Frente Amplio de Liberación, Movimiento al Socialismo*--were in fact "front organizations of the Bands of Terrorist Delinquents."[120] In another report with lengthy analysis of the Catholic Church and the Theology of Liberation,[121] human rights organizations such as CELS, *La Comisión Argentina por los Derechos Humanos* and *La Liga Argentina por los Derechos del Hombre* are denounced as

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[120] Ibid., 18, 20. These names translate as Workers Party, Broad Liberation Front, and Movement toward Socialism.

[121] Conference of American Army Intelligence, "Estrategia del Movimiento Comunista Internacional (MCI) en Latinoamérica a Traves de Distintos Modos de Acción," (secret), Tema 3, 1987.

"solidarity organizations" of subversion[122] supported by foreign organizations such as Amnesty International, the Ford Foundation, and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.[123] All such groups are seen as "front organizations, facades, infiltrated solidarity organizations, commissions and support groups of the ICM."[124] The report concludes with an annex listing the principal human rights organizations in each country in the Americas.[125]

Conclusion

In this chapter, the documentation clearly shows that key elements of the national-security doctrine still permeated the thinking and planning of the Argentine armed forces until at least 1991 (as demonstrated by the Joint Chiefs' internal security bill). While major factions and differences erupted during the 1980s, especially within the army, all factions agreed on two key points. These were first, the necessity to vindicate the national-security state and the dirty-war methods of the 1970s, and second, the necessity to end military accountability to civilian laws (the trials). The military high command also insisted on the necessity to maintain an internal-security role based on a "hypothesis of conflict" with *internal subversion* in the 1980s. These convictions were shared by retired *Proceso* officers, many in the *carapintada* movement, the high command, both liberal and nationalist sectors, and military men who sought power through the political system such as Bussi

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[122] Ibid., 23-24, 28. These names translate as Center of Legal and Social Studies, the Argentine Commission on Human Rights, and the Argentine League for the Rights of Man.

[123] Ibid., 26 and 28.

[124] Ibid., 26.

[125] For further reading on the XVII Conference, see Ballester et al, "El sistema interamericano...", op.cit.; Samuel Blixen, "El Estado policial que nos preparan los militares," *Brecha* (Uruguay), Año III, No. 145 (August 26, 1988); Luis Garasino, "El 'narcoterrorismo,'" *Clarín*, November 9, 1987; articles in *Compañero* (Uruguayan newspaper), Año XVIII, No. 139 (September 1, 1988); Fernando Nadra, "Los Cerebros del Terror," *Qué Pasa*, n.d. (circa 1988).

in Tucumán, Ruiz Palacios in Chaco, Ulloa in Salta, and Requeijo in Río Negro.[126]

This enduring acceptance of the tenets of the extremist and highly ideological world view of the national-security doctrine posed critical challenges for democratization. Indeed, as the Conference of American Armies documents demonstrated, the armies of Latin America (with the participation of the Pentagon) continued to view Latin America as the target of an "International Communist Conspiracy" long after the transition to civilian government. Civilians who failed to see these same demons became suspect themselves. Liberal-democracy was still visualized as dangerously porous, possibly endangering national security; in some cases it was regarded as a form of disguised subversion. Those who argued for an open, non-guardian system were still seen as naive, complicit, or subversive. Given this enduring national-security ideology, Alfonsín's strategy--to win over part or all of the *Proceso* armed forces--was a serious misreading of the mentality of a majority of the officers, which led to a flawed approach.

A major conclusion of this chapter is that important sectors of the armed forces--as represented by official spokesmen and delegates--still believed in the 1980s that *control of the civilian population* was required, a key tenet of the national-security doctrine. Legal political activity such as freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of the press, the right to dissent, the right to organize and strike: all were regarded as vulnerable areas, often manipulated by subversion in "its legal face." As was clear in the military's draft bill for internal security and the Conference documents, the armed forces preferred such activities to be closely monitored by the military and

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[126] Each of these retired officers sought electoral office in various provinces, running on campaigns of law and order, family and tradition. Bussi--a graduate of U.S. military schools who served a term in Vietnam as Argentine military observer--had run Tucumán as a virtual feudal enclave during the *Proceso*. He was released from indictment for some 800 judicial cases of torture, homicide, illegal deprivation of liberty, and other crimes by the Due Obedience law in 1987. Supported by the traditional families of the oligarchy and former *Proceso* functionaries in the province, he won 98,000 votes there (18.6%) in the 1987 election for governor. While Bussi lost the election, his right-wing party, *Fuerza República*, gained two seats in Congress, various seats in provincial legislatures, and a majority in Tucumán's Constituent Assembly. See López Echagüe, *El Enigma del General Bussi...*, op.cit., 11, 96 and 118.

possibly criminalized by law. And as the Conference documents showed, the armies of the Americas still engaged in planning, operations and intelligence based on internal enemies, guided by the national-security doctrine. Clearly, such convictions and practices by a powerful political actor impacted dramatically upon the democratization process. Democracy, as an ideal and a system which posits rule by the majority, stands opposed to a concept of the population as composed of latent or clandestine subversives who cannot be trusted.

The term "latent subversion" was actually used in 1989 by the civilian vice president of the party led by retired *Proceso* general Bussi.[127] In a classic rendition of the national-security ideology, he defended the methods of the dirty war, and added:

> "[Subversion] isn't totally eliminated. Because subversion admits various grades. It isn't eliminated from the point of view of political activism which evidently some of them [*sic*] are doing. But while they maintain this level, I don't think it is necessary to repress them militarily. I don't know at what point this latent subversion, which is now involved in 'gym practice,' will enter the military plane; if they do we would rethink the appropriate techniques with which to combat them."[128]

The absence of tolerance for dissent, critical opinion, a free press and liberal-to-left politics--the hallmark of the national-security doctrine--has chilling effects on the openness necessary for a liberal democracy to develop. In the context of Latin America, this intolerance served as a rationale for a permanent military presence in society. The armed forces continued to see themselves as guardians of the nation in a permanent war against subversion, on political, social and ideological (not simply military) levels. This, in turn, meant that officers needed to be trained and equipped to defend a certain ideology, seen as representing Western Christian values.[129] The continuation of an

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[127] López Echagüe, op.cit., 131-133.

[128] Ibid., 133.

[129] This was clearly demonstrated by one of the presentations at the 1987 Armies Conference, which was entitled "Ideological Formation of the Military Man for Capacities in the Anti-Subversive Struggle." Presented by Ecuador. Conference of American Armies documents, op.cit., 145.

ideological military meant that a right-wing political actor--in effect, an armed political party--could continue forcing the political process in a closed or rightward direction, toward a guardian model.

The second conclusion of this chapter, then, is that the persistence of the national-security doctrine within the armed forces served to restrict the democratization process in order to produce a controlled, guardian-type model. This occurred in several ways. First, as shown in this chapter (to be examined in more detail in later chapters), the results in practice of the national-security doctrine were to perpetuate fear in the population, mute criticism, and narrow the options of the democratizing forces.

The attempts to influence the legal and legislative systems to incorporate military demands were another means of steering the process in a guardian-style direction. The terror campaigns of bombings, threats and warning statements, kidnappings and other manifestations of low-intensity warfare technique and PSYOPS by insurrectionist groups also served to truncate or limit the democratic process. One of the ways this occurred was via what I have called the *hegemonic power* of the armed forces: the ability to restrict the political vision and expectations of a people through the manipulation of fear. These terror campaigns, the barrage of statements by all sectors of the military and their religious and civilian allies, the uprisings by the *carapintadas*: all of this sent an unmistakable message to Argentines, who were experienced at reading such signals. Too much change would not be permitted; vindication--or resigned acceptance--of the national-security state was demanded.

On a more intangible level, the constant equation of all forms of critical thinking with terrorism has the cumulative effect of narrowing the political spectrum and reinforcing the status quo. Martha Crenshaw discusses the effects on political culture of political violence and especially its effect on perceived standards of acceptable behavior. Although she focuses on individual terrorism rather than state terror, her conclusions apply to the latter. She writes: "Public attitudes

may develop in a way that equates all radicalism with terrorism and discredits critics of the established order as terrorist sympathizers."[130] In the case of Argentina (and many other Latin American countries), the effect is even deeper because political liberalism itself (not only radicalism) is regarded as a form of subversion by adherents to the national-security doctrine. Clearly, such political messages sought to steer the new democracy toward a guardian model where the *permanent and traditional structures of state and society*--the armed forces, the Church, the existing political and socioeconomic order, the family--preserved their dominance despite the transition to civilian government, with as little "disruption" from newly enfranchised civilian sectors as possible.

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[130] Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence* (Wesleyan University Press, 1984) 28.

CHAPTER 6

PERSISTENCE OF CORE NATIONAL-SECURITY STRUCTURES AND ORGANIZATIONS

"Although the criminal organization of the junta years has been destroyed, some parts of it continue to operate."

Interior Minister Tróccoli, October 1985

"The military has not restructured itself. The doctrine of 'internal security' persists, and as a result, the former organization and deployment remain in place because if 'the enemy is internal,' the forces of order must have control over the whole territory in order to operate on the day that our Western Christian way of life is threatened..."

From a book by CEMIDA officers, 1987[1]

Previous chapters have demonstrated that the national-security doctrine formed the basis for the national-security state in the context of the Cold War. The military created structures, organizations and laws to conduct the struggle against "subversion" (expansively defined) on military, political and ideological levels. These structures included counterinsurgency organizations, national-security bodies, internal security systems, intelligence apparatuses and informant networks, and internal security laws and decrees which institutionalized the political and tutelary role of the armed forces in the political life of the nation. Later, in the 1970s, clandestine prison, torture and execution systems were also established as part of the national-security apparatus.

This chapter assesses the enduring remnants of the national-security organizations and structures after the 1983 transition to civilian government. Three major arenas are examined: 1) The intelligence organizations of the armed forces, and evidence of their continuing political autonomy during the 1980s, as well as the attempts by the Alfonsín administration to exert control. Examples

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[1] José Luis García, Horacio Ballester, Agusto Benjamín Rattenbach, Carlos Mariano Gazcón, *Fuerzas armadas argentinas, el cambio necesario: bases políticas y técnicas para una reforma militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1987) 136.

of continuing domestic surveillance are discussed as well as evidence of autonomous and anti-government political activities by military intelligence. 2) We explore the shadowy remnants of the *grupos de tareas* from the days of the dirty war, which continued to operate in the nebulous zone between military direction and autonomy. 3) We examine the legal-structural foundation and the national-security structures demanded by the armed forces after 1983, by analyzing statements by the chiefs-of-staff during the Senate debate on the new Defense Law and during the Internal Security Law debate. This analysis allows us to understand the ways in which the military tried to establish the framework for a guardian system. We also examine the Congressional debates regarding these new laws in order to understand the conflicting attitudes of civilian forces toward national security.

As we shall see, a legal-juridical foundation was gradually put into place during the 1980s to authorize a military role in internal security and intelligence, that parallel legislative system discussed in Chapter 1. Some of the decrees and secret policies enacted by Alfonsín were directly contrary to public policy, and incorporated military national-security values and structures. Over time, a significant number of military demands were included in new legislation and decrees.

Finally, an overall evaluation is made in this chapter regarding the impact of persisting national-security organizations upon the democratization process. The evidence presented in the chapter demonstrates that the armed forces sought to maintain their internal-security and intelligence structures and their capability to monitor civilian politics. In other words, the armed forces sought to establish a guardian model rather than allowing the full development of liberal-democratic rights and freedoms. Liberal and participatory models were still regarded as dangerous to national security.

Reforming the Intelligence Apparatuses

The electoral platform of the Radicals in 1983 stated that the intelligence organizations of

the armed forces would be restricted to gathering solely military intelligence and would be reorganized to this end.[2] In other words, the intelligence apparatuses would be prohibited from an internal-security role focused on gathering political intelligence on domestic groups and individuals. This was an explicit attempt to eradicate the national-security doctrine.

Alfonsín's first head of *Secretaría de Informaciones del Estado*, or SIDE, the state intelligence organization, was Roberto Manuel Pena, a civilian lawyer. SIDE was ostensibly civilian, but for years was incorporated into the military's vast intelligence apparatus and controlled by the armed forces, especially the army. His task was to "civilianize" the intelligence agency. However, Pena resigned in February 1985 after a little over a year, citing the government's resistance to his ideas to reform and bring under control the intelligence services of the armed forces.[3] Another reason for Pena's resignation was his inability to coordinate effectively with the armed forces, which resisted sharing information with him.[4]

Pena stated that he had uncovered "special operating bases" of retired ex-*Proceso* intelligence officers and civilians conducting political intelligence and psychological operations to influence politics, groups which he had not been able to bring under civilian control.[5] He argued that the authorization of "reserved funds" for the numerous intelligence bodies played a key role in their autonomy. These secret funds had been removed by Congress in 1984 from the national budget--*but*

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[2] Plataforma Electoral Nacional de la Unión Cívica Radical, July 30, 1983. Third Part on "La cuestión militar," under "Propuestas específicas," point 2, page 8.

[3] "Arguindegui forecasts big Guglielminetti scandal," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 10, 1985.

[4] Héctor Ruiz Núñez, "¿Control civil o militar? Los servicios secretos," *El Periodista*, No. 65 (6-12 December, 1985), 3.

[5] Roberto Pena, "Propuesta en el área de 'inteligencia,'" n.d., 2. According to Eduardo Estévez, the Argentine legislative aide who gave me a copy of this unpublished document (and who worked with Pena) its date was 1987. See also Armando Torres, "Military Intelligence Up to New Tricks," *Argentine News*, (August 7, 1985) 10.

the executive branch reinstated some in subsequent years.[6]

Alfonsín also signed a secret decree in 1985 reauthorizing three secret decrees signed by military presidents in earlier years, which allowed intelligence and security forces to create business fronts and carry out covert money-making activities without any audit by the state.[7] In 1969 army intelligence had created the Department of Production, a self-financing arm of intelligence which created and ran money-changing houses, tourism agencies, private security-guard operations, and other enterprises which combined profit-making with intelligence gathering.[8] Alfonsín's secret Decree 1774 of 1985 derailed an investigation by the National Accounting Tribunal, which cited violations and irregularities by the army intelligence department, and specifically authorized the 1969 decree that instituted the Department of Production.[9] Decree 1774, in short, provided civilian authorization of military-imposed decrees and legitimated practices which gave intelligence organizations substantial political and financial autonomy from civilian oversight. The decree allowed military intelligence to escape efforts by Congress or other democratic regulatory agencies to control its activity by reducing its funds. Indeed, Chumbita notes that as official funds for the military were reduced, the activities of the Department of Production multiplied.[10]

Even more significantly, Alfonsín signed this decree in an attempt to head off an independent

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[6] Ibid., 2; see also Douglas Tweedale and Eugenio Paillet, "Pulling in the reins on Argentina's spies," *Argentine News* (September 9, 1985) 15-16; Iglesias Rouco, "Las leyes secretas," *La Prensa*, September 23, 1985. Article 36 of Law 23,110 of 1984 removed secret funds ("special accounts") from the budgets of the armed forces chiefs-of-staff, the police and other security forces. However, the following year, a number of these secret funds were re-established. See *Boletín Oficial*, Law 23,110, Article 36, 3.

[7] Rouco, ibid., 1-2. See also "Alfonsín upheld shady Army activities," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 7, 1988, 1.

[8] Chumbita, *Los carapintada...*, op.cit., 96.

[9] "Army OK'd 'Cover-Up' of Business Fronts," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 8, 1988, 1; and "Army Upheld Shady..." op.cit.

[10] Chumbita cites a 1988 *El Nuevo Periodista* article (without giving the title) which documented this. See Chumbita, op.cit., 97.

investigation into military intelligence activity. This was an early example of the president acting to protect and institutionalize a major (and undemocratic) prerogative of the armed forces, in secret, which contradicted his public policy in favor of democratic openness and military accountability to civilian rule. In so doing he allowed military intelligence to perpetuate practices which undercut his plans to confine the political power of the armed forces and establish civilian control of the military. These funds were believed to supply the armed forces intelligence services with hidden financing for covert and "black" operations,[11] which would not survive scrutiny by civilian authorities. Such secret funds provided a means to carry out political intelligence and/or illegal activities without accountability to any civilian authorities, thus fortifying the political autonomy and prerogatives of the armed forces.[12] With secret and non-accountable funds, army intelligence could continue operating as a "state within the state," immune to democratic control.

According to Pena, no one knew exactly how many intelligence organs existed in the armed forces and within other state sectors.[13] Pena also revealed that intelligence operatives, still subordinate to the armed forces and particularly the army, were instrumental in organizing masses by FAMUS, an organization formed in 1984 calling itself Relatives and Friends of the Victims of Subversion (FAMUS) in conscious imitation of the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. FAMUS held monthly masses in which anti-democratic priests (who had supported the *Proceso*) gave fiery speeches denouncing the "corrupt, pornographic democracy" in what amounted to coup-mongering meetings, attracting up to one thousand military officers and rightist civilians per

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[11] Tweedale and Paillet, "Pulling in the reins on Argentina's spies," op.cit., 15-16.

[12] For a conceptual discussion of the impact of such self-financing enterprises upon a democratic state, see Morris Blachman and Kenneth Sharpe, "The War on Drugs: American Democracy under Assault," *World Policy Journal*, V. 7 No. 1, (Winter 1989) especially 143-146.

[13] For estimates and documentation of various intelligence bodies, see Federico Mittelbach, "La centralización de los servicios: Inteligencia no es sólo espionaje," and other related articles in *El Periodista*, No. 65 (6-12 of December 1985) and No. 51 (30 August- 12 September 1985).

mass. After the August 1985 mass in which Father Julio Treviño called for "spiritual and material arms" to be used to defend the fatherland,[14] 200 of the participants gathered in the street outside and shouted "Death to the traitor Alfonsín!" and "Out with the Radical synagogue!" Reporters were threatened and told they might joint the ranks of the disappeared.[15]

Pena also declared that military intelligence was still involved in monitoring union activity, student and human rights organizations and political figures. Further, he charged, "civilian commando groups under orders from the military intelligence commands committed the bomb attacks on retired officers' clubs in Córdoba and the raid on a Rosario courthouse in which incriminating documents on the dirty war were stolen."[16] This information is crucial, for it indicates that the former head of SIDE himself had knowledge proving that some of the terrorist acts committed during the first years of civilian government *were institutional, or para-institutional operations* by military intelligence. If this was the case, it means that just as during the dirty war, terrorist acts appeared to be decentralized, but were in fact authorized at the highest levels of the armed forces and/or intelligence bodies.

Pena insisted that military leaders still held to the tenets of the national-security doctrine.[17] He revealed that military intelligence groups organized the opposition campaign to defeat the Alfonsín position in the Beagle Channel referendum, printing propaganda on military printing presses calling for a "no" vote. Pena also stated that military intelligence during his tenure still concerned

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[14] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 20, 1985.

[15] Rightist sectors of Argentine society (especially among the armed forces and right-wing Catholics) were enraged that Alfonsín's government included a number of Jews. See "Government to prosecute priest for inciting rebellion," *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 26, 1984, 1.

[16] Quoted in Armando Torres, "Military intelligence up to new tricks," op.cit., 10.

[17] Ibid; see also Maria Seoane, "Entrevista con Roberto Manuel Pena: La Mano de Obra Ocupada," in *El Periodista de Buenos Aires*, No. 48, (9 to 15 of August, 1985) 2; and Roberto Pena, "Propuesta..." op.cit.

itself with economic issues as well as domestic politics.[18] In summary, Pena's statements supported the interpretation that covert attempts to influence internal politics in a right-wing and even *golpista* direction--bombings, organization of the FAMUS masses and the Beagle Channel "no" vote--were directly orchestrated by military intelligence, making it a significant actor in Argentine politics in 1984-85.

Pena dismissed a number of military officers, retired and active duty, who held SIDE jobs. However, after his resignation, many of these officers were rehired by the next two Radical appointees, who held more conciliatory views towards the armed forces.[19] Army intelligence--known as Battalion 601, an apparatus deeply involved in the dirty war--was left virtually intact. 601, with over 4000 agents,[20] possessed its own sources of funding, which allowed it great autonomy. As Pena stated in 1985, "The government decided to keep tolerating the situation."[21]

Intelligence or Deception?

Another indication that the intelligence apparatuses were politically autonomous and beyond the control of the government was provided by their manipulation of vital information, over which they held a complete monopoly. The Alfonsín administration recognized early on that the information supplied by SIDE to the government was untrustworthy. This was a continuing problem through the end of Alfonsín's term, as SIDE failed to predict the three military uprisings and the La

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[18] Seoane, "Entrevista..." op.cit., 2; Torres, "Military Intelligence..." op.cit., 10.

[19] In an internal document prepared by an adviser to the army entitled "La Situación Militar," August 26, 1986, the writer noted that the new head of SIDE, Facundo Suárez, and the new Secretary of Defense, Dr. Mosso, should have "better dialogue" with the army and navy because the previous SIDE head (who temporarily replaced Pena) had close links to the air force.

[20] Internal document prepared by army adviser, "La Situación de Inteligencia," December 20, 1986.

[21] Seoane, op.cit.

Tablada attack. It seemed that military circles themselves sought to exploit this situation. As early as February 1984, an internal document[22] stated, "...the incapacity to control internal security is one of the most serious weak spots for the government, since it neutralized SIDE and has not achieved open and frank collaboration with the police nor known how to utilize the intelligence services of either the armed forces or the security forces." In effect, the agents of the intelligence apparatus--the most recalcitrant toward civilian control--often exercised a sort of passive resistance by neglecting to inform the government accurately.

More serious, there were cases where it seemed that SIDE and the other intelligence organizations actively supplied misinformation to the government, or even employed the so-called *"doble juego"* [the use of deception, double agents or set-ups]. At the same time, military spokesmen decried the government's attempts to demilitarize SIDE and control the intelligence bodies by insisting that civilians did not have the skills needed to run intelligence organizations. The urgent problem with control of these bodies led the Alfonsín administration to attempt that control through novel--and dubious--means. The most striking means was the government's organization of at least two secret, parallel intelligence groups, one directly under the control of the Defense Minister and the other directly under the control of the Under-Secretary General of the President.

These secret groups were organized in order to "spy on the spies" and provide reliable information to the government. However, these attempts eventually backfired, sparking major scandals for the Alfonsín government as they became public knowledge. First, the "Alem group," under the authority of the Presidential Under-Secretary General, hired Raúl Guglielminetti, a dirty

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[22] "La Situación Militar," prepared by army adviser, February 14, 1984. Document made available to author in Buenos Aires.

war operative from the days of the Triple A and the *Proceso.*[23] The Alem group employed another unsavory operative from the *Proceso* days named Juan Antonio del Cerro (also known as "Colores"). Both were identified by the human rights groups as violators of human rights, and extensive evidence of their pasts uncovered.

Colores, who was called before a judge, revealed his membership in the Alem group. He said that Alfonsín threw out information from SIDE because it was worthless, and that his mission in Alem was to prevent the infiltration of Montoneros in the government and carry out intelligence.[24] Colores claimed he had penetrated the Nicaraguan Embassy in order to place microphones, and was ordered to spy on the Peronist opposition in Congress. These charges were denied by the government, and in fact, they seemed to indicate military objectives (especially the former scheme) rather than those of the civilian government. In other words, Colores may have used his position to stage a *doble juego* to monitor and/or discredit the government. These charges and counter-charges were typical of the murky intrigues and machinations of the 1980s in Argentina, which suggested military PSYOPS or intelligence operations.[25]

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[23] Raúl Guglielminetti was a man who represented the "organic continuity" (the term is Giussani's) linking the Triple A, the *Proceso* and the clandestine remnants of the national-security apparatus during the Alfonsín administration. An intelligence operative with admitted Nazi sympathies, he was accused of several cases of torture and kidnapping after the transition to democracy. Guglielminetti was formerly security chief for General Bignone of the fourth *Proceso* junta. He also was a key CIA link; known as Major Guastavino, he was one of the instructors of the Nicaraguan *contras*, working with the United States. See Giussani, *Los Días...*, op.cit., 181, 182; *El Cronista*, July 12, 1992, 18; *Clarín*, September 8, 1992.

[24] "Los servicios por dentro," *Somos* (June 6, 1986).

[25] This theory of the *doble juegos* of SIDE and military intelligence was confirmed or shared by a variety of sources in interviews in Buenos Aires in 1992 (although others disagreed). Those who agreed included two naval intelligence officers, a retired high-ranking army officer, high-ranking Radicals, independent investigative journalists, and human rights activists. See also Douglas Tweedale and Eugenio Paillet, "Pulling in the reins on Argentina's spies," *Argentine News* (September 9, 1985) 15-16.

An internal document prepared for military leaders called "Documento de Trabajo VI"[26] suggested that Defense Minister Borrás was using the Defense group (also called the Puga-Sacco group, the names of the two active-duty army officers heading the group) to conduct surveillance of the armed forces and military intelligence organizations. Other sources confirmed that the Alfonsín administration created these groups in part to monitor the existing intelligence services in order to uncover and control autonomous intelligence-gathering and plotting by these bodies.[27] This maneuver enraged the military (perhaps partly explaining the hostility evidenced in the document about Borrás covered in Chapter 5). According to *Somos*, a popular news magazine, creation of the groups "began a virtual war among the intelligence services."[28] In one incident, SIDE agents clandestinely entered the Alem office disguised as phone company workers in order to tap the phones in a counter-intelligence operation, but were foiled when Guglielminetti returned and pulled a gun on them.[29] According to Radical and military sources, however, the Defense Ministry group was actually providing intelligence on the internal workings of the government to military intelligence.[30] In other words, it was implementing "double agent" (*"doble juego"*) functions.

More serious, however, and more ominous, was the discovery that *these groups were linked to the wave of extorsion-kidnappings that took place after the return to civilian government--while pretending to act to solve them.* After the Alem group gained the confidence of the government,

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[26] "Document VI: Trabajo sobre la crisis de los servicios de inteligencia de las FFAA por una errónea política oficial," July 4, 1986, 5. This document, acquired by author in Buenos Aires, was prepared by an adviser to the army.

[27] Journalists, citing government sources, wrote openly of this. See, for example, Douglas Tweedale and Eugenio Paillet, "Pulling in the reins on Argentina's spies," op.cit., 16.

[28] *Somos* (May 14, 1986).

[29] Interview with Dante Giadone conducted by author, September 2, 1992, Buenos Aires. See also Ruiz Núñez, "¿Control civil o militar?..." op.cit., 3; and *Somos* (May 14, 1992) op.cit.

[30] Interviews with José Manuel Ugarte, Congressional aide, October 9 and 29, 1992, and Col. Gustavo Cáceres (ret.) October 19, 1992, conducted by author, Buenos Aires.

permitting members of the force (which had expanded) to obtain government identification cards and so on, it began to act in its own interests. For example, in the case of the extortion-kidnapping of businessman Sergio Meller, the Meller family paid Guglielminetti $2 million in the Alem office for his rescue.[31] Later Guglielminetti was extradited from Spain as a member of a right-wing group involved in kidnappings and terrorist attacks.[32] Another extortion-kidnapping that caused shock waves in 1985 was the Sivak case. Osvaldo Sivak was a businessman who had been kidnapped once during the dirty war and released after the family paid an enormous ransom. He was kidnapped again in 1985, and investigations by the family found links to the same *grupo de tareas*, which was linked to army and police intelligence.[33] In this case, the family paid the Puga-Sacco group a large sum of money to assist with finding Sivak, only to find that the group itself was involved. The Alem group was later linked to another high-profile extortion-kidnapping of a wealthy businessman, Enrique Menotti Pescarmona.[34]

Eventually, it was discovered and discussed widely in the press that three of the operatives employed by the Defense Ministry (in the Puga-Sacco group) to work on the Sivak case were in fact conspiring with the kidnapping ring.[35] Martín Aguilar was a former policeman and naval intelligence officer; Pedro Salvia was also linked to navy intelligence, and had been documented by CELS as a member of Task Force 3.3.2 of ESMA; and Roberto Barrionuevo was associated with

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[31] *Somos* (May 14, 1986).

[32] Burns, *The Land That Lost Its Heroes...*, op.cit., 179; "Watergate Looms for Argentina?" *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 18, 1985.

[33] Interview with Marta Oyhanarte de Sivak, his widow, conducted by author, September 15, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[34] *Somos* (May 14, 1986).

[35] See, for example, *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 6, 1986 and passim.

army intelligence.[36] The government was sharply criticized by opposition politicians, the Sivak family, members of the press and the public; Peronist deputy José Luis Manzano warned, "It seems naive to think the same intelligence services with the same personnel and the same habits of the military dictatorship can contribute to security under democracy."[37]

These episodes demonstrated at the very least that the government did not control the state security forces, which continued to act with impunity. That is, the *government* did not control the *state*. The former Presidential Under-Secretary General believes today that Guglielminetti was acting as a double agent, and that military intelligence deliberately orchestrated this situation in order to discredit the government, and him in particular. Dante Giadone, a lawyer and former military officer, was known as a reform-minded member of the Alfonsín government, particularly in military matters. He claims he did not know Guglielminetti's background, and that he made a mistake by hiring him. According to Giadone, the hiring of Guglielminetti was promoted by the two navy intelligence officers who made up the core of the Alem group, who argued that he had important information about an assassination plot and other schemes against Alfonsín. After he was hired, Guglielminetti wrote a letter to *Ambito Financiero* (a conservative daily newspaper with connections to the military) revealing his assignment. In short, the entire episode may have been a *doble juego* intended to discredit the Radical government.[38]

Regarding the actions of the Alem and Puga-Sacco groups, the true facts may never be known: were they *doble juegos* by the intelligence apparatuses in order to regain their control of

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[36] *Somos*, op.cit.

[37] "UCR gives nod to probe of parallel intelligence: Tróccoli grilling set for Wed." ***Buenos Aires Herald***, May 15, 1986.

[38] Interview with Dante Giadone, former Presidential Secretary, conducted by author, August 18, 1992, Buenos Aires. It should be noted that this was denied by one of the navy officers involved, in an interview conducted by the author on August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires.

SIDE and conduct counter-intelligence? autonomous operations by *mafioso* operatives (commonly called "unemployed work hands" from the *grupos de tareas*) using their dirty war techniques? a mismanaged maneuver by the government? or all three? Whichever was the case, high-ranking officers used such incidents to strongly attack the government, refurbish their image as the only intelligence experts, and call for the military to reassume command of intelligence. Retired general Jorge Arguindeguy--the first chief-of-staff of the army under Alfonsín--said management errors in SIDE were to blame for the Guglielminetti affair, and that intelligence "cannot be left in the hands of amateurs." He added, "We all deserve a full explanation" of "all the connections and ramifications."[39] (However, as journalist Héctor Ruiz Núñez pointed out, the military's intelligence apparatuses were less than competent in *external* military intelligence after so many decades of being directed toward the internal realm. During the Malvinas war, for example, they failed to monitor even public BBC broadcasts which forecast where British ships were to disembark.[40] This confirms the analysis that military intelligence organizations were essentially *political* bodies devoted to internal politics.)

Another scandal which may have been a *doble juego* by SIDE or simply incompetence was the much-publicized arrest of twelve alleged *golpistas* by the Alfonsín government in the midst of the wave of bombings in 1985. These twelve--six civilians and six military officers--included prominent rightist civilians Rosendo Fraga and Jorge Vago. The press reported that a secret meeting had taken place of active and retired military officers, right-wing civilians and General Suárez Mason, wanted for human rights violations. A loyal intelligence officer, supposedly invited by

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[39] "Arguindegui forecasts big Guglielminetti scandal," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 10, 1985. In fact, the Interior Minister was summoned to brief Congress on these affairs.

[40] Ruiz Núñez, "¿Control civil...", op.cit., 2.

mistake, reported that the group was plotting to destabilize the government.[41] All twelve were arrested without charge, but were clearly suspected of masterminding the destabilization campaign and conspiracy. Three days later, Alfonsín declared a state of siege, the first ever declared by a Radical administration. Soon, however, the court found no evidence to support the government's arrests, and released all 12. Moreover, two of the officers were *promoted* shortly thereafter, in a move which further embarrassed the government.

The political effects of this episode were mixed: as some have pointed out, the bombing wave did ebb after Alfonsín's decisive action. However, the government paid a significant political cost by imposing authoritarian measures (constitutional rights are suspended under a state of siege), issuing the arrest order of the 12 with a legally-questionable decree (later declared unconstitutional by a judge), and apparently persecuting critics of the government. As a columnist from the *Buenos Aires Herald* noted some time later, "The people who planned last month's military uprisings seem just as diabolically clever as the destabilizers whose bombing campaign in spring 1985 forced the government into a state-of-siege blunder which played a definite role in causing the Radical vote to slump 10% nation-wide."[42]

The internal "Documento de Trabajo" prepared for military decision-makers at this time presented arguments with which to castigate the government by capitalizing on its mistakes and weaknesses. The document criticized the government for lacking a coherent policy on intelligence, failing to brake common crime, failing to learn from the Guglielminetti scandal, imposing the state-of-siege and arresting the 12, and violating the UCR platform by creating parallel intelligence groups

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[41] Everett G. Martin, "Argentines Are Blasé about State of Siege," *Wall Street Journal*, November 11, 1985.

[42] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 3, 1987. Elections were held in 1985 for parliamentary offices.

to use for political functions.[43] In fact, the discovery of these parallel intelligence groups was a major blow to the credibility of the government and its vaunted "ethical" stance. Interior Minister Antonio Tróccoli--called before Congress to explain the government's parallel intelligence groups--admitted he had made "a tremendous error."[44] Pena said when he heard of the Alem group, he told Giadone to dissolve it immediately, which did occur. Defense Minister Germán López (who replaced Roque Carranza when the second Defense Minister also died suddenly) resigned after learning of the government's role in the Sivak affair.[45] Radical Senator Adolfo Gass said the government's mistakes were due to "infiltrators."[46]

A number of sources believed SIDE deliberately set up the government for a political fall by leading officials to believe there was solid proof that the 12 were involved in a conspiracy.[47] One respected journalist claimed he had found evidence that military officers fired from SIDE by Pena and reinstated by his successor Rossi planned the episode as revenge.[48] According to a retired high-ranking army officer, the campaign was also organized to pressure the government to return

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[43] "Documento VI: Trabajo sobre la crisis..." op.cit.

[44] *Somos*, op.cit.

[45] "Rift with Tróccoli over probe: López admits Sivak case led him to quit," *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 4, 1986, 1. López was much firmer on restricting the political role of the military and the intelligence bodies than other members of Alfonsín's cabinet. He had urged Tróccoli repeatedly to disband the parallel groups. He was replaced by Horacio Juanarena, a more conciliatory Defense Minister who remained until the end of Alfonsín's term. In one internal document prepared by an army adviser, the writer noted that before López had been appointed, the chiefs of the Joint Chiefs had been pushing for Juanarena, "given that the high command sees him as a 'manageable' man, unlike López." From "Actualización Situación Militar," February 1986.

[46] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 28, 1985, 7.

[47] *Supra* note 25.

[48] In the words of this journalist, Julio Villalonga, who interviewed an army officer who was one of the 12, the operatives in SIDE decided to feed "*carne podrida*"--rotten meat, literally--to the government. Interview with Julio Villalonga, expert on military issues, conducted by author, October 2, 1992, Buenos Aires.

the military to command of SIDE.[49]

Another relevant point about SIDE is that many of the operatives and officers employed by it became sympathizers or active members of the *carapintada* insurrectionist movement. This substantiates the interpretation that the intelligence bodies were among those sectors of the armed forces most actively and violently opposed to the democratization process and to civilian control. During the first military uprising during Holy Week in 1987, the Radical government was unable to obtain accurate or timely information from SIDE on developments as they occurred at different army garrisons across the country.[50] This problem persisted with the other military rebellions and the assault on La Tablada in 1989. Radical leader César Jaroslavsky accused SIDE of being "a nest of *carapintadas*" in 1989.[51] One army officer in SIDE, Enrique Venturini, was later dismissed from a key intelligence post because of his participation in the Aldo Rico faction of the *carapintadas*; in 1992, after he and Rico had been discharged from the army, they ran as a slate for electoral office under the banner of Rico's new party. (This development illustrated the political ambitions of leading *carapintadas* as well.)

SIDE's ideological affinity with the extremist national-security perspectives of the *carapintadas* supports the view that SIDE and the other intelligence organizations tended to act to *undermine* rather than support the civilian government. In effect, the intelligence organizations acted to discredit the civilian government and derail the advance of democratization with dirty tricks, deceptive practices, and inaccurate information. As remnants of national-security structures enduring from the *Proceso*, SIDE and the military intelligence organizations often acted as a brake upon

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[49] Interview with Col. Gustavo Cáceres (ret.) conducted by author, October 19, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[50] Interview with Carlos Juvenal, investigative journalist, conducted by author, October 16, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[51] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 4, 1989.

political participation and effective government functioning, thus damaging the consolidation of democracy.

Domestic Surveillance by the Military

There were other indications that the old structures of the intelligence apparatuses continued to function in politically autonomous ways despite the transition, and against the stated policy of the civilian government. An internal report in August 1985--twenty months after the transition--asserted that the human rights organizations (such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) remained "the epicenter of subversion" in the internal realm.[52] This report suggested that the intelligence organizations continued to conduct domestic surveillance and intelligence. The report stated that "subversion was engaged in the organizational stage" and described one meeting, allegedly of former Montoneros gathered in a journalists' center in Mendoza, in language indicating that the intelligence services had some means of infiltrating the meeting.[53] The same report further demonstrated the internal-security role of the military by stating, "The military intelligence services of the Armed Forces are studying at this moment the connections between some members of the Puccio family recently detained for extortion-kidnappings and the organization CELS."[54] This peculiar view never appeared publicly, to the author's knowledge.

In another report[55] from the same era, the author stated that subversion had infiltrated several political parties, including the *Partido Intransigente* (Intransigent Party), the *Frente del Pueblo Unido* (United People's Front) and *Peronismo Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Peronism).

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[52] "Actualización Situación de Seguridad," prepared by army adviser, August 1985, 2.

[53] Ibid., 3.

[54] Ibid.

[55] "Actualización Situación de Seguridad," prepared by army adviser, September 1985, 3.

The report--exhibiting the alarmist views of the national-security doctrine--also predicted that the subversive organizations would begin to conduct armed actions in 1986.[56]

Secret official documents obtained by journalist Horacio Verbitsky in 1986 provided more documentation that naval intelligence continued to monitor political activists engaged in legal political activity despite the new Defense Law being debated in Congress. One official document, reproduced in Verbitsky's book,[57] contained a political biography of an individual suspected of subversion, including his political activity after the transition to democracy. This activity, the report noted, included "distributing pamphlets in support of provincial teachers" in June 1986 and "inciting labor struggles."[58]

In summary, SIDE and military intelligence remained largely beyond the control of the civilian government throughout Alfonsín's term, despite efforts to impose Radical leadership. SIDE failed to predict major military disturbances--indeed, members of SIDE were involved in those disturbances--as well as the La Tablada attack, and seemed to be involved in plots to undermine the government. Meanwhile, the military intelligence apparatuses continued to act autonomously, refusing to share information with the government and operating according to their own plans and strategies. In 1989, Radical Senator Fernando de la Rúa said, "There could have been mistakes in the state-managed intelligence services before the subversive assault [La Tablada]...[the intelligence services] are usually not effective in our country because nobody knows who they are working for."[59] The totality of these events demonstrated that the civilian *government*, despite the transition to democracy, had not made much headway in terms of democratizing the *state*, particularly the

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Horacio Verbitsky, *Civiles y Militares...*, op.cit., 411-417 (Annex 8).

[58] Ibid., 412.

[59] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 6, 1989.

national-security structures run by the armed forces. In other words, as discussed in Chapter 1, undemocratic state structures endured despite the transition to a democratically-minded *government*. The intelligence apparatuses--persisting structures of the national-security state--continued to wield autonomous political power, at times working at cross-purposes to civilian policy.

Other Indications of Persisting National-Security Structures

Another structure through which retired *Proceso* officers, dirty warriors and *grupos de tareas* operated in the 1980s was through the hundreds of private security agencies that sprang up after the transition. Many private agencies had actually existed during the *Proceso*, and at times were contracted by the military state to perform various operations. For example, one security agency, called *Magister* and headed by former *Proceso* army intelligence chief Otto Paladino, was involved in the kidnapping of a journalist named Patricio Kelly in 1983.[60] Kelly denounced this agency as a nexus of former Triple A operatives, military intelligence and the armed forces.[61] Members of another such security agency, called *Pats*, were accused of participating in an extreme-right terrorist cell made up of military and police officers which conducted terrorist acts in 1985. Later the agency served as a base of operations for two *carapintada* uprisings (including seizure of the municipal airport) in 1988.[62] Some 70,000 retired and active intelligence, armed and security forces personnel were employed by such agencies in 1992.[63]

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[60] See articles in the *Buenos Aires Herald* August 25 to September 11, 1983.

[61] Kelly, editor of an investigative magazine called *Quorum* at the time, often exposed inside information about the *Proceso* or the methods and organizations of the dirty war. He was rumored to have links to foreign intelligence agencies. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 4 and 5, 1983.

[62] Horacio Cecchi with Olga Wornat, "El regreso de un fantasma: Qué Quiere Camps," *Somos* (March 30, 1992) 8.

[63] Estimate provided by Argentine military expert, 1993.

Another indication of the sheer size of the intelligence structures after the transition to civilian government may be deduced from the personnel numbers, budgets and deployment of these forces. In December 1986, an internal summary for military circles[64] gave the following figures for the numbers of intelligence personnel employed by the armed forces and the state:

SIDE	6000 out of 6000 total
Army general staff	4000 out of 60,000 total
Navy general staff	2000 out of 28,000 total
Air force general staff	1200 out of 16,000 total
Gendarmería	1000 out of 16,000 total
Prefectura	1000 out of 12,000 total
Federal police	4000 out of 40,000 total
Provincial police, capital	5000 out of 45,000 total
Provincial police, other	5000 out of 50,000 total
Penitentiary service	600 out of 6000 total
Parallel (e.g. Alem, etc.)	300 out of 300 total
TOTAL	30,100 out of 279,300 total[65]

If accurate, these figures indicated that some 10.7% of all personnel in these entities were engaged in intelligence functions.

Defense budget research conducted by economist Thomas Scheetz indicated that intelligence expenditures, often hidden in defense and security budgets, continued to be unusually large in the 1980s. In his numerous publications, Scheetz compares the Defense-related percentage of the Gross National Product and of the national budget to those percentages allotted to social welfare, education, and health, and shows that the armed forces continued to receive disproportionately large percentages.[66] In the national budgets during the 1980s and 1990s, for example, he found funds

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[64] "Actualización Situación de Seguridad," prepared by army adviser, December 20, 1986.

[65] From another angle, in 1987 the *Buenos Aires Herald* columnist noted that of 106,000 government employees in the ministries, 44,500 were located solely in Defense; he questioned how many were involved in intelligence organizations. See Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 12, 1987.

[66] See, for example, Thomas Scheetz, "Las prioridades equivocadas de nuestros gobernantes: políticas de seguridad vs. políticas sociales," *Noticias de la Fundación Arturo Illia*, No. 15 (First Quarter of 1992), 8; "El Costo Laboral de la Seguridad Externa e Interna: Los Casos de la Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, y Perú,

for intelligence disguised in various budgets, including Defense and General Administration, adding up to a significant yearly amount.[67]

According to one journalist, SIDE's budget is some $10 million a month for operating expenses;[68] a retired naval intelligence officer also confirmed that the intelligence organizations run their own businesses as a way of raising secret funds.[69] In 1991, SIDE's yearly budget was $122 million U.S.[70] according to government officials. In 1993 the figure rose to $168 million U.S.[71]

A journalist who researched the assignments of major army intelligence officers in 1986 found that 79.4% were deployed in Buenos Aires.[72] He argued that despite public assertions by the army and right-wing allies that *Sendero Luminoso* or other subversive movements endangered the interior of the country, this deployment indicated that the army still feared the citizens of the capital the most. He also pointed out that three of the 12 suspected conspirators arrested via Alfonsín's decree in 1985--Luis Jorge Arias Duval, Jorge Horacio Granada and Leopoldo Norberto

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1969-1988," *Desarrollo Económico*, v. 30, No. 118 (July-August 1990); "The Macroeconomic Impact of Defence Expenditures: Some Econometric Evidence for Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Peru," *Defence Economics*, V. 2 (1991); "The Evolution of Public Sector Expenditures: Changing Political Priorities in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Peru," *Journal of Peace Research* (1992); "The Latin American Arms Industry as a Drag on Development, with special reference to the current Argentine case," manuscript.

[67] In 1988, for example, SIDE received some $70.4 million U.S. (deflated to thousands of australes in 1987 figures and converted to U.S. dollars). Unpublished estimates made available to the author by Thomas Scheetz, EURAL researcher, Buenos Aires, 1992 and 1993. The author is grateful to him for sharing his research and the EURAL data base with her.

[68] Interview with Carlos Juvenal conducted by author, October 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[69] Interview with navy intelligence officer (ret.) conducted by author, September 29, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[70] *Clarín*, April 21, 1993.

[71] *Ambito Financiero*, June 3, 1993.

[72] Pedro Jerez Calderón, "Inteligencia concentrada," *El Periodista*, Año 2 No. 77 (28 February to 6 March, 1986).

Cao--were active-duty intelligence officers.[73] Also worth mentioning is the fact that despite the reduction in budget for the armed forces overall, the army maintained the same number of officers and non-commissioned officers (some 30,000 in total) while the number of conscripts was drastically reduced. In 1987, there was one officer for every 5 soldiers--a serious discrepancy--compared to 1:10 in 1982. Similarly, the three forces maintained practically the same deployment of garrisons and troops throughout the country as during the *Proceso*.[74] These figures demonstrated that the structures of the armed forces from the days of the national-security state were maintained well after the transition to democracy. Finally, a major 1993 article in *La Maga* demonstrated that despite the budget cuts, Defense and Internal Security still received a sum exceeding that of Education and Culture, Health and Social Action, and Justice *combined*.[75]

The Military's Demands for National-Security Structures

Here we examine military statements to determine exactly what types of national-security structures the armed forces demanded during the Alfonsín administration. Also in this section we document the tug-of-war with civilian democratizing forces attempting to confine the political autonomy of the military, and the outcome of this struggle.

As we saw in the last chapter, the chiefs of the three branches of the armed forces appeared before the Senate during the 1986 Defense Law debate in order to argue for a continuing internal

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[73] This journalist seems to have named the wrong Arias Duval. Alejandro Agustín Arias Duval was arrested as one of "the twelve." The two were related and both involved in intelligence. Alejandro Agustín Arias Duval was later linked to the Sivak kidnapping by investigative journalist Carlos Juvenal. See his article "Implican al Coronel Arias Duval en el secuestro de Sivak," *La Prensa*, June 20, 1986. Juvenal reported that a policeman involved in the first kidnapping of Sivak in 1979 said the chief of the band that committed the second abduction was the colonel.

[74] See Ernesto López, "El achique militar," *El Nuevo Periodista*, No. 196 (24 to 30 June, 1988) 5-6.

[75] Eduardo Blanco, "El poder militar: el promedio histórico del gasto militar supera el 15 por ciento de los recursos públicos," *La Maga* (January 6, 1993) 1-3.

security role. The Radicals had proposed a new defense law in 1984 which specifically excluded the armed forces from internal security and intelligence and explicitly stated that the national-security doctrine must be abrogated and a new mission specified for the armed forces.[76] This bill was hotly debated and discussed in Congress for several years; eventually, the Peronists worked closely with the Radicals to produce a bipartisan bill which would accomplish these goals. They were fiercely opposed by the military chiefs-of-staff themselves, who presented alternative proposals, and by military allies among the Peronists as well as the Ucedé and the provincial parties (which were controlled by oligarchic families traditionally close to the armed forces). What were the organizations and legal-juridical structures they demanded?

A key military complaint was clearly the fact that *the new Defense Law under discussion excluded the armed forces from an internal security role and from internal intelligence.* The majority of deputies in Congress, Peronists and Radicals as well as representatives of smaller parties, agreed that the role of the armed forces should be transformed. This situation gave rise to the tug-of-war regarding the military role between these democratizing forces and the military. Each branch of the armed forces, in its long typewritten critiques of the bill, agreed on several aspects: a) the military required an internal security and intelligence role, b) the designation of Commander-in-Chief should be restored to heads of the forces, and c) there should be provision for the division of the country into military zones if necessary, in which military commanders would assume operational control in case of emergency situations.

The first objection, of course, reflected the national-security doctrine's emphasis on military control of the population and insertion in political life, and demonstrated that these tenets of the

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[76] El Poder Ejecutivo Nacional, Defense bill, 1985, 1 and 2. The introduction stated that the bill was designed to "revise the ideas" such as "ideological frontiers" which had confused the concepts of national defense and internal security, and explicitly abrogate Onganía's law 16,970 and the doctrine of national security.

doctrine were still ingrained in the thinking of the military high command. The second was a demand to reverse another Alfonsín reform: by designating the head of each service branch "chief-of-staff" (and withdrawing their previous status as commanders-in-chief) the civilian government had sought to make clear that there was only one commander-in-chief, the president. The armed forces chiefs were essentially demanding that they be given equal status to the president in military matters. The third demand sought legal-juridical authorization for a practice through which previous military regimes had created virtual military fiefdoms in Argentina, where zone and sub-zone commanders wielded absolute power. Again, this demand implicitly promoted the view that equal or greater status and authority should be given to military commanders than to elected civilian authorities.

The Radicals did add to the original bill the "firepower clause," under which the armed forces would be authorized to intervene in domestic conflicts if the security forces were overwhelmed. There is evidence that military circles regarded this as a victory. One internal report stated, "The existence of a hypothesis of internal war, negated in the initial text of the bill on National Defense, is implicitly recognized now, since the government has proposed that the president determine when the 'firepower' of those who attack the internal order justifies the intervention of the armed forces."[77]

After the La Tablada attack in January 1989, Alfonsín acquiesced to longstanding military demands and complaints by creating several new security structures. These essentially authorized a guardian framework and inserted the armed forces directly into internal-security and policy-making functions, in flagrant contradiction to the newly-passed Defense Law. Details regarding the La Tablada episode are covered in detail in the next chapter; suffice it to say here that a group of leftists attacked the garrison, convinced they were forestalling a coup. In contrast to the seizures of

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[77] "Actualización Situación Militar," prepared by an adviser to the army, July 1986. Author obtained access to document in Buenos Aires, 1992.

barracks by the *carapintadas*, which were characterized by negotiations between the high command and the rebels, and obvious reluctance by the military to fire on fellow officers, the civilian attackers were shortly thereafter surrounded by military units and bombarded with heavy firepower over the next day and a half. The key point to be made in this chapter is that after this event, Alfonsín issued several decrees creating new national-security structures. One was Decree 83/89, which created a new National Security Council (COSENA) to advise him on the "subversive threat." It included the ministers of Interior, Defense, Foreign Relations, *and* the chiefs-of-staff of the armed forces, the chief of the Joint Chiefs, and the head of SIDE.[78] In other words, the armed forces gained a permanent presence in the government's internal security command.

The mission of COSENA included developing a strategy for anti-subversive action and coordinating the work of the intelligence services. Critics among the Peronist and other opposition parties, the left, the independent press, and the human rights organizations criticized this as a violation of the newly-passed Defense Law, which excluded the armed forces from an internal security role, and asked why CODENA (the National Defense Council authorized by the Defense Law) had never been convoked. CODENA consisted of Congressional representatives and ministers as permanent members--that is, civilian authorities and not military chiefs--although the latter could be called to attend.[79]

In February, the *Buenos Aires Herald*, citing "reliable sources," reported that in COSENA's second meeting, the chiefs-of-staff would insist on a military intelligence role in planning new hypotheses of internal conflict.[80] Well-known military spokesmen, both retired and active-duty,

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[78] International League for Human Rights, "Argentina: The Human Rights Record," March 1990, 13.

[79] Armando Vidal, "La hora de las sospechas," *Clarín*, December 16, 1989; "Controversia política por la creación del consejo de seguridad nacional," *Ambito Financiero*, January 26, 1989, 3; and Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 3, 1988.

[80] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 8, 1989.

clamored publicly for Alfonsín to immediately implement a strategy to combat communist subversion.[81] Army chief-of-staff Francisco Gassino called for repression of ideological enemies: "those who...with or without weapons have tried to make the men of arms and Argentine society the target of their ideological action."[82] Key civilians also reverted to calling for a military internal-security role. Vice President Víctor Martínez said, "It was a big mistake to exclude the armed forces from the intelligence tasks related to anti-terrorist activities"[83] and orthodox Peronist Angelo Robledo said, "The state cannot combat subversion without the structures of military intelligence."[84]

In March 1989, COSENA (headed by a retired senior navy officer) recommended the creation of another body called the Committee for Internal Security. Alfonsín acquiesced to this via Decree 327, and again included military and intelligence chiefs. Article 1 explained that the purpose of Decree 327 was to prevent "the formation or activity of armed groups with the aptitude to endanger the existence of the National Constitution, or threaten the life, property or security of the Nation's inhabitants."[85] Article 6 allowed the president to appoint military zone commanders in emergencies and Article 7 allowed him to use the national intelligence apparatuses (including, that is, military intelligence) to "prevent and neutralize" the subversive threat as long as Article 15 of

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[81] Retired general Luciano B. Menéndez demanded this and advised Alfonsín to resign immediately if he were not willing to do so, in an article for *La Prensa*. He continued that the struggle against "political subversion" must be taken up; a law repressing "anti-Argentine activities" should be promulgated; Marxists should be excluded from all public offices; and "the authorities should impose a national, moral and Catholic orientation on the education of the youth and children of the Fatherland." See *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 7, 1989.

[82] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 12, 1989.

[83] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 10, 1989.

[84] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 8, 1989.

[85] República Argentina, *Boletín Oficial*, March 1989, 1424. Article 1, Decreto 327. See also *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 11, 1989, 1, and International League for Human Rights, op.cit., 13.

the Defense Law was not violated.[86] Although the decree incorporated several longstanding military demands, it failed to satisfy hard-line elements of the armed forces. In a published article in *Ambito Financiero*, retired General Heriberto Auel (who was close to the *carapintadas*) wrote that Alfonsín had further confused internal security matters, and advised: "There is only one way to solve the problem: establish a hypothesis of unconventional war, and through planning for this, create the necessary organizations, train them, deploy them, administer them."[87]

Meanwhile, the Peronists, the labor confederation the CGT, and the Christian Democrats all made statements asserting that Decree 327 marked a return to the national-security doctrine, and many emphasized that it contradicted the Defense Law.[88] Indeed, Alvaro Alsogaray commented, "The President violated the Defense Law, under which the armed forces cannot respond to internal aggression, which is ridiculous. I do not criticize the intervention but rather the law."[89] The next day he urged that Congress immediately repeal the article in the Defense Law excluding the armed forces from internal security.[90]

In March 1989, the Alfonsín administration began preparing an omnibus anti-terrorist law.

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[86] Article 15 of the 1988 Defense Law said that the highest national intelligence body would obtain information and intelligence necessary for the national strategy of defense, and stated explicitly: "The questions related to the internal politics of the country will in no case constitute a hypothesis of study for military intelligence." Congreso Legislativo de la Nación Argentina, Ley 23,554, 4.

[87] Heriberto Auel, "Para una 'casi guerra,' inspiraron un decreto que es 'casi una solución,'" *Ambito Financiero*, March 13, 1989, 52.

[88] See, for example, a protest by the Committee of Defense of the Justicialista Party [Peronist], who argued that while the Defense Law specified a National Defense Committee (CODENA) to include *when necessary* the chiefs-of-staff, COSENA made the armed forces chiefs permanent members, thus authorizing a permanent role in internal security in violation of the Defense Law. This distortion, they claimed, reflected the doctrine of national security. "Declaración de la Comisión de Defensa del Consejo de Técnicos y Profesionales del Partido Justicialista," n.d. Document acquired by author in Buenos Aires. Some Radicals also criticized the decree.

[89] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 26, 1988.

[90] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 27, 1988.

COSENA approved two draft anti-terrorist laws and one decree reforming the criminal code.[91] It was clear that COSENA was a structure giving the armed forces a direct voice in policy-making. Again, this anti-terrorist bill was greeted with alarm by many sectors, who criticized its excessively broad sweep. For example, the bill allowed sentences of 1-5 years of prison to be imposed upon "apologists of crime who directly attack the system" and 1-6 years for "public display of the name or initials of a subversive organization." It also sanctioned "conspiring against the system, instigating or inciting others to commit crimes against the system."[92] In short, these vague clauses targeted *ideological enemies*, as the armed forces had urged for years, thus accentuating the tendency toward a guardian model. Finally, the bill stated that any legal actions against soldiers resulting from the bill would be resolved in military courts and not by civilian justice, implicitly countermanding the Military Code reform of 1984.

The new legal-juridical structures created after La Tablada clearly reflected many of the longstanding values and demands of the armed forces: incorporation of military commanders in a policy-making role on internal security; authorization of a military combat role against "internal subversion," authorization of a role for military intelligence in the internal sphere (although this article was ambiguous, given Alfonsín's insistence on respecting Article 15 of the Defense Law), the specification of military courts, and the sanctioning not only of terrorists but also "ideological enemies." That is, these legal-juridical structures implanted the framework for a guardian model. As one civilian close to military circles said, "...the terrorist attack at La Tablada in January 1989 also made Alfonsín reverse his position, because then he signed a decree which authorized the participation of the armed forces to combat terrorism, which totally reversed what Alfonsín had been

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[91] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 9, 1989.

[92] "Government completes new omnibus law: Congress sent new anti-terrorist law," *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 19, 1987, 1.

saying in earlier years. Thus I say that all this [including the three military uprisings as well] forced Alfonsín to rectify his military policy."[93] Ucedé representative Federico Clérici, similarly, remarked that the bill was "positive...[Alfonsín] finally realized he had been wrong for the last 5 years."[94] From the opposite perspective, a prominent socialist deputy (who had been tortured during the *Proceso*), Alfredo Bravo, commented that the bill "made clear the militarization of the Argentine political process."[95]

However, given the ambiguity mentioned above, the armed forces were not fully satisfied with these decrees and the anti-terrorist bill. *Clarín* published a long article containing the critique of the army and word filtered out that the forces, especially the army, preferred Alfonsín to modify the 1988 Defense Law.[96] Alfonsín had rejected the anti-subversive bill prepared by the armed forces and proposed his own.[97] In short, Alfonsín submitted to some demands of the armed forces but resisted complete tutelage by military commanders, a stance which increased military hostility toward Alfonsín.

To summarize this section, after the La Tablada attack in 1989 the Alfonsín administration yielded to many of the longstanding demands of the armed forces: a military voice in policy-making, creation of national-security structures including the military, a legal-juridical basis for internal security, and a role in internal intelligence. These changes marked an abdication of many of the original goals of the administration, and gave tacit civilian authorization to the reinsertion of the

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[93] Interview with Rosendo Fraga conducted by author, August 24, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[94] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 19, 1987, op.cit. Another conservative, Congressman Romero Feris, presented a bill to strengthen the anti-terrorist legislation. *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 31, 1989.

[95] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 23, 1989.

[96] "Quién lleva la batuta," *Somos* (March 8, 1989).

[97] Luis Garasino, "Paquete antiterrorista: Objeciones militares," *Clarín*, March 5, 1989.

armed forces into the political process.

Civilian Allies and Class Alliances: Public Debates on Defense and Security

As we discussed in the last chapter, the concern expressed by the chiefs of the armed forces in their alternative bill for internal security--fears of "social commotion," civil disobedience, strikes, occupations of factories--gave an indication that their main fear was "the threat from below." In the Congressional debates on the internal-security bill in 1991, several deputies pointed out the significance of such a law at a time when poverty and inequality were growing in the country, and looting of supermarkets for food by men, women and children were occurring for the first time in Argentina's history.[98] Significantly, provincial parties and the Ucedé, based in the powerful land-owning and business sectors, strongly criticized the Radical-Peronist defense bill in 1987 and 1988 and called for an internal security role for the armed forces. During the 1991 Internal Security law debate in Congress, these representatives approved the bill, but sought to broaden it by authorizing the armed forces to develop a "hypothesis of conflict" of internal war and prepare, train, and equip themselves to this end. These demands by civilian allies--similar to the often-expressed demands of the armed forces--illustrated the enduring parallel interests and alliances between the armed forces and these social sectors.

One such party, the Union for a New Majority, was formed by the Romero Feris family of Corrientes. Liberal-Autonomist Pact governor (and later Senator) José Antonio Romero Feris had been a key political figure in the province since the 1960s. He served as ambassador to Costa Rica during the *Proceso* (1978-79) and launched the new party Union for a New Majority in 1986. The *Centro de Estudios Unión de la Nueva Mayoría* (Center of Studies, Union for a New Majority) in

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[98] This occurred in 1989 and again in 1990, as hyperinflation swept the country and food prices multiplied from hour to hour.

Buenos Aires, headed by Rosendo Fraga, is the think-tank for the party; this organization itself suggests the alliance between the liberal wing of the army and the provincial civilian conservatives.[99] Romero Feris's brother Raúl was president of the Argentine Rural Confederation for years, representing agro-exporting and farming interests;[100] his uncle Gabriel was a senator (1983-1986) and later governor of the province. While a senator, Gabriel Romero Feris presented a bill to amnesty all convicted and accused military officers.[101]

In one of his books, Fraga included the critique by the Center of Studies, Union for a New Majority of the Radical-Peronist defense bill.[102] He began: "The work of the *Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría* also put forward a broader concept than did the official bill in terms of national defense, coinciding with the position of the military commanders of the Joint Chiefs in that the aggressions that affect the nation in modern conflict cannot be circumscribed solely within the external realm."[103] Other key points were: a) the concept of the mission of the armed forces in the Radical-Peronist bill was confused and ideological; b) the "reason for being" of the armed forces had to be clearly stated, and a "priority [was] to close the revision of the anti-subversive struggle through a law of national pacification;"[104] c) there was a need to restructure the armed forces, authorize concrete and specific missions for the intelligence services, and correct the drastic reduction of the military budget, "which in 1987 counted with less than half of the resources as in the last years of the de facto government;" and d) there was a need to reverse the tendency to see

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[99] It should be recalled that Rosendo Fraga Sr. was an army general.

[100] Joe Schneider, "Make way for the center," *Argentine News* (July 5, 1986) 39.

[101] See Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 106.

[102] Ibid., 100-103.

[103] Ibid., 98.

[104] Ibid., 101.

the armed forces as a political force, occupying power since 1930, when in fact civilian sectors had always been involved in coups.[105]

The Ucedé, represented by Alvaro Alsogaray and others in Congress, repeatedly criticized the Radical-Peronist defense bill during the Congressional debates of 1987 and 1988, arguing that the armed forces needed to retain the capacity to intervene in domestic conflicts and maintain an internal intelligence mission. These debates included extended analysis and discussion of the specific history of Argentina, the consequences of the national-security doctrine, and the political role of the military (and that of the United States). In 1987, Alsogaray argued that the bill ignored and excluded the most probable hypothesis of conflict--subversion.[106] He also complained that internal intelligence was excluded from the bill, and called for a specific anti-subversive law.[107] This position, however, was outvoted by the majority. Romero Feris proposed abolishing Article 13 of the Defense bill which explicitly excluded the armed forces from various forms of internal conflicts.[108]

The debates in Congress on the Internal Security bill were even more heated. This bill, which was again a joint project of the Radicals and Peronists, had nevertheless been stalled for two years in Congress. Deputy Victorio Bisciotti, the Radical author of the bill, alluded to roadblocks imposed by the executive branch--Carlos Menem had replaced Alfonsín in July 1989-- and "strong pressures" exerted by unnamed sources.[109] Conrado Storani, another Radical, stated the bill was

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[105] Ibid., 102.

[106] República Argentina, Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación, *Diario de las Sesiones del Congreso*, December 29 and 30, 1987 debates on Defense bill, 4750.

[107] Ibid., 4751.

[108] Ibid., Senate debates on Defense bill, April 13-14, 1988, 3128.

[109] Ibid., June 12-13, 1991, 647.

worked on intensely in 1989 and 1990, but not scheduled for debate until 1991 because the executive branch delayed, "certainly obeying the influence which determined groups exercised because concrete corporate interests were not satisfied, which could not be admitted in the elaboration of a law."[110] Storani's comments on the "determined groups" seemed an elliptical reference to the armed forces. In fact, each armed service branch had again submitted typewritten critiques of the bill.[111] As with the Defense bill, they repeated their longstanding criticisms: the absence of their commanders as permanent members in internal security bodies,[112] the so-called artificial division between external defense and internal security, and the absence of clear authorization to conduct internal intelligence.

In the stormy debates on this bill, opposing deputies from the leftist parties and some dissident Radicals and Peronists warned that the national-security doctrine had been resuscitated in the bill and the door was being reopened to legalized military involvement in internal conflicts and political affairs. One deputy argued that the new structures created by the bill, such as the Council on Internal Security, included the security forces in deliberative and policy-making functions which had resulted in disastrous consequences in the past.[113] Another decried the return to a system of repression incorporating the armed forces in military operations against internal enemies.[114]

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[110] Ibid., 690.

[111] Ejército de la Nación, "Observaciones al proyecto de ley de seguridad interior," n.d.; Fuerza Aérea, "Asunto: Proyecto de ley de seguridad interior," n.d.; Armada, "Consideraciones sobre el proyecto de ley de seguridad interior del Sr. diputado Toma," n.d. Copies obtained by author in Buenos Aires.

[112] As we have seen, Alfonsín's 1989 decree 83/89 *did* include the military commanders in COSENA, thus implementing this longstanding military demand. However, the bipartisan Internal Security bill--finally approved by Congress in December 1991--did not include them in new bodies it created. Some Congressional representatives and aides today argue that the Internal Security law automatically takes legal precedence over previous executive decrees; other observers argue the legal situation is more ambiguous.

[113] *Diario de las Sesiones*, op.cit., June 12-13, 1991, 675. Deputy Simón Lázara also spoke of the continuing operations of the intelligence agencies, which tapped phones, conducted surveillance of politicians, journalists, and activists, and wrote reports with their opinions on political and social matters that somehow always found their way into the press.

[114] Ibid, 678. This critique was made by Deputy Luis Zamora.

The bill's sponsors argued that a law was desperately needed to fill a vacuum which the armed forces were filling. Deputy Bisciotti said that during the La Tablada attack, no one knew who was coordinating the counter-offensive or whose jurisdiction was involved. There were no organizations to coordinate, plan and execute actions of internal security because there was no law. He asked, "Do the Deputies know where the task of developing the plans for such conflicts is occurring? In the Joint General Staffs of the Armed Forces. I wonder whether the elaboration of such plans will not respond to a militarized concept of internal security."[115] Bisciotti also criticized the decrees issued by Alfonsín and one year later, by Menem, which included the armed forces in new structures of internal security.[116]

Right-wing Senators such as Alsogaray and Francisco de Durañona y Vedia from the Ucedé and Luis Herrera from the orthodox wing of Peronism supported the law, but said it failed to go far enough. The president of the Commission of Defense of the Senate, Horacio Félix Bravo Herrera, a right-wing Peronist, proposed an alternative law calling for the armed forces to form the permanent pillar of the internal-security system.[117] In one heated exchange, Alsogaray referred to the representative of *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), Luis Zamora, as "an infiltrated activist" who was "managed by Moscow and Fidel Castro."[118] Zamora argued that the internal security law perpetuated the dominion of the intelligence services and left the population at the mercy of the

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[115] Ibid., 652. Here Bisciotti was saying that despite the Defense Law, the military continued to plan responses to *internal conflicts*, confirming the continuity of a "hypothesis of conflict" based on internal enemies, as posited in this study.

[116] Ibid., 651. Menem's 1990 Decree 392 went further than Alfonsín's Decree 327 by authorizing a "hypothesis of conflict" on domestic unrest as well as military intervention in "social commotion." It is important to note that many Radicals criticized Alfonsín's measures after La Tablada. See also Chapter 9 on the Menem administration.

[117] Senado de la Nación, "Fundamentos del Dictamen de Comisión," November 19, 1991.

[118] *Diario de las Sesiones*, June 12-13, 1991, op.cit., 683. Note that this debate took place in 1991, two years after the fall of the wall, indicating the persistence of national-security ideology stressing communist subversion among military allies (as well as the military).

military. Zamora asked rhetorically why "internal commotion" only referred to civilian activities, when the military insurrections had also put the republic in danger and threatened the lives and peace of the community; the military insurrectionists were pardoned or amnestied, he argued, and no rules of the violation of internal security were applied.[119] Alsogaray stated, as he had on previous occasions, that the Ucedé was opposed to the exclusion of the armed forces from internal security, as stated in Article 13 of the Defense Law, and called explicitly for abrogating this article.[120] In one apparent allusion to the draft bill on internal security prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (see Chapter 6), Deputy Alberto Natale of the Progressive Democrats said his party opposed the proposal "whose text is circulating among the senators--while it may not have parliamentary status--but is known by everyone and will certainly be proposed during the debate."[121]

In fact, *the final Internal Security Law did abolish Article 13 of the Defense Law and its accompanying chart,* which had graphically illustrated that the armed forces were strictly prohibited from intervening in internal conflicts. This nullification indicated the political advances made by the armed forces and their civilian allies by the early 1990s. The new law also set up new security bodies which were to be activated by the executive branch. Perhaps the most significant aspects of the new law--promulgated in early 1992 and "reglamented" [regulated, clarified and authorized by the executive] in July 1992--were the absent elements. There was little role for Congress in determining when the armed forces were to be employed in internal conflicts, centralizing that function in the executive branch.[122] A clause forbidding the use of a "due obedience" approach

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[119] Ibid., 679.

[120] Ibid., 684.

[121] Ibid., 665.

[122] Congress is technically required to approve a state of siege first, but historically in Argentina presidents have declared states of siege and taken other unilateral executive actions without Congressional approval.

to illegal orders had been eliminated from the original draft.[123] Executive decrees 327 and 392, which authorized military operations in domestic conflicts, were not specifically abrogated. However, the armed forces were not permanent members of the new national-security bodies; they were included as a "last resort" if the security forces were overpowered, as in the Defense Law.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented the endurance and/or reconsolidation of structures of national-security organizations, counterinsurgency commandos, and *grupos de tareas* during the civilian administration of President Alfonsín. As we have seen, these structures became the epicenter of resistance to civilian rule and the democratization process. Intelligence apparatuses--SIDE and military intelligence--continued to monitor and openly threaten politicians, journalists, human rights advocates, unionists, teachers and students, and leftist organizers throughout the 1980s. Offices were broken into, individuals threatened by unknown armed men or death threats, mail opened, and articles fed to the press through 1992 by the intelligence organizations. In 1990, for example, when Radical legislators introduced a bill to reform the intelligence apparatuses, many Radical Congressmen received the same threatening letter.[124] Even more seriously, evidence pointed to the involvement of elements of these intelligence apparatuses in terrorist acts such as bombings, kidnappings and extortion, and deliberate deception to undermine the civilian government.

Such activities demonstrated that intelligence was indeed a key political actor in Argentina in the 1980s. The continuation of such activities served to perpetuate a climate of fear in the society, which was damaging to the free and open atmosphere needed to allow liberal-democratic freedoms to take root. Insurrectionist military sectors and intelligence operatives sought to destabilize the

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[123] *Diario...*, June 12-13, 1991, op.cit., 668.

[124] Interview with José Manuel Ugarte conducted by author, October 29, 1992, Buenos Aires.

government and create chaos and terror, perhaps attempting to prove that democracy meant anarchy and only military government could impose law and order. The threats and warnings against journalists and other social critics were also aimed at narrowing the political debate and the "acceptable" political spectrum, preempting political challenges to the values and interests of the military, and encouraging ideological conformity. Again, these means of restricting democracy may be seen as military attempts to create a guardian model, in which the military monitored and controlled the political process and confined liberal freedoms within national-security bounds.

Military intelligence also took an active political role, as we have seen, in fomenting *golpista* currents via FAMUS, and organizing civilian opposition to the administration's political measures, such as the Beagle Channel referendum. In later years, signs of intelligence harassment and monitoring continued. In short, national-security organizations continued to exist and operate during the 1980s, acting to curb and/or control civilian political activity.

Secret, politically autonomous military national-security organizations are incompatible with the values of liberal as well as participatory democracy; there is no accountability to the public nor subordination to civilian control. At worst, such organizations may act as a parallel state, creating a "militarized democracy" or guardian system. As we have seen, the national-security state is a model of state and society antagonistic to democracy as a form of government. To the extent that national-security structures and values persist, democratization processes are weakened or confined. In Argentina, the greatest threat to democratization in the 1980s was not the possibility of a coup, but rather the process of increasing participation of the military in civilian government through the progressive insertion of military interests and national-security values within the laws and institutions of democracy. As we have seen, the armed forces did secure civilian authorization of many of their internal security functions during the Alfonsín administration, although not as completely as they desired. Both the Defense Law and the Internal Security law allowed military intervention in

domestic conflicts only as a last resort. However, Menem opened the door wider to a military internal-security role with Decree 392 and other acts (see Chapter 9). Moreover, the two laws did not specifically abolish the decrees enacted by Alfonsín and Menem, thus leaving in place (or at least leaving open to legal question) the parallel legal-juridical structure authorizing the armed forces' internal-security role.

This chapter has shown how the Alfonsín administration gradually yielded prerogatives back to the armed forces, as exemplified by the establishment of the parallel legal-juridical structure authorizing a military internal-security role, the approval of secret funds for the armed forces, and the retreat *vis-à-vis* "civilianizing" the intelligence apparatuses. The provision of "covert amnesties" via the *Punto Final* and Due Obedience laws is discussed in Chapter 8. Incrementally, the government reauthorized internal-security responsibilities and deliberative functions to the military, essentially incorporating military values, interests and organizations into civilian governmental structures and laws. Given that major currents of the armed forces still held to the tenets of the national-security doctrine, this represented a form of militarizing civilian institutions and laws. This regression by Alfonsín from the 1983 Platform of the Radical Party and his own former principles was symptomatic of the ability of the military to move the political center of gravity to the right in Argentina over the course of the 1980s, and "contain" civilian power. That is, the armed forces succeeded in steering the new democracy toward a guardian model.

On the other hand, Alfonsín refused to the end to accede to the most insistent demands of the armed forces: namely to gain the untrammeled right to intervene in (and prepare for) "social commotion," to receive a blanket amnesty or pardon for all convicted and accused military officers, and to obtain complete vindication for the dirty war and the national-security state. Menem, as we shall see, has acted to largely acquiesce to these demands. Alfonsín negotiated with the armed forces and conceded on many issues, but he always sought to preserve the achievement that brought him

the most respect and acclaim domestically and internationally: the trials and sentences of the *juntas* of the *Proceso* for the systematic violation of human rights.

In summary, the evidence in this chapter has shown that the second expectation was substantially fulfilled. National-security structures did persist, penetrating civilian realms; while clearly not to the extent as during the *Proceso*, these intelligence bodies and the remnants of the *grupos de tareas* continued to act beyond civilian control in ways detrimental to a free and open system, and with significant autonomous political power. Further, the armed forces did resist the downsizing or dismantling of these bodies, as predicted, and in fact aggressively sought to reestablish the legal authorization for such organizations and structures through 1991.

CHAPTER 7

CONTINUITY OF DIRTY WAR METHODS

"Deeds such as these demonstrate that the paramilitary and parapolice apparatuses have not been dismantled in Argentina. The repressive apparatus keeps acting in the full light of day, with an unknown face, and this situation reminds us of the worse methodology used during the military dictatorship."

Congressman Raúl Rabanaque Caballero, commenting on a recent kidnapping, July 1985

"These extortion-kidnapping bands have a very large infrastructure with helicopters and credentials that permit them to open many doors, including passage from one country to another...they are linked to the intelligence services."

Congressional Deputy José Luis Manzano, commenting on new evidence regarding continuing kidnappings, November 1987[1]

In this chapter we explore the persistence of dirty war methods and operations by remnants of the national-security state after the transition. To review, the term "dirty war methods" as used in this study refers to two broad areas: first, practices by clandestine groups demonstrating counterinsurgency-based methods, including acts of terrorism, politically-motivated attacks, covert operations or intelligence-related maneuvers such as the use of infiltration, provocation, disinformation and/or deception (e.g., PSYOPS). Second, it refers to abusive methods used officially by the armed and security forces in their treatment of conscripts and the civilian population. While the systematized state terror that existed during the first years of the *Proceso* ended with the transition (in fact, before), incidents of right-wing terrorism and dirty war practices did continue during the Alfonsín administration. This chapter shows how these practices had the result of steering Argentina toward a guardian system, in which democratic liberties were narrowed

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[1] In the same debate, deputy Rabanaque pointed out the links between the bands who kidnapped Sivak and Neuman with the *"Grupo Centroamérica"* led by former army intelligence chief Osvaldo Riveiro. The *Grupo Centroamérica* trained the *contras* in Honduras. See "Manifestaciones del diputado Rabanaque," *La Prensa*, November 12, 1987.

and military tutelage of politics strengthened. First, terrorist acts--whose authors were generally never discovered--kept Argentines fearful, and militated against the consolidation of constitutional rights and political freedoms. Second, abusive practices toward civilians by the armed and security forces perpetuated a system in which violence and coercion were used as a means of social control, beyond the bounds of civilian regulation.

This chapter examines, first, the wave of bombings and other destabilizing acts during 1984-1986 and 1988 (mentioned previously), and second, the extortion-kidnapping wave throughout the 1980s, with further documentation of the links to the intelligence apparatus. These were examples of the first category of dirty war methods in the above typology. Evidence pointing to military involvement in these acts is examined and evaluated.

As we saw in previous chapters, internal documents prepared by military advisers, *carapintada* documents, and civilian investigations all substantiated the hypothesis that former or current military and intelligence sectors carried out destabilizing and terrorist acts during the 1980s. Many Argentine observers believe this was the case. While conclusive evidence was difficult to come by, the fact remains that these practices, as a heritage of the national-security state, damaged the consolidation of liberal democracy in Argentina and signaled the persistence of national-security ideology and practices among armed and violent groups.

The chapter then examines the second category of dirty war methods: abusive practices used by the armed forces in training conscripts, and used by the security structure--mainly the police--in dealing with criminal suspects and the population in general. Despite the transition to democracy, torture, extrajudicial execution and other abuses continue to be used by the military-security forces. Finally, the La Tablada incident (in which armed leftists invaded an army garrison, sparking a massive military response) is examined in greater depth. These incidents all provided evidence that there was a discernable continuity between the types of practices carried out by the national-security

state, and by enduring apparatuses or structural remnants of that state in the 1980s. In other words, these incidents reflected the continuity of dirty war attitudes and techniques from the days of the national-security state. The targets of such practices continued to be political activists, dissidents, journalists, human rights advocates, lawyers and other individuals and organizations struggling to construct a liberal or participatory democracy. In the conclusion, we evaluate the implications for democratization of these practices.

Terror as a Means of Political Influence

In 1984, as we have seen, a number of disturbing signs indicated that sectors of the armed forces and intelligence bodies and their supporters among right-wing Catholic Church sectors were increasingly insurrectionist. Just months after the transition to civilian rule, various intelligence-style, covert operations targeting Argentine citizens began. To name just a few examples, in November 1984, boxes of bones were sent to relatives of the disappeared with notes saying they were those of family members.[2] In December, the Madres received 300 packages containing handkerchiefs with threats written on them (the Madres were known for the white kerchiefs they wore on their heads during weekly demonstrations).[3] Bombs were placed in theaters and found in a stadium where Alfonsín was scheduled to speak. One human rights organization compiled a list of 300 acts of terrorism and violence in 1984 alone by right-wing groups with apparent links to the security apparatus.[4] In April of 1984, fifty-nine retired officers published a statement denouncing

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[2] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 18, 1984. Later this was found to be false.

[3] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 31, 1984.

[4] *Servicio de Paz y Justicia*, "Informe sobre atentados, amenazas, intimidaciones, y robo de documentación," unpublished, cited in Mark Osiel, "The Making of Human Rights Policy in Argentina: The Impact of Ideas and Interests on a Legal Conflict," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 18 (1986) 161.

the "anti-armed forces campaign" and praising the dirty warriors.[5] More and more active-duty officers made public statements praising the *Proceso* and vindicating the dirty war as a victory against subversion.

In September 1985, a voice interrupted a Radio Continental broadcast to demand liberty for the *Proceso* juntas and warned that "we will return and there will be many more disappeared than in the last ten years."[6] In October, a clandestine group (apparently army officers) released a flyer entitled "Honor, Courage and Austerity" in which they contemptuously mocked Alfonsín (they referred to the president's initials, "R A," calling him the "Ratón de Argentina," the Argentine mouse). The flyer made a fierce defense of the "counter-subversive war" and attacked the "psychological war" aimed at the armed forces, ending with the declaration, "*Viva* the Fatherland and *Viva* the Argentine Army!"[7] The document reflected the tone of the army insurrectionists who later became known as *carapintadas*, for the camouflage paint they wore during their uprisings. The *carapintadas*, it should be recalled, were officers mainly from the nationalist-authoritarian wing of the armed and security forces, who resented both the civilian government and their liberal-internationalist commanders (Chapter 8 examines the *carapintadas* in more detail).

Numerous similar incidents occurred in the early years of Alfonsín's administration. Often, flyers from the "Armed Forces of the Resistance" or unknown commando squads would be scattered at sites or anonymous callers would claim responsibility. For example, after Peronist Youth member Héctor David was kidnapped, beaten and questioned by armed men, the *Comando Antisemita* claimed responsibility.[8] In another incident, a powerful bomb destroyed the railway track between Córdoba

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[5] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 12, 1984.

[6] *Clarín*, September 18, 1985.

[7] Flyer in the author's possession.

[8] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 11, 1985.

and Buenos Aires and a group calling itself *Escuadrón Juan Facundo Quiroga* claimed responsibility; many Radicals were about to take the train to attend a rally in the capital.[9] Other flyers found in Córdoba declared "war on the democratic government" and were signed Armed Forces of the Resistance.[10] The authors of these early operations were never found and the high command undertook no visible investigations to identify them. Probably these acts were carried out by various *comando* groups, intelligence groups and/or former *grupos de tareas* (disappearance squads) acting in a decentralized fashion, just as they had during the *Proceso*. Many of these sectors became active in the *carapintadas* movement.

Between 1984 and 1986 several waves of bombings and bomb threats erupted throughout the capital city of Buenos Aires, the political and economic center of the country. In 1985, when bombs and threats were a daily occurrence, Defense Minister Germán López said: "We know that two of the phone threats came from Battalion 601 [army intelligence]. It still has the same structure and the same men it did during the military government."[11] Government officials repeatedly told the press they suspected the violence was orchestrated by military intelligence and the state intelligence service.[12] Within two months in 1985, there were 21 violent attacks and 1500 bomb threats.[13] Elementary schools, Radical Party offices, synagogues, popular cafes and government officials' houses were targeted by anonymous persons on an almost daily basis.

Telephoned messages warned the public of impending attacks, sparking widespread fear and

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[9] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 24, 1986.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Everett G. Martin, "Argentines are Blasé about State of Siege," *Wall Street Journal*, November 4, 1985. Battalion 601 changed its name to Centro de Reunión de Inteligencia Militar, or CRIM, after the transition, but remained essentially intact.

[12] See, for example, *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 13, 1985 and November 3, 1985.

[13] See Douglass Tweedale, "Argentina under state of siege," *Argentine News* (November 11, 1985) 6-8.

anxiety. In some cases, the telephoned messages warned that a series of primary schools would be bombed, thus causing parents and teachers to evacuate their children, only to find that the threat was a hoax. (One day, threats were called in to over 200 schools, resulting in the evacuation of 76,000 primary school children.)[14] These methods recalled military PSYOPS (psychological operations) campaigns and low-intensity warfare strategies. The bombing wave occurred during the civilian trials of the *juntas*, a time of tension in which the formerly all-powerful military chiefs were facing a civilian court of law for the first time and the secrets of the dirty war were being publicly aired.

This time period was also immediately before the important 1985 election for legislative posts, which Alfonsín's Radical Party hoped to win. In 1992, a number of military sources asserted in interviews that in fact, sectors of the government itself or the Radicals were the authors of the bombing wave in 1985, in order to manipulate the population into voting for the Radicals as the only alternative to military rule.[15] It was striking that unrelated sources from the army, navy, and intelligence units presented the same analysis; it seemed that many in the armed forces believed this to be the case. As proof, many cited the fact that the Radicals did win the elections.

On the other hand, the Radical government denounced the bombing wave as an assault upon the democratization process. Antonio Tróccoli, the Interior Minister, called the bombing wave "a full-fledged destabilization campaign" by "unemployed workhands"[16]--referring to the infamous *grupos de tareas* used during the dirty war--and most of the political parties and the public seemed to share this assessment. Other practices reminiscent of the methods of the dirty war occurred at the same time, lending support to the view that there was a campaign of intimidation and destabilization in progress by elements of the armed and security forces. There were cases of

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[14] Ibid., 8.

[15] Interviews conducted by author in 1992, Buenos Aires.

[16] See Eugenio Paillot, "Destabilization underway: interview" in *Argentine News* (May 6, 1985) 5-10.

political activists--Peronists, leftists and Radicals--kidnapped, tortured and warned to stop their political activity. For example, one woman was kidnapped and burned with cigarettes after her husband testified in the trial of the *juntas*. The next day, a car began following her husband.[17]

Human rights activists reported office break-ins and surveillance by Ford Falcons, the cars used by military intelligence and "disappearance" squads during the dirty war. The Madres were attacked during their weekly demonstration by a band of thugs on July 9, 1984, and a judge who had indicted two generals was followed by a car on July 10.[18] An activist of *Movimiento al Socialismo* was kidnapped by men in a Falcon in March 1985, held 16 hours, beaten and burned with cigarettes, and warned against forming an electoral coalition of leftist parties. The men said, "We have enough arms and money to persecute and kill all your leaders."[19] A member of the Peronist *Descamisados* was kidnapped and burned with cigarettes and questioned about his organization in June.[20] The judges and prosecutors trying the *juntas* received repeated death threats from numerous commando groups.[21] On September 16, 1985 alone, 14 clandestine groups sent death threat letters to the prosecutors and judges.[22]

Most non-military sources in my investigation discarded the theory that the Alfonsín government was involved, although some analysts thought there might be some truth to this.[23] In

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[17] *La Razón*, July 5, 1984 and *Clarín*, July 6, 1984.

[18] *Clarín*, July 10 and 11, 1984.

[19] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 3, 1985, 13.

[20] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 14, 1985, 11. There were other similar incidents as well.

[21] Julio Strassera, the lead prosecutor, denounced this campaign of threats. *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 21, 1985.

[22] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 4, 1985, 11.

[23] Several analysts believed there might be some involvement by a faction of the Radicals. One expert told me that possibly the Puga-Sacco group or another of the para-intelligence organizations of the government could have been involved. Then, however, the question is whether one can say this was "the government,"

the assessment of the author, the most likely explanation of the wave of bombings and violence was that a number of actors were involved, namely disgruntled intelligence operatives, commando squads associated with the *carapintadas*, remnants of the *grupos de tareas*, and right-wing civilians close to military and absolutist-Catholic sectors. The fact that the same targets as during the dirty war were attacked leads to the logical conclusion that the same forces were acting against perceived subversion, and/or to narrow the democratic opening. It should be recalled that one internal military report, cited in Chapter 5, pointed to a coalescing movement among "fascist sectors of our army" led by Mohamed Alí Seineldín which were suspected in bombings of synagogues, the Curia and the Cathedral.[24]

A *carapintada* document (by the so-called Organization of the Argentine Army for Resistance), also cited in Chapter 5,[25] called in 1986 for direct actions against specified targets, elimination of select targets, active resistance to illegitimate orders, and active organized resistance to the threat of detention of fellow officers. This document supports the view that insurrectionist factions of the army *encouraged a strategy of destabilization of the government*, including violent acts. The wave of violence that occurred in these early years seemed to correspond to the strategy proposed in this document. Finally, it should be recalled that in 1985 Roberto Pena, Alfonsín's first civilian head of SIDE, said he had found evidence implicating military intelligence and civilian commandos in 1984 bombings and other such acts (see Chapter 5).

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or an engineered *doble juego*.

[24] Reserved military document entitled "Military Situation," February 29, 1984.

[25] *Organización del Ejército Argentino para la Resistencia*, "Fuerzas enemigas," April 1986, "reserved document" (made available to author in Buenos Aires, 1992).

Another internal report prepared by an adviser to the army[26] confirmed the involvement by military-security and intelligence sectors in terrorist attacks, stating the likely authors as follows: "Threats to schools: Para-SIDE; bombings of Jewish day care centers: para-police; student killed in Córdoba: para-SIDE; bombs in cafes: internal military..." Again, this document lends support to the view that enduring structures and organizations of the national-security state were seeking to narrow the democratic opening by means of violence.

A respected independent journalist also pointed to the wave of violence as the result of the activities of decentralized groups of intelligence operatives, *carapintadas*, right-wing civilians and police.[27] He thought, however, that some of the incidents might have been "staged" by the Radicals to drum up support. In an interview, a retired navy intelligence officer said the culprits were elements from the intelligence services, police and Battalion 601 who were trying to create a climate of terror and instability.[28] These groups, he asserted, knew they could not overthrow Alfonsín, but wanted to create disruptions and make the country ungovernable. There were "thousands and thousands of men involved in this type of covert operations," he added.

In later years, some evidence did come to light implicating the *carapintadas* in criminal and terrorist violence. In February 1988 a gang of active and retired army officers was arrested by police in a robbery attempt. Some were linked to the *carapintadas*. They told police that they were part of an "irregular national army" formed in 1985, fighting for Fatherland, God, and Home. According to these officers, their parallel army had three levels of organization: an operational level, led by Aldo Rico; an intelligence and "acción sicológica" apparatus; and an infrastructure and

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[26] "Actualización Situación de Seguridad," December 20, 1986. A civilian close to the military confirmed that these sectors were responsible for many of the bombings in an interview with the author on July 20, 1993 in Buenos Aires.

[27] Interview with journalist conducted by author, October 26, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[28] Interview with retired navy officer conducted by author, September 29, 1992, Buenos Aires.

logistics apparatus, which obtained funds (of which they were a part). Later, before a court, the officers retracted these statements.[29] This incident suggested the involvement of the *carapintadas* in common crime to raise money for their activities.[30]

Other evidence of the links of the *carapintadas* to bombings was provided in 1988 when police broke up a right-wing anti-Semitic gang in Córdoba. *Carapintada* documents, right-wing literature and arms were found in their houses and group members admitted bombing a textile plant in March 1988.[31] A non-commissioned officer from the air force linked to a Rico *carapintada* group was arrested as part of this bombing gang several days later.[32] As huge arms caches were discovered by an investigating judge in many Buenos Aires neighborhoods in November 1988, evidence pointed to known *carapintadas* and individuals linked to the Sivak kidnapping (discussed below).[33] However, these investigations lost their momentum on December 2, 1988, interrupted by a new national crisis: the third *carapintada* uprising.

Later in 1988 and 1989, there was further proof that *carapintada* groups were involved in terrorist bombings. In mid-1989, a rash of attacks on military targets took place, such as the bombing of a car parked in the lot of the army general staff and the destruction of a major's car in La Plata. Leaflets signed by the OSA (*Organización Suboficiales Argentinos*, or Argentine Organization of Non-Commissioned Officers) found in these sites claimed responsibility, indicating that these were attacks by the right-wing nationalist *carapintadas* against liberal-internationalist

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[29] Chumbita, *Los carapintada...*, op.cit., 89-91.

[30] Aldo Rico's *carapintada* newsletter, *Fortaleza*, denied this group was linked to their cause. However, this could have been an example of "plausible deniability."

[31] *Buenos Aires Herald*, Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor" column, June 12, 1988.

[32] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 15, 1988.

[33] See *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 23 to 29, 1988. See also Chumbita, *Los carapintada...*, op.cit., 92-98.

officers of the army, a signal of a fierce internal power struggle. In February, 1990 new bombings in Córdoba were accompanied by flyers from a new group, SENA (*Suboficiales del Ejército Nacional* or Non-Commissioned Officers of the National Army) blaming their targets for "ferocious persecution against junior officers of the National Army" and warning "your blood will wash the pain of our families...Tremble, traitors! The military machine of the National Army is on the march."[34] An anonymous officer who was a member of SENA told *Somos* magazine: "Our commander is Colonel Mohamed Alí Seineldín and he is the only one who can order us into operations, or suspend them."[35] He added that the officers who made up SENA were "the nerves and the motor" of the army and that SENA "maintains its own autonomous organization" within the army.[36] In short, *carapintada* groups claimed responsibility for these bombings.

In 1984-1985, the government was apparently powerless to stop the wave of terrorist acts due to the lack of cooperation and/or complicity of the armed and security forces, creating conditions of impunity which encouraged such acts. The ideological climate created by FAMUS, civilian allies of the *Proceso* and hostile military officers in these years also served to embolden the terrorists. In response to the spreading sense of terror in 1985, Alfonsín called for a massive gathering of supporters of democracy in April, and 250,000 citizens gathered in the Plaza de Mayo. This event was significant, as the president relied on "people power" to demonstrate that the majority of Argentines demanded democracy and not another military resurgence. In the past, the wide majority

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[34] Cited in *Somos*, #709, (April 25, 1990), 9. See also *Ambito Financiero*, December 22, 1989; and *La Prensa*, February 21, 1990, 8.

[35] *Somos*, ibid., 10.

[36] Ibid.

of the population had remained passive when confronted with the possibility of military coups.[37] Thus the demonstration sent a strong signal to real and potential *golpistas*.

Similar destabilizing activities that recalled the methods of the *Proceso* continued through 1986. Congressional deputies from the two major parties, the Radicals and Peronists, condemned these events as part of a "psychological war" and named "paramilitary groups that sustained the last military government and continue carrying out their violent practices."[38] In May 1986, a powerful bomb was discovered in the Third Army Corps base in Córdoba, again immediately before Alfonsín was scheduled to arrive to address the troops.[39] In the same week, eight Radical Party offices were bombed;[40] a new extreme-right organization was formed calling itself the National Resistance Movement, which in its first meeting called Alfonsín "a traitor to the Fatherland" and "the Republic's leading subversive;"[41] armed men in three unmarked Ford Falcons pinned Peronist Deputy José Manzano to a wall as he was walking, threatened him with machine guns, and warned him to amend his political behavior.[42] In short, intimidating actions by unknown squadrons reminiscent of the dirty war continued to try to destabilize the democratization process, stifle political debate and instill a climate of terror. Another goal may have been to force the government into imposing authoritarian measures, thus undermining the democratic credentials of the government by

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[37] As a Peronist deputy explained, in the past during military uprisings and coups, people waited to see what would happen; this is what changed in the 1980s. The population became an anti-coup actor by taking to the streets to stop coup attempts. Interview with Luis Brunati conducted by author, July 22, 1993, Buenos Aires. Top-ranking Radicals also gave me a similar analysis.

[38] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 22, 1986, 11.

[39] See press reports May 21-25, 1986, Buenos Aires.

[40] "Eight Radical offices bombed," *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 17, 1986, 1.

[41] The meeting, which was semi-public, received messages of congratulations from former General Ramón Camps, former de facto President Levingston, retired Admiral Rojas and Archbishop DiStefano. James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 18, 1986.

[42] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 2, 1986.

making it clamp down on newly restored freedoms.[43] The resistance to civilian rule came aboveground in March 1987, with the first of the armed insurrections by the *carapintadas*; these are analyzed in the next chapter.

In 1988, another wave of bombings occurred, this time targeting public places with the intent to hurt bystanders.[44] For example, theaters were bombed, wounding several people, in March 1988, and leaflets from an organization called "OAS-MRP for National Liberation" were found. This group had appeared after the first military uprising, and claimed credit for numerous other bombings. Police Chief Juan Pirker stated, "Until now, all expressions of this kind had been intimidatory but in this case they have changed their method...they placed bombs in places where they knew there would be victims."[45] The wave of bombings and hoaxes continued for days, targeting bus terminals, embassies, supermarkets, churches, hospitals and hotels.[46] These acts coincided with constant pressure from many sectors of the armed forces and their civilian allies for the termination of all civil trials of military men for human rights violations, and the passage of an amnesty. These objectives (among others) were openly demanded by the *carapintadas* during their uprisings as well.

In 1991, selective terrorist acts continued during the debate on the Internal Security law. In April, 111 tombs in a Jewish cemetery were desecrated; in May, leftist film maker Pino Solanas was shot in the legs and the office of the Madres was sacked for the fourth time; the following day, a grenade was found in San Cayetano Church; in June, the son of a leftist journalist was kidnapped

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[43] This was, in fact, the practical result of the imposition of the state of siege in 1985 (see Chapter 5).

[44] In 1988, the Defense Law was finally passed. Also, the presidential elections were approaching (1989). These political elements were possible factors in the timing of this bombing wave.

[45] "Lavalle cinemas hit: 3 wounded in terrorist bombings," *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 30, 1988, 1.

[46] "La Plata bomb defused," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 2, 1988, 1.

and later released.[47]

These examples of dirty war methods and threats against civilians and civilian government perpetuated a climate of pervasive fear and intimidation in Argentina, especially during the early years after the transition. This climate profoundly shaped the early political expectations of the democratizing forces, as they realized that their hopes for establishing civilian justice and a new relationship with the armed forces would be sharply confined by the demands and prerogatives of the armed forces themselves. The combination of violence and pressure by all sectors of the armed forces had the effect of reimposing the will of the military upon the civilian government by degrees. This tendency was criticized by some Peronists and Radicals, the human rights organizations, smaller political parties, and independent journalists, but their criticisms were rejected by the executive branch (this phenomenon is discussed in Chapter 8). Gradually, as the government granted concessions to the armed forces over time, large sectors of Alfonsín's 1983 constituency began to desert him; the Radicals suffered a steady loss of electoral and popular support over the years, culminating in the abrupt end to Alfonsín's presidency five months early in 1989. While this cannot be attributed solely to the efforts of hostile elements of the armed forces--for other powerful corporate interests in Argentina also acted to undermine the Radical government, and the government itself made serious mistakes--the campaign of attacks and violence did contribute to the narrowing of the political opening established in 1984 and the weakening of the unity of the democratic forces.

Remnants of the *Grupos de Tareas*

In the last chapter, we saw how remnants of the *grupos de tareas* persisted during the 1980s. While the practice of disappearance on a large scale had been abandoned by 1979 or 1980, these groups continued using one element of this dirty war method: namely, the practice of kidnapping

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[47] "¿Libertad o seguridad? Ola de violencia," *Somos*, (June 17, 1991).

wealthy businessmen (many Jewish) for ransom. During the 1980s, at least 45 such businessmen were kidnapped (and many never reappeared), many with the same *modus operandi*,[48] illustrating the fact that these dirty war structures still endured and operated in the same manner after the transition to democracy. The question of whether these kidnappings were autonomous operations or were directed by military intelligence was very difficult to determine. However, it was clear that a vast and sophisticated infrastructure was in place to carry them out, an infrastructure possessed by few other than the armed forces.

Carlos Juvenal, an expert on the subject, believes that there was protection or complicity by military intelligence and particular officers in these kidnapping operations, although he doubts they were institutional acts by the armed forces as in the past.[49] Congressional representatives and government investigators cited links to former *Proceso* intelligence chiefs, but were never conclusively able to prove them. For example, Congressional Deputy Raúl Rabanaque denounced the link between the extortion-kidnapping gangs and the military intelligence group led by Colonel Osvaldo Riveiro that trained counterrevolutionary forces in Central America. Many of these gang members, he asserted, were former or current members of Battalion 601, army intelligence.[50] Peronist Deputy José Luis Manzano also linked the kidnappings of Sivak and Neuman to the intelligence apparatus.[51] Government investigator Carlos Oliveri, assistant prosecutor of the

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[48] See "Manos Trágicas," *Noticias* (May 1993) 73, for a summary. Argentine journalist Carlos Juvenal is near completion of a book on this subject; he received death threats in July 1993 as a result.

[49] Interview with Carlos Juvenal, investigative journalist, July 14, 1993. In another interview, Marta Oyhanarte, widow of Sivak, tended to agree. Interview with Marta Oyhanarte conducted by author, September 15, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[50] "Está detenido un agente de inteligencia del 601," *La Razón*, November 11, 1987. See also Carlos Juvenal, "Las bandas que armó Aníbal Gordon," *El Cronista*, July 12, 1992; "Kidnapping extortionist gang smashed," *Argentine News* (December 1987) 39-40; "30 ex policías involucrados," *La Razón*, November 12, 1987.

[51] *La Razón*, November 12, 1987.

National Bureau of Administrative Investigations, stated that behind the Sivak kidnapping gang was "a criminal superstructure" with connections to former and current military and police intelligence operatives. He said that one member of Battalion 601 had been detained in relation to the Sivak and Neuman cases.[52] This officer was Leandro Sánchez Reisse, who was caught and extradited for his involvement in the kidnapping of Fernando Combal (see below).[53] However, these investigations never resulted in convictions of arrested military officers. Sánchez Reisse was released due to "lack of evidence," and returned to the United States, *where he became an agent with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.*[54] Two of the lower-ranking operatives arrested in the Sivak case, Police Sergeant Alberto Caeta and another police officer, ostensibly committed suicide (or were murdered) in their cells.[55]

During the *Proceso*, these operations were used to fund counterinsurgency projects of the armed forces; according to Sivak's widow,

> "In the first kidnapping in 1979, they took [my husband]. This band was made up of police and military officers, led by the Chief of the *Superintendencia* of Security of the Federal Police, who was never indicted, and people supposedly related to Battalion 601, intelligence. Under them, there was this group, which functioned to carry out disappearances of prosperous businessmen. If they were democratic, so much the better, and if they were Jews, better still. And during this time, half of the ransom went to them, and half for the fund for fighting subversion..."[56]

In 1987, after Interior Minister Tróccoli was questioned by Congress about the government's parallel intelligence group in the Sivak affair[57]--called "Alfonsín's Watergate" by the press--the minister

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[52] *La Razón*, November 11, 1987.

[53] *Argentine News* (December 1987) 40.

[54] David Corn, "The CIA and the Cocaine Coup," *The Nation*, October 7, 1991.

[55] "Kidnapping extortionist gang smashed," *Argentine News* (December 1987) 39.

[56] Interview with Marta Oyhanarte de Sivak conducted by author, September 15, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[57] This parallel intelligence group, as we have seen, was later found to be involved in the kidnapping-extortion ring. See Chapter 6.

removed the top leadership of the police (holdovers from the *Proceso*) and appointed a professional police chief named Juan Pirker.[58] After this, the police began to crack some of the kidnapping cases and uncover groups of police officers within the force who were involved in extortion, drug-trafficking, and arms deals. The gang involved in many of the kidnappings had links to Anfbal Gordon and Raúl Guglielminetti, both of whom had links to the Triple A and army intelligence during the *Proceso*. One of the police detained for the Sivak kidnapping had worked under Suárez Mason during the *Proceso*; he claimed that "superiors" were involved in the second abduction of Sivak.[59] Another policeman detained in this case was caught with three kilos of cocaine and arrested for drug-trafficking.[60]

One police officer, who admitted to killing Sivak, led police to a field where the bodies of two kidnapping victims--Sivak, and Benjamín Neuman (abducted during the *Proceso*)--were found near each other. He led police to a third body shortly after that, that of Eduardo Oxenford. A number of aspects of many of the cases were the same, suggesting that the operations were coordinated by the same people. Despite the Sivak family's conviction that the leadership of the kidnapping gang extended high into the intelligence apparatus of the armed forces, only police officers were imprisoned for the crime.[61] According to Sivak's widow, evidence incriminating two former army captains and a federal police official was also ignored by the judge.[62]

In 1991, another breakthrough occurred when another major kidnapping-extortion ring of

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[58] Pirker died suddenly at age 54 after the 1989 La Tablada incident, leading many to suspect that his death was not due to natural causes (a suspicion that also surrounded the deaths of former Defense Ministers Raúl Borrás and Roque Carranza).

[59] Marta Oyhanarte de Sivak, "Que sea justicia," *El Cronista*, n.d. [circa late 1990].

[60] *Argentine News* (December 1987) op.cit., 39.

[61] Two of them, released after serving short sentences, went on to participate in new kidnapping-extortions. See Juvenal, op.cit.

[62] Marta Oyhanarte, "La justicia...", op.cit., 40-41.

senior police officers and intelligence operatives was broken up.[63] A number of these suspects had links to the military intelligence apparatuses and several had served the *Proceso* regime. One of those arrested, José Ahmed, had been involved in both Sivak kidnappings; he served no sentence for the first, carried out during the *Proceso*, and was released early after being convicted for the second. Soon after his release, Ahmed was arrested for involvement in a new kidnapping in 1991, that of Mauricio Macri, the son of a wealthy industrialist.

Evidence from U.S. sources further filled in the shadowy outlines of these operations, and suggested that the kidnapping ring was linked to large-scale, international money-laundering and gun-running by the Argentine military and other military and intelligence services. In 1987, the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations took testimony from Argentine army intelligence officer Leandro Sánchez Reisse as he tried to evade extradition to Argentina in connection with the kidnapping case of Fernando Combal. According to Sánchez Reisse, a member of Battalion 601, he worked with the CIA to set up a money-laundering operation in Florida in the late 1970s. His primary work within 601 was not spying, but setting up and running business operations and enterprises for the army. One business Sánchez Reisse set up in Florida was incorporated by Norman Faber, a partner in William Casey's law firm (the subsequent CIA chief under Ronald Reagan). Sánchez Reisse testified that the pawn shop he set up was actually a center for Argentine intelligence activities in Latin America and also a center for a covert arms transfers.[64]

Sánchez Reisse said the businesses he ran in Florida arranged covert weapons shipments to

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[63] Nathaniel C. Nash, "Argentina Finds a Kidnapping Ring of Policemen," *New York Times*, December 8, 1991, 12.

[64] This account draws on an interview with Jack Blum, former special counsel for the Senate committee between 1987 and 1989, conducted by author July 30, 1993, Washington D.C.; David Corn, "The CIA and the Cocaine Coup," *The Nation*, October 7, 1991; and "La CIA propició la extensión de la guerra sucia de la Argentina," Siete Días, *El Diario/La Prensa*, August 25, 1991.

Central America in the early 1980s, with the assistance of the CIA, and also wired funds around the world. For example, some $30 million was transferred to locations in Central America from places like Switzerland and the Bahamas over an 18-month period. He also claimed that in 1980 one of his Florida businesses funneled a large amount of money from alleged Bolivian drug-trafficker Roberto Suárez Levy to the Argentine military; in return, the military sent weapons to Bolivia, which were used in the 1980 coup (which the Argentine military helped organize).[65] He also said his business sent weapons to the *contras* in Central America.[66]

The testimony of Sánchez Reisse formed part of an investigation by the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate on the linkages between drug-running and political forces in Latin America. Senator Cranston's office revealed other facts from his testimony. Sánchez Reisse said his superiors were Suárez Mason and Guglielminetti, and that extortion money and drug money were used to pay Argentine operatives from Battalion 601 involved in counterinsurgency in Central America.[67]

Sánchez Reisse was finally extradited from the United States to Argentina for the Combal trial, as were two other intelligence operatives (from Switzerland), Luis Martínez and Rubén Bufano. All three were quickly released due to "lack of evidence."[68] Guglielminetti was also released from prison in Argentina when his charge (in the Sergio Meller kidnapping case) was reduced from

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[65] In June 1993, official Bolivian sources asserted that ex-members of the Argentine military were still protecting ex-dictator Luis García Meza. He was installed in the 1980 coup, assisted by Argentine army officers, and in 1981 was overthrown by another military faction, which accused him of "discrediting the Armed Forces and being linked to narcotraffic." García Meza became a fugitive in 1989. Bolivia held trials of the military *golpistas* in 1992, the second Latin American country to do so, and convicted García Meza *en absentia* to 30 years in prison. "García Meza estaría en la Argentina," *El Diario/La Prensa*, June 27, 1993.

[66] Corn, op.cit., 405. For interesting references to the Argentine training of the *contras* in the words of the latter, see Dieter Eich and Carlos Rincón, *The Contras: Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas* (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985) 22-23, 46-47.

[67] "La CIA..." *El Diario/La Prensa*, op.cit.; Corn, op.cit., 405.

[68] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 6, 1987; Blum interview.

extortion to fraud.[69] Suárez Mason, who was charged with human rights violations, was freed under Menem's pardon in 1990, after being extradited from the United States in 1987 in a landmark case.[70] Again, the murky links between criminal operations such as kidnappings, counterinsurgency operations, arms- and drug-trafficking, human rights abuses, and the intelligence services of the continent (including those of the United States), were partially exposed by linking the names and practices of these individuals.

The continuing criminal activity of these operators from the *grupos de tareas* and military intelligence made clear the government's difficulties in democratizing the armed and security structures of the state, which had remained relatively untouched since the *Proceso*. The fact that millions of dollars in ransom were paid to such groups during the 1980s raises the question of how, and to what purpose, such funds were used. Another conclusion that may be drawn is that the various amnesties such as the *Punto Final* and Due Obedience law, and the lenient sentences accorded to these operatives--many of whom had been accused of human rights atrocities during the dirty war--were counterproductive in terms of democratic consolidation and basic security. The international connections of some of the dirty war operatives also seemed to provide a protective mantle for them to avoid accountability and legal sanctions.

Treatment of the Civilian Population

Since the transition to democracy, there continues to be a high incidence of police overreaction, brutality, and torture of civilian suspects, which are virtually never sanctioned.[71] The

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[69] "Guglielminetti: Otra vez en libertad," *Página/12*, April 7, 1992, 9.

[70] President Menem pardoned Súarez Mason even though his case had not yet come to trial.

[71] See Alejandro M. Garro, "Nine Years of Transition to Democracy in Argentina: Partial Failure or Qualified Success?" *Journal of Transnational Law*, V.31, No. 1 (1993) 24-42.

treatment of civilian suspects by the police and the treatment of conscripts by army officers during the 1980s exhibit features which can be traced to the methods of the dirty war. It is important to recall that the police were incorporated into the repressive apparatus during the dirty war and commanded by army officers. Police often performed the actual torture and murder of the disappeared under the supervision of military officers.[72] The kidnapping-extortion cases uncovered substantial evidence of criminal networks operating at the highest levels of the police through 1991, as shown. In other words, the police, though they were separated from the direct control of the army in 1984, may be considered as an enduring structure of the *Proceso* national-security apparatus, since many of its personnel and its practices remained the same.

A 1990 report by *Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales*, CELS[73] showed that the majority of some 900 extrajudicial executions by police between the years 1982 and 1989 were concentrated on poor and working class youth, rather than on political suspects as in the past. This indicated that the police focused on "the threat from below" presumably posed by underprivileged youth. The report posited that many of the deaths which occurred in "supposed confrontations" were unnecessary[74] and a consequence of overly-aggressive police. The authors argued that public revulsion toward the military and security forces after 1983 meant that the police sought to project the image of a rising wave of crime in order to bolster their image as saviors of society. The police used episodes of violent repression of suspected delinquents in order to spread a sense of insecurity

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[72] Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide of the *Asemblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos* conducted by author, July 20, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[73] CELS is a human rights organization specializing in research and legal defense of victims of human rights abuses. Alicia Oliveira and Sofía Tiscornia, "La Construcción Social de Imágenes de Guerra," *Cuadernos del CELS*, No. 1 (October 1990) 16, 18. For an important case study of police brutality in 1980s Argentina and the popular response, see Laura Kalmanowiecki, "Police, People and Preemption in Argentina," in Martha Huggins, ed., *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal Violence* (New York: Praeger, 1991) 47-60.

[74] Oliveira and Tiscornia, op.cit., 5.

and violence, and to justify their role as the forces of law and order. The CELS report showed that during the 1980s, deaths of civilians in "presumed confrontations" escalated from 61 in 1982 (still during the *Proceso*), to 130 in 1984, to 251 in 1985, and then gradually falling back to 101 in 1989.[75]

Extrajudicial executions by police foreclosed the rights of citizens to due process and other constitutional rights, thus narrowing democratic freedoms and imposing a guardian-style system. Use of such methods instilled fear in communities and served to endow police with unchecked coercive power, beyond the control of civilian authorities. In one incident, two youths travelling by motorcycle who turned the wrong way down a one-way street were shot and killed by police. The police claimed the youths had a gun, but witnesses saw no gun and no evidence of gunpowder was found by the coroner. Nevertheless, the case against the policeman was dismissed.[76] In another case, three youths were forced into a car by three men dressed in civilian clothes who claimed they were police. Then they were evicted from the car and shot. Police claimed they died in a shootout.[77] In a recent case, a 21-year-old Mendoza youth, accused of stealing a car, disappeared after a dance in 1992. Amnesty International took up the case, and in June 1993, a body was found that lawyers claimed was the youth's.[78]

Americas Watch documented five years of police violence in Argentina and asserted, "such abuses persist because of the continuation of a system of impunity in which politicians, police and

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[75] Ibid., 18.

[76] Americas Watch, "Police Violence in Argentina," December 1991, cited in Henry Goethals, "So-called 'Dirty War' is over, but abuses continue in Argentina," *Times of the Americas*, January 8, 1992, 5.

[77] This incident provoked a march by 50 friends and relatives in a working class section of Buenos Aires. A similar incident had occurred a month earlier in another suburb; all charges against police were dropped in that case. See "Police Shootings, Violence on the Rise," *Argentine News* (July 1987) 37.

[78] "Amnesty mandará carta," *Página/12*, October 3, 1992; "El caso Guardati provoca temblores," *Página/12*, October 10, 1992; and Federico Ferber, "Argentina: Polémica por identificación de cadáver de desaparecido," InterPress Service, June 19, 1993.

other officials turn a blind eye to the intimidation [by police] of judges, witnesses and ultimately to the unlawful use of violence." The human rights group added that many of the brutal methods enduring from the dirty war were still in use.[79] Cases of torture by electric cattleprod (as in the dirty war) were reported.[80] The Interior Ministry's human rights officer found that of 678 cases of physical abuse of detainees in Buenos Aires between 1984 and 1986, most remained unpunished.[81] At the Ninth Session of the United Nations Committee Against Torture in November 1992, the Committee expressed deep concern about Amnesty International reports of 773 cases of torture and abuse by security forces from the period 1989 to 1991 alone in Argentina.[82]

Recently, the security forces demonstrated another element of the old methods of the dirty war in a major scandal called "ideological persecution" in Argentina. In June 1993, an authorized police questionnaire was sent to primary and secondary school administrations in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Misiones, La Pampa and Neuquén, asking for information about the ideological tendencies of all students and their political activities. The questionnaire also asked teachers to identify potential agitators.[83] The requests for information were signed by high-ranking police officials. After the outraged response of all political parties, teachers, unions and the public, the Buenos Aires police official who signed the document said the incident was an error. He claimed that a subordinate had mistakenly sent out an old questionnaire from the days of the *Proceso* and forged his signature.[84] Police officials in other provinces gave similar explanations.

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[79] Americas Watch, "Police Violence in Argentina," cited in Goethals, op.cit., 5.

[80] *Página/12*, October 10, 1992.

[81] Cited in Garro, op.cit., 25, n.72.

[82] International Service for Human Rights, "*Human Rights Monitor*, No. 19 (December 1992), 10.

[83] "Examen político a estudiantes," *El Diario/La Prensa*, June 25, 1993, and "Repudio e indignación por cuestionario para informe ideológico de estudiantes," *El Diario/La Prensa*, June 27, 1993.

[84] *El Diario/La Prensa*, ibid., June 27, 1993.

The scandal gradually spread higher as it became clear that the questionnaires appeared in *all* parts of the country. Several police chiefs, officers of the *Gendarmería* and *Prefectura*, and the intelligence chief of the Interior Ministry were brought before a court to testify; several were dismissed, including retired major Alejandro Broussan, director of intelligence for Interior.[85] The Interior Minister, Gustavo Beliz, was summoned to testify before Congress (several weeks later, he resigned, citing his unease with government practices regarding Menem's re-election campaign). Several of these officials said the orders for the questionnaire had come from the Council of Internal Security formed after the passage of the Internal Security law. This episode provided more evidence of the difficulty of democratizing a former national-security state and the persistence of authoritarian practices in the security apparatus (in this case, apparently activated by rightist Peronist government officials using the structures set up by the Internal Security law).[86]

As we have seen in this section, substantial evidence suggests that large sectors of the security forces in Argentina have failed to adjust to the transition and absorb the values of democracy. The constitutional rights of citizens are still ignored or violated. This may be seen as a consequence of the government's failure to remove human rights abusers and *Proceso* functionaries from the security forces, thus leaving in place individuals and structures from the days of the dirty war. However, the countering force of public opinion in favor of democracy and against the methods of the dirty war is a positive sign, and demonstrates the crucial importance of pressure from democratic forces as a means of challenging the entrenched political power of the state. In the next section, we see that practices persisting from the dirty war may still be found in the armed forces as well.

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[85] Ernesto Tannenbaum, "Recuerdos del '85," *Página/12*, July 23, 1993.

[86] See *Somos* special issue #877 (July 19, 1993) on the scandal, and Buenos Aires press reports for July 1993.

Military Treatment of Conscripts

During the years of the Alfonsín and Menem administrations, several cases came to light indicating that conscripts continued to be systematically abused by military officers and that training in torture was still taking place. The former was a practice enduring from the days of the military state, and expressed the sense of contempt for civilians--including civilians drafted as soldiers--ingrained within the armed forces. This attitude was seen during the Malvinas war, when conscripts stationed on the islands suffered from lack of food, inadequate clothing, and poor leadership during the month-long crisis. Many young conscripts had not even finished basic training; they were not equipped for the freezing antarctic climate; some suffered from malnutrition.[87] Meanwhile, officers too accustomed to luxury and corrupt practices confiscated the soldiers' rations for their own use, punished conscripts for stealing food, and in some cases left the troops to fend for themselves.[88]

Secondly, there was evidence that the practice of torture as part of training endured. In a 1986 book by War College professor Isidoro J. Ruiz Moreno, the author stated that future *carapintada* Seineldín taught troops methods of torture by practicing on each other. The book states:

> "They even undergo what prisoners experience, because their camps do not meet the norms set down by the Geneva conventions, but have been adopted from the experience of Vietnam. The candidate is picked up by surprise, hooded, and beaten, in accordance with an established method...Naked and put into a narrow hole in which they have to remain standing, or rather buried, the unfortunate individuals have a tin roof over them; it is roasting by day and freezing by night."[89]

In July 1986 a federal judge indicted a second-lieutenant for using electric current from field telephones to torture conscripts; the commander of the Fifth Army Corps, however, defended the

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[87] *Informe Rattenbach: El Drama de Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Espartaco, 1988) 606-608.

[88] In one case, a conscript was tied naked to a post for stealing food. See Burns, op.cit., 107-108. Active-duty air force brigadier Horacio Crespo later blamed top army officers for being "excessively used to comfort and far too reluctant to undergo the sacrifices entailed in a war." Ibid., 109.

[89] Isidro J. Ruiz Moreno, *Comandos en Acción: El Ejército en las Malvinas*, (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1986), cited by Emilio Mignone in his *Witness to the Truth*, op.cit., 109.

practice, and the torturers were released by the military court.[90] In another case in 1992, a lieutenant was indicted by a civilian judge for shooting in the stomach a conscript who was about to be discharged from the service. The conscript, dressed in civilian clothes, had protested the lieutenant's order to do push-ups in the dirt.[91] Also in 1992, a group of conscripts were tortured with electric current, cigarettes and beatings in the Azul garrison. General Julio Veronelli said that sometimes the officers "simulated interrogations"[92] and added, "exercises were carried out that were consistent with the methodology applied to situations which may confront combatants."[93]

According to Graciela Fernández Meijide, a leader of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, who with other human rights leaders met with senior army officers regarding the case:

> "This was not an isolated case, but part of a [military] practice. This is a maneuver, part of training for combat supposedly, strategic preparation. A denunciation was made in the Buenos Aires province, and people reacted very well, some Congressmen too, who made denunciations. And we requested a meeting with the chief of the army. And he received the *Asemblea*. Also the Minister of Defense was there...The first thing they said was that these young officers were to be separated from the armed forces...At the same time, to give a reflection regarding these young officers: they didn't come from the dictatorship's repressive bodies, but their attitudes still reflected a mentality of this type. So it is very disturbing...The armed forces heads said they will see what can be done with the study plans in order to change the instructions. If they admit this, that military study and instruction plans must be changed, it means that the same terms, the same ideology permeates the training--the same concepts, the same forms, and that this hasn't changed."[94]

On the positive side, it should be noted that the promise to remove the officers was a first in Argentina.

In separate interviews in the 1980s, both Rico and Seineldín of the *carapintadas* openly

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[90] Ibid, 110.

[91] *Clarín*, May 20, 1992.

[92] *Clarín*, July 16, 1992, and *Página/12*, July 5, 1992.

[93] *Página/12*, May 16, 1992.

[94] Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide conducted by author, July 20, 1992, Buenos Aires.

defended the use of torture in the interests of national security.[95] The constant statements by many officers glorifying the dirty war also implicitly endorsed the dirty war methods of disappearance, torture and murder as a valid defense strategy. These statements, combined with evidence that through 1992, officers and junior officers were still torturing conscripts and offering instruction in the uses and practice of torture, demonstrated that democratization and respect for human rights had not penetrated key sectors of the armed forces; rather, national-security ideology, values and practices still permeated the institution.

Other Major Repressive Incidents

Other incidents demonstrated the continuity, while on a more limited scale, of the methods of the dirty war. In Tucumán, for example, during a demonstration protesting the candidacy of former *Proceso* governor General Antonio Bussi, bodyguards fired upon the crowd, killing one youth and wounding three others. Bussi, who was running for governor, dismissed the incident by calling the demonstrators "a gang of subversives."[96] A city councilman asserted that the gunmen had been accused of grave human rights offenses but released under the Due Obedience law.[97] Ten thousand people demonstrated against Bussi in Tucumán after this incident.

The La Tablada incident--the armed attack by leftists on an army garrison--was significant

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[95] See *Página/12*, August 5, 1987, for the Seineldín interview where he justified torture [also reprinted in *La Semana*, December 1988, 6-7]. Rico defended the methods of the dirty war and bragged he had killed "subversives." See Horacio Verbitsky, "El Destape," *Página/12*, April 19, 1992, 11, and "Rico se pinto la cara," *Página/12*, August 28, 1992. Rico, defending torture, also told two journalists: "The prisoner must be made to talk somehow...Subversive war is a special type of war. There are no ethics." See Jorge Grecco and Gustavo González, *Argentina: El Ejército que Tenemos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1990) 138.

[96] "Bussi fans fire on demo, two killed; daily bombed," *Argentine News*, September 1987, 16.

[97] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 29, 1987.

for a number of reasons.[98] First, elements of the incident suggested the involvement of military intelligence. Second, the operation to crush the attack exhibited the same dirty war methods as in the past: summary executions, brutality, and excessive force. Briefly, the incident unfolded as follows.

On January 23, 1989--one month after a third *carapintada* revolt led by Seineldín--an armed group stormed the La Tablada garrison outside of Buenos Aires. At first, it was assumed this was a fourth military uprising, especially given that this garrison was a stronghold of the Rico forces.[99] However, this impression was confounded by the response of the military. Police immediately surrounded the barracks, and then some 3500 army troops (combining "loyalist" and *carapintada* forces) staged a massive bombardment of the area, using phosphorus bombs, helicopters, tanks, mortars and heavy artillery.[100] This was a dramatic break from army standards in dealing with the rebellious *carapintadas*, where troops were reluctant to participate in surrounding the insurrectionists, let alone open fire. Previous *carapintada* revolts had been stretched out for days to allow negotiations between the insurrectionists and the high command.

After 30 hours of firefight, Alfonsín flew to the scene. Many thought he went in order to stop the army siege of the compound. Some 39 people were dead: 28 attackers, 11 security forces; 70 were wounded. Several persons who were photographed being taken prisoner "disappeared;"[101]

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[98] For a major, book-length investigation of La Tablada, see Juan Salinas and Julio Villalonga, *Gorriarán: La Tablada y "las Guerras de Inteligencia" en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Mangin, 1993).

[99] The government believed this for the first hours of the assault; *La Razón* in its afternoon edition also printed this. Interview with high-ranking Radical conducted by author, July 8, 1992, Buenos Aires. During Rico's uprising in 1987, the commander of this regiment refused to march against him; the officer corps barricaded themselves inside to protest his removal by chief-of-staff Caridi after this.

[100] Phosphorus bombs are prohibited by international accords.

[101] Horacio Méndez Carreras, "The La Tablada Sun Does Not Lie," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 26, 1989. He points out that two popular magazines, *Somos* and *Gente*, had photos showing three attackers being arrested.

the army said they had died in combat. Twenty attackers were taken prisoner, most of whom were working class youth from the *barrio* nearby. To the shock and consternation of many, Jorge Baños was listed among the dead. He was a well-known human rights lawyer who had once worked with CELS and who was a leader of the *Movimiento Todo por la Patria*, the MTP. Another dead attacker was Francisco Provenzano, an activist from a family with long ties to the Radicals.[102]

MTP was a group of human rights workers and activists that had existed for a few years. It published a leftist magazine and worked in the working class slums to organize youth. A change occurred in the group when former ERP guerrilla Enrique Gorriarán Merlo became associated with it, according to observers.[103] It became more radicalized, defending armed struggle and expressing fears that a coup was imminent. Some original members of the group left at this point. Gorriarán Merlo was accused by the army of leading the attack on La Tablada, but he was never found.[104]

Baños had been involved in a highly-publicized incident just two weeks before. He had publicly accused Carlos Menem--then running for president in the upcoming 1989 elections--of conspiring with Seineldín to organize a coup if he lost the election.[105] Menem angrily denied this and threatened to sue. Baños said he had been informed of this by military intelligence officers, with

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[102] MTP members claimed these two were killed by the army after being taken prisoner, and in 1990 Amnesty International called for an investigation of this, citing strong evidence. "Amnesty calls for La Tablada probe," *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 28, 1990. Amnesty stated, "Although the offenses committed by the MTP members were very serious, the actions of armed opposition groups can never be used by governments to justify violations of basic human rights."

[103] Joe Schneider, "Argentina: The Enigma of La Tablada," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (September 1989), 9-10.

[104] Some in Argentina believe him to be a double agent. See Schneider, ibid., 10; and Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* (New York: Penguin Books USA, 1990) 229-230.

[105] *Ambito Financiero*, January 26, 1989. Many journalists, however, regarded this charge as *carne podrida*, false information fed to the lawyer in order to create a climate of panic. Later, though, *carapintada* sources themselves intimated something similar: that the *carapintadas* would "insure" a Menem victory. See Chapter 9.

whom he was in contact. It should be recalled that the MTP was also given the transcripts from the Conference of American Armies in 1987 by a military contact.[106]

According to Emilio Mignone, who knew members of the MTP:

> "I am absolutely convinced that this [MTP] *muchacho*, who was very foolish, was pushed by the military, by the intelligence services. He sat with me, right here, and told me 2 or 3 months before, that there was going to be a coup by the *carapintadas*. A terrible coup. And the plan was to assassinate some 2000 people, more or less well-known, in the first night. And that I was one of those on the list. And that's why he came, to tell me to do something...I said, first, I don't believe it. Second, if it happens, and they kill people, there would be a reaction incredibly strong nationally and throughout the world. So I would have died for something useful...and he said, well, you have to leave, denounce this...and I said denounce what? something ridiculous. Finally I asked, how do you people know this? And he said to me, we have excellent military contacts, who give us information. And these 'excellent military contacts' giving them information were giving what we call in Argentina *'carne podrida'*--false information to convince them they were credible, and finally they did convince them that in January 1989, on a specific date, there would be this *carapintada* coup...and they were going to go there to fight this, and save the country. And there was no *carapintada* rebellion when they went there, they were caught inside and massacred. And then the army was able to say, you see, there is subversion still in the country."[107]

The surviving members of the attacking group claimed they stormed the garrison in order to forestall a coup by the *carapintadas*. Most Argentines I spoke with--in off-the record discussions by members of the Radical administration and interviews with human rights activists, independent journalists, academics, and Peronists--agreed that while the MTP was a genuine dissident group, which had acted suicidally and foolishly, they believed manipulation by military intelligence was involved.[108]

La Tablada: Signals of Military Intelligence Involvement

"They [MTP] were strongly infiltrated. Exactly as the armed forces had infiltrated the

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[106] Schneider, "The Enigma..." op.cit., 10.

[107] Interview with Emilio Mignone of CELS conducted by author, September 12, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[108] Military sources, however, denied this hypothesis; some argued the Radical government itself was behind the assault.

> Montoneros, social organizations, and so on. That is, compared to previous intelligence work, this was exactly the same. Second, the repression, which they did exactly the same way--including disappearing people and assassinating people after capturing them. And further, using an exhibition of power that didn't correspond to the forces attacking La Tablada. In this moment the chief of police of the capital, Pirker, said this could have been a police action which didn't require the armed forces."[109]

Apart from the fact that Baños had acquired authentic information from military sources in the past, there were other indications of involvement by military intelligence in the La Tablada incident. First, *the entire firefight of 30 hours was televised live*. Military officers had set up cameras around La Tablada, and broadcast the episode for the entire duration, traumatizing the population. This hinted at the type of "psychological operation" involving use of the media that had been discussed in the 1987 Armies Conference (see Chapter 5). The fact that television cameras were in place also indicated that the army had advance warning of the attack. Furthermore, the attackers attempted to surrender and were not allowed to do so for many hours.

Second, a high-ranking officer admitted that the army had tapped the telephones of the MTP militants in advance and knew the attack was coming.[110] Independent journalists who arrived at the scene testified later during the trial that the police seemed to have been alerted in advance.[111] This raises the question of why the Alfonsín government did not know about the attack in advance, and why the government at first believed the attack to be another *carapintada* revolt. Even if the

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[109] Interview with Graciela Fernández Meijide, op.cit.

[110] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[111] "La Tablada: Testigos de la prensa," *Página/12*, September 21, 1989. Journalist Julio Villalonga, who conducted an in-depth investigation of the incident with co-author Juan Salinas, said: "First, the operation to take La Tablada was monitored by the secret intelligence services of the military, especially the army, but also the provincial police of Buenos Aires. The decision to attack the headquarters at La Tablada was taken on the 20th of January, 3 days before, a Friday. On Sunday, 22 January, all the military units in Rosario and the capital were put on a state of alert. The day of 23 January, at 4:30 in the morning, there was a police operation, with 200 patrollers 3 blocks from La Tablada. It was totally infiltrated, this operation. But it wasn't difficult to do this. Because a month before, there had already been a media report, for example in *El Informador Público*, absolutely linked to the military intelligence services, that there was going to be a guerrilla outbreak, of ERP along with the *Coordinadora* of Radicalismo." Interview conducted by author October 2, 1992, Buenos Aires.

attack was not instigated by intelligence operatives, at the very least it seemed military intelligence used the event for its own purposes and failed to inform the government in order to do so. As a *Buenos Aires Herald* editorial put it, "...It has been suggested that intelligence could not possibly have been totally ignorant of the attack but allowed it to go ahead because it suited the aims of government-military *rapproachemente*."[112] A columnist from the same newspaper, commenting on the quick appointment of COSENA and the foothold this gave the armed forces in internal security (see Chapter 6) said, "There is a danger of institutionalizing anti-terrorism and military intervention before insuring that a terrorist threat still exists...What is behind this government insistence on blowing up the natural emotions created by La Tablada? The accusation exists that the intelligence services knew of the attack but allowed it to go ahead to vindicate the armed forces."[113]

There were other developments that seemed to indicate military disinformation. First, stories circulated and printed in the press immediately after La Tablada said that the attackers had committed atrocities, such as mutilating army officers.[114] During the trial these charges were dropped by the prosecutor for lack of proof.[115] Second, some of the evidence used by the prosecution during the trial came from questionable sources. For example, key documents supposedly showing the plan of attack were supplied by Catholic priest Moisés Jardín one week after the attack. He said he found them in the garrison on January 24, without explaining how he came to be there or why they were not found by investigators before. This priest, who headed a private,

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[112] Editorial, *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 2, 1989.

[113] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 5, 1989.

[114] *El Heraldo*, quoting "military intelligence sources," published this. *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 28, 1989.

[115] "Versiones desmentidas," *Sur*, August 7, 1989, 9.

Catholic anti-drug agency called *Prolatin*, was well-known as the spiritual advisor and spokesman for *carapintada* Seineldín.[116] Third, some of the conscripts and non-commissioned officers who testified in the trial stated that some of the soldiers killed were victims of army fire, not the attackers.[117] Fourth, one sergeant testified that on January 18, a few days before the attack, the troops had practiced repelling such an attack.[118] Finally, army spokesmen had claimed that the attackers were armed with heavy, sophisticated weapons such as SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles. However, when the army exhibited the weapons later in a press conference, they were old small-fire arms and in poor condition.[119]

Important information came to light during the trial of the twenty captured attackers. General Alfredo Arrillaga--the general who commanded the repressive forces during the firefight--came to testify and one of the defense attorneys realized, and stated, that during the *Proceso* he had been tortured and interrogated by this officer. After the shock died down, Arrillaga revealed he had been given express orders by army chief-of-staff Francisco Gassino (the former head of army intelligence) "to annihilate the subversive group."[120] The parallel to the language of the pre-*Proceso* military in 1975 was unmistakable, as was the fact that the orders did not come from the civilian commander-in-chief.

When asked under what hypothesis of conflict the armed forces responded to the La Tablada attack, in a defense effort to show the army had violated the Defense Law, Arrillaga replied at first

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[116] "La Tablada 20 to begin testifying," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 25, 1989.

[117] "Confusing testimony," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 11, 1989.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Schneider, op.cit., 12; also, interview with journalist Carlos Juvenal conducted by author, October 16, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[120] The defense lawyer was one of the few survivors of "The Night of the Ties," when the military seized a number of labor lawyers. See "Defence: Arrillaga torturer," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 8, 1989, 1.

that the Defense Law allowed the armed forces to respond to attacks on their own installations. When pressed, he added, "This was a permanent subversive action without time limits, based upon an international context, which is manifested in clear aggression and is not of an internal origin."[121] In other words, the army's apparently official interpretation of the episode was to characterize it as externally instigated, which provided a justification for military action *within the limits of the Defense Law.* That is, by assuming such internal conflicts or criminal attacks to be permanently directed by "the International Communist Movement," the armed forces could justify military combat operations in any domestic situation as "*external defense.*" This is a key point, which undermines the case that the Defense Law really prohibited a military internal-security role.

The Meaning of La Tablada

The truth about La Tablada may never be known. Some analysts argue that suspicions of a military plot are no more than conspiracy-theory. Anfbal Pérez Liñán,[122] for example, presents four contrasting analyses of the incident: the view of the MTP, that a military coup was about to take place; the view of the armed forces, that subversives aimed to take over the government; the rightist view, that the Radicals financed or manipulated the MTP into acting (Frondizi, Menem and others[123] strenuously argued this); and the leftist view, that the intelligence apparatus fed false

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[121] "La Tablada: Recuerdos de Mar del Plata," *Página/12*, August 8, 1989, 9.

[122] Anfbal Pérez Liñán, "Terrorism and Democracy: Argentina 1983-1989," presentation for the XVII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (September 24-27, 1992) 17-18.

[123] For a book arguing this position see Horacio Félix Bravo Herrera, *La Guerrilla de Papel: Toda la Verdad sobre la Apoyatura Periodística que Tuvo el Asalto al Cuartel de La Tablada* (Buenos Aires: SIELP Srl., 1992). It will be recalled that the author, a Peronist Senator, introduced an alternative Internal Security bill to the Senate calling for the armed forces to reassume a central role in internal security and intelligence. In this book, Bravo Herrera suggests that the La Tablada assault, like the bombing wave in 1985, was a Radical plot to prevent the Peronists from winning elections. His reasoning was that the MTP sought to paint itself as the savior of democracy against *carapintada* attacks, while simultaneously linking Menem to Seineldín, as MTP leaders had done two weeks before, thus discrediting Menem in an election year. In language reminiscent of military documents, he also attacks the press and hints that many Radicals were in fact

information to the MTP. He dismisses all four as weak and suggests that the incident was simply a terrorist act.

However, this analysis neglects several important elements that support the hypothesis of military intelligence manipulation. First, it fails to deal with evidence indicating that the armed forces knew in advance of the attack. Second, it overlooks past counterintelligence practices by the armed forces, in which incidents were provoked or orchestrated in order to discredit or falsely blame leftist groups, deceive the public and justify repression (see Chapter 4). Third, there is substantial evidence, in various secret documents obtained by this author and presented in this study, of plans to conduct military PSYOPS campaigns. At this moment, the Internal Security bill was under consideration by Congress. Fourth, the question of why the government was kept in the dark, while the armed and security forces had time to plan their reaction, is not explained by this view. In short, this view does not account for the numerous anomalies of the incident.

Finally, many trustworthy observer-participants in Argentina with long experience and knowledge of the Argentine armed forces (and not only "leftists" in Pérez Liñán's terms) remain convinced that military intelligence was involved. As former *Buenos Aires Herald* editor Robert Cox argued,

> "Anyone taking La Tablada at face value is crazy. The rational explanation is that--judging by the way the military intelligence services have behaved in the past--they would have infiltrated the MTP. They wanted something to happen, it suited them beautifully. They wanted to discredit the most important movement in Argentina, apart from the reestablishment of constitutional government, which is the establishment of the watchdogs."[124]

In short, the linkages long posited by the military between the left and the human rights organizations--the "watchdogs"--and "subversion" seemed to be proven by the La Tablada incident.

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subversives.

[124] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 11, 1989.

The renewed "struggle against subversion" allowed the military to justify its intelligence function, deployment and internal security mission in the eyes of a traumatized public and chastened civilian authorities. The discrediting of the watchdogs allowed the armed forces to push Argentine state and society another step toward a guardian system, in which the military reclaimed its privileged role: to monitor and judge civilian politics, and provide the sole bulwark against "subversion" and chaos.

Political Consequences of La Tablada

The right wing and the armed forces chiefs made numerous statements lauding the success of the military operation and warning of the dangers of resurgent subversion. Army chief-of-staff Francisco Gassino (an expert on the theories of Gramsci) stated, "The Army is now closing ranks around its martyrs in the face of 'the common enemy'...the attack showed the sinister profile of subversion."[125] The military journal *Revista Militar* published a special issue on La Tablada, whose two main sections were "Homage to those who died and struggled in 'La Tablada,'" (with photos of a joint mass sponsored by *Círculo Militar* and *FAMUS*) and "Toward the vindication of the war fought against subversion."[126]

The armed forces benefited from the new atmosphere, which dramatically moved Argentine politics to the right. First, La Tablada united the nationalist *carapintadas* with the liberal-rightist sector of the army and the high command, if temporarily, for the first time in years, in the old "anti-subversive struggle." Second, the human rights movement and the Radical government were discredited; they seemed to be "subversives in disguise," as military officers had long implied. Third, the armed forces were inserted into an intelligence and internal-security role expressly denied to them by the 1988 Defense Law via Alfonsín's decrees (see Chapter 6), and at the precise moment

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[125] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 25, 1989.

[126] *Revista Militar*, No. 721 (January-July 1989).

when the new Internal Security law was to be taken up by Congress. Fourth, the armed forces regained the sense of prestige and praise they had sought for so long, and the apparent vindication of the "war against subversion." The public's view of the military--which had ranged from suspicious to hostile, given the recent third *carapintada* insurrection--seemed to improve dramatically after this incident. According to one survey, approval ratings for the army shot up to 67.6%, and it concluded "the Army has been the great beneficiary in terms of image."[127] Finally, the incident produced a crackdown on the left, including legal leftist parties. House-to-house searches were conducted, dragnets set up, many arrests made, and a climate of ideological persecution and fear produced.[128]

The armed forces were emboldened by La Tablada to influence politics in ways they had not attempted in several years. For example, the armed forces demanded, and received, the cancellation of a television documentary called "The Storehouse of Memory" in April after army spokesmen expressed "profound displeasure and unease"[129] and chief-of-staff Gassino called it "demeaning to the military."[130] As we saw in Chapter 6, numerous statements were made instructing the civilian authorities on steps to take in order to counter the imminent terrorist threat. Military spokesmen warned that the country was about to repeat the experience of the 1970s, evoking images of another dirty war. The newly-formed National Security Council, *COSENA*--headed by retired Admiral Barry Melbourne Hussey--warned of new terrorist groups, new MTP activity in four cities, and an

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[127] *Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría*, "Defensa y Seguridad: Sondeo de Opinión sobre el Ataque a La Tablada," March, 1989, 51. The study made use of 1000 cases in the capital and Greater Buenos Aires; error rating +-2.5%.

[128] Some 100 homes were raided in the search for terrorists. *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 29, 1989. The United Left and MAS criticized a raid carried out in Córdoba against a meeting, in which property was confiscated. *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 15, 1989.

[129] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 25, 1989.

[130] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 30, 1989.

incipient MTP-*Sendero Luminoso* alliance. In June, military intelligence sources said guerrilla training camps existed in three provinces and warned that urban guerrilla warfare was imminent.[131]

In fact, the predicted resurgence of terrorism never materialized. The fearsome warnings of the armed forces seemed designed to consolidate their position in an emerging guardian system and keep the population and the civilian government off balance. Overall, the La Tablada incident and the political developments in its wake were severe blows to those who had been struggling to put limits upon the powers of the armed forces. The military's position as tutor of civilian society and co-governing force was consolidated, and the ability of Argentines to exercise liberal democratic freedoms was set back.

An important point noted by Dante Giadone was that the command of the repressive operation at La Tablada was carried out by the army chief-of-staff; however, chiefs-of-staff were not legally authorized to have an operational role. This was, by law, the prerogative of the president. "In the sedition of Monte Caseros and Villa Martelli [two previous *carapintada* uprisings], the chief-of-staff of the army--who according to the Defense Law does not have operational functions--put himself in charge of the repression as if he were the commander-in-chief. The same occurred during La Tablada. In this opportunity, the Ministers of Defense and Security should have conducted the operations with the security forces."[132] Indeed, Police Chief Pirker said that had he received the order, elite units of the police armed with tear gas could have ended the incident in a few hours, without the combat and destruction that occurred.[133]

As a final note, a trial of the attackers did take place. There the defendants stated that they

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[131] Schneider, "La Enigma..." op.cit., 13. Note that military intelligence was carrying out domestic intelligence.

[132] Dante Giadone, "La política de defensa del radicalismo," *Noticias de la Fundación Arturo Illia*, No. 8, Third Semester (1989), 36.

[133] Jorge Grecco, "Aspirina contra el cáncer," *Somos* (June 17, 1991); CELS Report, op.cit.

were tortured after being arrested by the army; they also claimed false documents attributed to the MTP were used to convict them. One defendant said her army captors told her, "We will do to you what we did in 1976"[134] before torturing them. In contrast to the amnesties and pardons accorded military insurrectionists in the recent past, the full weight of the law was brought to bear against the MTP members, including Father Puigjané, a priest who was sick at home during the assault. They were sentenced to the maximum criminal penalties; Puigjané received 20 years for "illicit association."[135] In March 1990 Amnesty International called for Argentina to investigate credible reports of torture, disappearances and secret killings of members of MTP after they were taken prisoner.[136]

Conclusion

The evidence in this chapter supports the hypothesis that national-security and repressive apparatuses not dismantled or restructured after the transition to democracy tend to function in the same manner and with the same methods as during authoritarian rule. This phenomenon sheds light on an important theoretical point: the state's repressive structures cannot be assumed to be neutral bodies which automatically become democratic after such a transition. As we have seen, remnants

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[134] "Attackers refuse to take the stand," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 26, 1989, 1.

[135] Thirteen of the defendants received life sentences and the others long prison terms. Bravo Herrera, op.cit., 111, and Julio José Viaggio, *La Tablada y el caso Puigjané* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Cartago, 1990) 89.

[136] "Amnesty calls for La Tablada probe," *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 28, 1990. According to Juan Méndez, director of the Washington office of Americas Watch (which also called on the government to investigate these cases), the government did conduct some investigations of penitentiary personnel, but as of November 1993 most investigations had been dropped and no convictions had resulted. Interview (by telephone) with Juan Méndez conducted by author November 2, 1993, New York. According to SERPAJ, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights recently agreed to present the denunciations of grave irregularities in the proceedings and processing of these prisoners to the Argentine government. *Servicio Paz y Justicia*, ed., "Democracia y Derechos Humanos: 10 Años Después," Buenos Aires: SERPAJ (December 1993) 11.

of the armed, security and intelligence apparatuses in Argentina continued to act in ways reflecting the legacies of the national-security state, with little allegiance to the values and institutions of democracy. In other words, the evidence indicates that active steps must be taken by civilian authorities to democratize the state, not assuming that state structures enduring from military regimes may be simply utilized by the new government in new ways.

What becomes clear from the experience of Argentina is that while the *idea* of democracy triumphed in 1983, democracy itself did not automatically emerge with the election. Rather, the consolidation of democracy was a *process* requiring the construction of new institutions of civilian power able to counter entrenched military power, most importantly by institutionalizing citizen power, and democratizing--or dismantling--repressive structures.[137] Civil institutions capable of articulating, satisfying and defending the interests of their constituents had to be rebuilt. As we have seen, it was precisely these emerging democratic and civilian institutions--the "watchdogs" of constitutional rights and democratic freedoms--which were the targets of dirty war attacks.

In other words, the persistence of the dirty war methods of the national-security apparatus had profound implications for democratization. As we have seen, through their activities various enduring national-security organizations and structures attempted to block the functioning and development of fragile democratic institutions. Judges, prosecutors and lawyers attempting to impose democratic norms were threatened and intimidated in an attempt to cripple the fledgling judicial system. Legislators were subject to threats and violence in an attempt to weaken or control the legislative branch. Executive power was bypassed, pressured or manipulated. Political activists were subjected to the same treatment, aimed at stifling an active and broad political spectrum conducive to open debate. Poor and working-class communities were subject to repression and

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[137] A similar idea was expressed by Marta Oyhanarte in her article "La justicia en la transición democrática," July 1988, 1.

intimidation. In short, the goal of the repressive practices was to keep power concentrated in the national-security apparatus in a manner designed to debilitate the development of independent checks on that power. To the extent that national-security structures and organizations persisted, utilizing the methods of terror and intimidation, democratic consolidation was thus inhibited and civilian power kept weak.

The evidence lends support to the expectation of this chapter: that similar counterinsurgency-based methods and operations by the armed and security forces or politicized sectors thereof continued after the transition, revealing similar values, ideology and doctrine as during the military regime. As we have seen, such methods had chilling effects on openness and political participation and organization in Argentina, thus setting back the struggle to contain the power of the military as a political actor and implanting a guardian model.

CHAPTER 8

POLITICAL INTERVENTION BY THE ARMED FORCES AFTER THE TRANSITION

"The respect that the government accorded the military sectors was highly controversial and was interpreted as a symptom of weakness of the democratic regime. With the exception of a few isolated voices the vast majority of the military, both active and retired, repudiated the present government, casting aspersions on it both privately and in public. The general staffs are filled with officers who for the most part were active participants in and 'descendants' of those who conducted the Proceso."
CEMIDA officers, 1987

"A coup is impossible under the present internal and external conditions but perhaps not if the socioeconomic and political situation were to deteriorate. Although I continue to be optimistic that Argentine democracy will be consolidated, there is no doubt that something changed in the country after the events of April and May 1987 [the first carapintada uprising]. The relation of forces changed. Confidence diminished. The euphoria over the military's subordination to civilian power was lost. Most serious, fear has returned..."
Emilio Mignone, CELS president, 1992[1]

This chapter discusses the forms of political intervention utilized by the armed forces, or factions thereof, in order to secure their objectives during the Alfonsín administration. To review, the fourth expectation generated by the core hypotheses of this study was that the armed forces or sectors would attempt to pressure civilian government through various open, extra-legal and coercive mechanisms to retain or expand their political influence and control, with the result that a) the interests and demands of the armed forces would be reflected in public policy, and b) armed forces' involvement would continue in civilian functions. This chapter focuses on the uprisings of the *carapintadas* as the prime example of political intervention.

To review, the *carapintadas* are insurrectionist officers, mainly from the army, but also including officers from the air force, *Gendarmería*, *Prefectura* and police as well as civilian allies.

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[1] Both quotes from Emilio F. Mignone, "Beyond Fear: Forms of Justice and Compensation," in Juan Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen and Manuel Antonio Garretón, eds., *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 257 and 262 respectively.

They gained their name after the first insurrection (April 1987), when they painted their faces with camouflage paint. Many of the *carapintadas* had been involved actively in the dirty war and had commando or intelligence training. Mostly from the nationalist-authoritarian current, the *carapintadas* resented and despised the Alfonsín government as well as their own liberal-internationalist commanders, whom they saw as too conciliatory to the government. They saw their commanders as willing to sacrifice the younger officers (most *carapintadas* were junior officers) to save themselves from human rights charges.

This chapter presents evidence to demonstrate that while there were certainly internal struggles for power within the military (between the nationalist-authoritarian *carapintadas* and the liberal-internationalist high command), the intervention of the *carapintadas* was also aimed at achieving *political* goals. These included reversing policies of the civilian government, narrowing the political opening, and attempting to mold the democratic system to conform to a tutelary, guardian model. The *carapintadas* openly state their aversion to liberal democracy. For example, Mohamed Alí Seineldín (the "father" of the *carapintada* movement) said in 1990 that he rejected a liberal, multiparty model because it led to dependency, exploitation, de-christianization and de-culturation.[2] The newsletter published by Seineldín's wing of the *carapintadas*, called *Hojas de Avanzada*, called for a nationalist and Catholic order in which the armed forces "must be first, the military factor of order and then an institutional factor of power in the Republic, with participation in the design and construction of the National Project."[3] The *carapintadas* used religious symbolism during their uprisings (for example, carrying rosaries and pictures of the Virgin Mary).

Aldo Rico, who today heads a distinct wing of nationalist-authoritarian followers, also said

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[2] Hugo Chumbita, *Los carapintada: Historia de un malentendido argentino* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1990) 270.

[3] Ibid., 232. *Hojas de Avanzada* translates as *Pages of the Vanguard.*

the army must participate in the design and construction of the "national being."[4] In 1987, Rico and his followers, confined to barracks after the first uprising, launched their newsletter, *Fortaleza*, which contained critiques both of the army high command and the Alfonsín government. It was significant that the *carapintadas* were permitted the freedom and the resources to publish and distribute this newsletter and use it as part of their political organizing while confined to barracks. *Fortaleza* attacked the generals for spiritual decadence and betrayal and attacked the government for its economic measures and political and social policies. One editorial by Rico stated:

> "...The only project of *alfonsinismo* is the destruction of the Republic...Doctor Alfonsín, his 'coordinators,' and the subversive apparatus embedded in his administration are transforming our Republic into a Vacant State....[there is] a persistent and accelerated process of de-culturization which is being imposed on our people, translated into an identity more and more diffuse and the loss of National Being..."[5]

In another editorial, Rico attacked the great powers, which he said were striving to "de-culturize" the nation through a plan to colonize exploited peoples, and implied the Alfonsín government was complicit, reflected

> "...in a plan implemented from the official structures to create an environment in accord with this project, [including] corruption of the youth, taking them away from religious values, making them obsessed with sexual problems...distributing drugs among teenagers, developing violence and music with hysterical, contorted dances, theater, TV and films with false heroes, songs in foreign languages...controlling the media to distract the citizens...exacerbate the social division, apply human rights in a discriminatory form...May God will that indignation appear within us, persist and increase. Perhaps this is the only way for us to gain consciousness of the reality and react...before it is too late."[6]

In short, the *carapintadas* had, and still have, a *political* program as well as complaints about institutional problems in the army. Both Rico's current and Seineldín's promote corporatist, ultra-nationalist and authoritarian visions of the ideal state. (See Chapter 9 for further evidence of the

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[4] Ibid., 238.

[5] Ibid., 86. *Fortaleza* translates as *Fortitude*.

[6] Ibid.

political nature of the *carapintada* ambitions.)

This chapter shows that the high command of the armed forces, while publicly opposing the insurrectionist methods of the *carapintadas*, often acted to support their immediate *goals*, thus trapping the Alfonsín administration in a political pincer movement, pressed by both "extremists" and "loyalists" to change the government's original policies. That is, the high command presented itself as the ally of the government, while simultaneously pressing for the same concessions that the *carapintadas* demanded (renewed prestige for the armed forces, an end to the trials, vindication of the dirty war, larger funds, and so on). The "loyalists," however, sought to gain their political objectives *within the constitutional system*; the combination resembled a type of "hard cop, soft cop" approach.

This chapter sketches the key events in the tug-of-war between military and civilian power during Alfonsín's term. The chapter is organized by issue-area: the trials are examined, the *carapintadas* and their three uprisings are analyzed, and the struggle over a military internal security role is further explored. After each major political intervention by the *carapintadas* the government made concessions. However, rather than satisfying the armed forces, such manifestations of weakness by the government had the opposite effect, generating new demands, bolder actions and sharper criticism from military sectors, while simultaneously undermining the popular support of Alfonsín's original constituency and fracturing the democratic forces.

Alfonsín's strategy of concessions was essentially a continuation of the longstanding habit of Argentine civilian governments to negotiate with the armed forces as a co-governor or equal political partner rather than a force to be commanded by civilian authorities. As we saw in Chapter 2, Frondizi's attempts to negotiate with rebellious sectors of the armed forces between 1959 and 1962 "lowered his own prestige as constitutional Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and

invited further invasions of his own authority."[7] A pattern was established in which the Alfonsín government tolerated, or tacitly or explicitly supported, acts of indiscipline and defiant statements within the armed forces with no reprimands or sanctions. This practice helped perpetuate and increase the political power of the armed forces, which moved from a low point after the Malvinas war to almost complete achievement of many of their political objectives *vis-à-vis* the civilian government by 1989.

First Major Battle: The Trials

As we saw in Chapter 5, the major issue consuming the Argentine armed forces, society and the government after the transition was the trials of the *juntas* and other military officers accused of grave human rights abuses. While the *Consejo* (the supreme court of the armed forces) moved slowly with the *junta* trials, human rights organizations and families of the victims immediately moved to bring civil cases against accused human rights offenders. By mid-1984, there were already some 2000 cases involving military and security men, implicating some 1000 individuals, before the courts.

The impact of Alfonsín's reform of the Military Code of Justice (see Chapter 5) had the immediate effect of terminating the civilian trials of the military in 1984. Since the reform of the Code stated that military rather than civilian courts had first jurisdiction for alleged crimes during the *Proceso*, with an automatic appeal process established after six months before civilian courts, civil judges moved to turn over their cases to military courts.[8] An appeal brought before the Supreme Court by human rights organizations, who argued that the case of former *Proceso* president Reynaldo Bignone belonged under civilian jurisdiction, was denied when the Court ruled in favor

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[7] Robert Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina...*, op.cit., 317.

[8] "House okays military code; Peronists stalk out," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 10, 1984, 1.

of the government.[9]

As stated previously, it was Alfonsín's clear intention to restrict the number of those brought to trial, in effect using the trials of the *juntas* as a symbolic manifestation of civilian justice while structuring the law so that the accused active-duty officers would be exonerated. The reform of the Military Code, with its legalization of "the three levels,"[10] was the first manifestation of this policy. However, this strategy of the administration had unintended effects. The newly re-established branches of government, namely the judiciary and the legislature, did not always bow to executive pressure; a number of judges, lawyers and prosecutors, backed by the well-organized human rights organizations, began exercising an independent role by indicting lower-ranking and active-duty officers, acting according to the established law. Meanwhile, as we saw in Chapter 5, the Senate moved to strengthen Alfonsín's original Military Code reform so that perpetrators of "aberrant or atrocious" human rights violations would not be exonerated for "following orders." The Chamber of Deputies imposed a six-month deadline for the military court to try cases before they were transferred to civilian courts, and made that transfer automatic. These developments undermined the strategy of the executive branch. Finally, the human rights organizations and a large proportion of society made known their support for the trials of human rights violators through frequent large demonstrations and via various polls and surveys, which were a form of political pressure on the government.[11]

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[9] In the Bignone case, the Supreme Court ruled that even common crimes committed by the military during the *Proceso* fell under military jurisdiction. *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 29, 1984.

[10] The three levels, again, referred to Alfonsín's original categorization of the levels of responsibility for human rights abuses during the *Proceso* in order to combine punishment with national reconciliation. He made a distinction among those who gave the orders (e.g., the *juntas*), those who carried them out, and those who exceeded the orders and thus committed excesses.

[11] For example, one poll in December 1985 found that 61% found the judgments of the *juntas* "just" while 34% found them too lenient. In "many" of the latter cases [number not specified], respondents thought the ex-commanders should have been shot. Estudios Políticos y Económicos, Nudelman Bass, published in *Tiempo Argentino*, December 21, 1985. The study was based on 400 interviews in 6 zones of the capital and Greater

The human rights organizations, judges, legislators and political party spokesmen criticized the policy of the three levels, especially after the release of the CONADEP Report, because the evidence compiled showed that the *Proceso's* system of state terror belied such classifications. That is, the repressive system, with its use of torture, disappearance and murder as instruments of social control, was criminal in itself; "excesses" were the foundation of the *juntas'* strategy to "reorganize" Argentine state and society and eliminate "subversion." All of the 2000 cases before the courts were for crimes such as torture and murder; all were "excesses." Many courts and lawyers argued that persons found guilty of such crimes should be prosecuted and sanctioned according to constitutional law, whether they were "following orders" or not. The retired military officers of CEMIDA argued that nowhere in the Military Code was it stated that officers had to obey orders to torture; even within military regulations, such acts were criminal, not "acts of service."[12]

Alfonsín's strategy was built upon the notion that the armed forces would "cleanse themselves," retiring human rights abusers or convicting them through the military courts, while the institution would adapt itself to democracy. The government always denied that any sort of pact or bargain was made with the armed forces, but there was evidence to suggest that in exchange for "self-purification" the government would prevent the civilian justice system from trying active-duty officers. However, when the emergent institutions of democracy began exercising independent power, Alfonsín's strategy went awry. Paradoxically, the evolution of events led to a battle between

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Buenos Aires.

[12] Colonel Horacio Ballester (ret.) of CEMIDA put it this way: "But this was a barbarity, because people are not robots. If a chief of a regiment organizes a band of assailants in his regiment, and all have to join it--no. Because the military is very clear, one needs to respect and obey one's superior, in every way and as an act of service and in compliance with military laws. As it exactly says in our military rules and laws. But there is no law that says if your chief tells you to rape someone, you have to do it, or to kill someone, or rob someone. One cannot obey such orders. For these reasons, the Due Obedience law is a lie. *It is* unacceptable. In fact, it is an insult to the military." Interview with Horacio Ballester conducted by author, June 4, 1992, Buenos Aires.

major democratic institutions (such as many courts and Congress) and broad sectors of the public on the one side, and the armed forces *and the Alfonsín administration* on the other; the executive branch was converted by degrees into the military's most active protector and defender. Nevertheless, most sectors of the armed forces felt nothing but hatred for the civilian government; they never forgave Alfonsín for bringing the *juntas* to trial and attempting to exclude them from their self-perceived guardian role of supervising state and society.

Another result in practice of the reform of the Military Code was that almost all the cases experienced delays of some years as they passed into the secret military court system. After two years, the *Consejo* ruled on only one case--the case of Alfredo Astíz,[13] the naval officer who had infiltrated the Madres during the *Proceso* and wounded and abducted Dagmar Hagelin (see Chapter 4)--and that ruling was an acquittal. This case, which was notorious in Argentina, was then taken over by the Federal Appeals Court. This latter court, however, cleared Astíz not due to lack of evidence but because the statute of limitations had expired (dramatically illustrating the adage "justice delayed is justice denied"). This occurred with other cases as well, leading to a sense of frustration and anguish and a steady decrease in the credibility of the government's "ethical" stance. As early as June 1984, the political columnist of the *Buenos Aires Herald* wrote, "The military are creeping back toward the political stage and the government would seem to be encouraging this, taking it for granted that if it butters up the brass, they will behave as the Constitutional requires..."[14]

Government Policy to Restrict the Trials

The first open outbreak of military insubordination occurred in July 1984, when officers at

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[13] Horacio Méndez Carreras, "The Law," *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 3, 1986. Astíz was eventually released. He remains on active-duty, regularly promoted. The navy consistently rejected the requests by the Alfonsín administration to retire him, in another display of defiance toward civilian authority.

[14] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 3, 1984.

the Army War College rebelled after two active-duty captains were arrested for suspected human rights offenses. Immediately, a high-ranking government source told the press that the government had pledged its support for the army to help quiet the unrest at the College. He also emphasized that the revised Military Code would be used in all such cases, meaning that the cases would be sent to the military court.[15] CELS criticized the government two days later for the climate of impunity that was beginning to emerge. A lawyer from CELS argued that none of the nine *junta* members charged by the administration had yet been arrested; only those indicted under civil cases had been detained (usually on military bases). Meanwhile, Bignone was released from military confinement the same day as CONADEP identified a clandestine concentration camp at Posadas Hospital, in an area under Bignone's command.[16] At the same time, the Giorgi case (Giorgi was a young scientist "disappeared" from his office during the *Proceso*) was transferred to military courts without respecting the 12 day appeal period guaranteed by law.

A rally called by Alfonsín in October to mark the first year of democracy drew a relatively small crowd, as did two others by the Peronists and the Church. The wave of bombings and violence, covered in the last chapter, was clearly a determinant; analysts explained the poor turn-outs as due to fear of a resurgent military and disillusionment with Alfonsín's progress.[17] In December a respected political journalist denounced the fact that not one military officer was in jail for human rights violations after a year of democracy, warning that "the shadow of the *Proceso* still hangs over the country."[18]

By late 1984, rumors were already circulating that the government was planning a broad

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[15] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 1, 1984, 17.

[16] "Giorgi Case Not Handled Fairly," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 3, 1984, 11.

[17] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor" column, *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 4, 1984.

[18] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 30, 1984.

amnesty for human rights violators. One journalist said that Defense Minister Borrás, in late 1984, told press contacts that an amnesty was coming.[19] This was dropped after Borrás' death, however, and Roque Carranza (the new Defense Minister) as well as Interior Minister Antonio Tróccoli repeatedly denied that any amnesty was under study (perhaps because the 1985 elections were coming up). However, Alfonsín's stated policy of the "three levels" clearly indicated that he sought to avoid prosecuting junior officers (those who "obeyed orders"). Lawyers and judges involved in human rights cases at the time were convinced that there was an agreement between the government and the high command to prevent indictments of active-duty officers and even to issue a disguised amnesty. As one attorney explained:

> "In 1986, April, the judge Torlasco resigned from the Federal Court--the first judge to do so--and he told me 'I'm resigning because what they are preparing is a virtual amnesty for the military, and I am not in agreement.' This was in April, 1986, in the beginning of all this. The Court received enormous pressure, enormous pressures from the government. I was representing various cases before this court, permanently in contact with them, the judges, and I perceived, day by day, this pressure...The judges had instructions not to indict anyone. Not to declare against the officers, the sub-officers, throw the ball to the other court, send the cases to military justice...they were there a year, inside, and absolutely nothing happened. When they returned to the civilian courts in December of 1986--the appeals court ordered that when they weren't doing anything--then they dictated the *Punto Final*."[20]

That is, many participants in the trials perceived that the Alfonsín government had a semi-public policy to absolve lower-ranking officers, despite evidence incriminating them in serious human rights violations (that is, criminal acts) and despite the judgment of the courts. To achieve this end, government officials utilized anti-democratic means such as executive interference in the legal process, and political pressure and influence upon the individual lawyers, judges and courts. This strategy undermined the consolidation of liberal democracy by disabling the functioning and

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[19] Interview with Carlos Juvenal, who was present at the briefing, conducted by author, October 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[20] Interview with Horacio Méndez Carreras conducted by author, September 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

development of fragile democratic institutions such as the independent judiciary, and weakening the rule of law. These, in turn, helped foster a guardian system where the traditional impunity and privileged position of the military would be protected.

The view that the Alfonsín government sought to absolve all but a few high-ranking officers was corroborated by military sources and the Radicals themselves. In August 1985, for example, Interior Minister Antonio Tróccoli was asked in an interview about the decision to shorten the testimony in the trials of the *juntas*: would this not prevent more active-duty officers from being called to testify? He responded, "Yes. But you've noticed that when officers on duty have been called by the court, it has been simply as witnesses, so this doesn't affect their situation."[21] Years later, Radical Senator Fernando de la Rúa said that the Military Code reform was intended to restrict trials to those who gave the orders, but had been interpreted in a "distorted" way by the courts, which sought to charge those who carried them out.[22] However, the law originally said those who committed excesses would be punished as well, a clause the Alfonsín administration abandoned by degrees. That is, de la Rúa omitted one of the original "three levels."

Military officers seemed to believe that the government would restrict the trials. In a secret document in February 1984, a military officer wrote that a law very similar to an amnesty was in the works.[23] In March 1985, former army chief-of-staff Jorge Arguindeguy met with Tróccoli, and the next day stated publicly that the trials were damaging the armed forces and put the victors of the war on trial. Then he stated that the final decision regarding the trials would have to be taken by

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[21] Douglass Tweedale and Armando Torres, "Carranza discards amnesty strategy," *Argentine News* (August 7, 1985) 6.

[22] "Interview with Fernando de la Rúa," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 18, 1989.

[23] "Situación Militar," February 29, 1984.

Alfonsín, despite the political cost, rather than the Supreme Court.[24] The press interpreted this as a trial balloon. Just days later, another officer, retired general Sánchez de Bustamante, met with Tróccoli and then publicly called for an amnesty. According to another document in military circles, dated 1986,

> "Human rights continues being a central theme in terms of military policy. Until now *the government has achieved the postponement of conflictive situations: a) in the Camps case, not one active-duty officer has been summonsed...In general terms, the executive branch has succeeded in causing the judicial branch to adopt a 'moderate position' in the trials.* Only isolated cases, such as that of Major Pla and the eventual juridical consequences of the CELS claim in the Angelelli case might become conflictive cases..."[25] [emphasis added]

The actual practice of the executive branch also supported the case that the government actively strove to free the majority of officers from prosecution. The sequence of major policy actions is examined below. However, the landmark ruling by the judges in the *junta* trials included a key point--*Punto 30*--which again undermined the government's strategy. This point stated that the court found that zone and sub-zone commanders, as well as "all those who had operational responsibility" were liable for criminal sanctions.[26] In other words, this point opened the way for trials of lower-ranks despite the fact that they may have been following higher orders. The Federal Appeals Court, in a display of independence and democratic functioning, was essentially imposing the rule of law despite the attempts by the executive branch to limit the prosecution of justice.

The second major step (after the "three levels") taken by the administration to limit those under trial occurred in 1986. In that year, civilian courts took over several major cases (including the Camps case[27]) after no action had been taken by military courts. On April 24, the Minister of

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[24] *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 24-27, 1985.

[25] "Actualización Situación Militar," July 1986, prepared by an adviser to the army.

[26] Americas Watch, "Truth and Partial Justice..." op.cit., 38.

[27] Camps, it will be recalled, commanded the police in Buenos Aires during the *Proceso*. He once bragged to a Spanish journalist that he was responsible for 5000 "subversive" deaths.

Defense issued "Instructions" to the military prosecutor of the *Consejo*, directing him to exempt all lower-ranking officers from prosecution under the "due obedience" clause, except in cases of excesses or atrocities.[28] This was seen as a step to counter the impact of *Punto 30*. One of the six prestigious judges of the *junta* trials, Jorge Torlasco, resigned, and at least two others threatened to do so, but were persuaded not to by the government. The assistant prosecutor of the *juntas*, Luis Moreno Ocampo, said, "The military prosecutor, by following government directives, could lead to impunity [*sic*] for aberrant crimes against human rights and such a case could give rise to more violence, even including personal vengeance."[29]

The human rights organizations called the Instructions "unconstitutional" and CELS leader Emilio Mignone said "This has been talked over with the chiefs-of-staff and has all the signs of a pact" to absolve officers of atrocious crimes; he added that the government move "weakened the stability of democratic institutions and the consolidation of democracy in Argentina."[30] A major demonstration soon after by opponents of the Instructions and covert amnesties for the military attracted 20,000 people, including some 2000 Radicals as well as human rights activists and all other major parties.

In June, the Appeals Court took over some 300 cases of army officers from the military court, citing lack of action. Defense Minister Horacio Juanarena met with the army high command to discuss this development; the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights criticized this action, saying "The armed forces should not and must not consider or analyze judicial decisions. Their duty is to respect the powers of the Constitution they must defend."[31] Another demonstration against military

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[28] Amnesty International, "1987 Report" (London: AI Publications, 1987) 130.

[29] "Appeals Judge Torlasco Quits," *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 4, 1986, 1.

[30] *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 29, 1986, 9.

[31] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 20, 1986.

amnesty drew 40,000 people, of all political parties, in July. In September 1986, a second major incident of military insubordination took place when lower-ranking officer Carlos Pla refused to submit to arrest. Pla, who had been Assistant Chief of Police in San Luis in 1976, had been implicated by testimony of a police agent in the torture, rape and murder of a 21-year-old student.[32] Pla locked himself in his office, supported by other officers. After negotiations between high officials of the Radical administration and the army, a delay in the case was achieved. Eventually the Court dropped this case and the Due Obedience Law cleared Pla.[33] In short, a tug-of-war--between mobilized civilians, human rights organizations, and fragile democratic institutions on the one side, and the military on the other--began to intensify. The Alfonsín administration increasingly tilted toward the side of the military.

The *Punto Final*

The third major attempt to impose executive will upon the judicial system was the *Punto Final* bill, long rumored and finally announced by the government in December 1986. The *Punto Final* bill established a 60 day statute of limitations beyond which all officers not already heard by the courts would be free of all guilt (even if they had been charged).[34] Alfonsín appeared on television to explain the bill, arguing that "there is growing difficulty because of the time elapsed

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[32] Americas Watch, op.cit., 57.

[33] Ibid., 58.

[34] Editorial, *Argentine News* (December 20, 1986) For excellent and more detailed discussions of this period, see Marcelo A. Sancinetti, *Derechos Humanos en la Argentina Pos-Dictatorial* (Buenos Aires: Lerner Editores Asociados, 1988), and Alejandro M. Garro and Henry Dahl, "Legal Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Argentina: One Step Forward, and Two Steps Backward," *Human Rights Law Journal*, Vol. 8, Nos. 2-4 (1987), for analysis by legal experts. See also Horacio Verbitsky, an investigative journalist, *Civiles y Militares: Memoria Secreta de la Transición*, second ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Contrapunto, 1987).

in the investigations...military personnel flounder in uncertainty because of endless suspicions."[35] The Supreme Court immediately withdrew several cases of military officers from its schedule. The bill effectively amnestied all such officers whether or not they had committed "atrocious or aberrant" acts, thus going a step beyond Alfonsín's original "three levels" approach. According to one investigative journalist, top generals of the army had threatened to resign *en masse* if the government did not immediately do something to "solve" the human rights trials. They also issued veiled warnings that they would be "unable to control the army" if nothing were done.[36] The bill was seemingly timed to coincide with Christmas vacations and the beginning of the long, hot summer in Buenos Aires, when most of the city closed down.

The bill sparked great controversy, generating more large demonstrations and a sense of outrage within broad sectors of society, including the Radical Party (such as the youth section of the party, *Juventud Radical*, the university students' organization *Franja Morada*, and some members of the *Coordinadora*, the new generation of leadership). Nevertheless, Alfonsín brought intense pressure to bear in order to pass the bill through Congress in record time. The government tried to reduce the number of Senate committees handling the bill from four to two. Two Peronist Senators walked out, saying they were not given sufficient time to study the bill. In the lower house, Radical leader César Jaroslavsky said any Radical not supporting the bill could look for another party.[37] Alfonsín's popularity dropped in the polls. Nevertheless, the bill passed on

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[35] "Alfonsín explains 'Full Stop'," *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 6, 1986, 1. However, as we have seen, the structure set up via the reform of the Military Code, which sent the cases back and forth between military and civilian justice, and the stalling by the *Consejo* of the armed forces were the reasons for this delay.

[36] Horacio Verbitsky, "Presión militar y crisis judicial," *El Periodista*, No. 118 (12 to 18 December, 1986) 5.

[37] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 21, 1986.

December 23, 1986,[38] as a massive protest unfolded outside Congress.

Polls showed that 90% of the public was opposed to the bill.[39] Several large demonstrations, with some 50,000 people participating, took place in mid-December. Federal Appeals Court President Guillermo Ledesma resigned; six members of the CONADEP commission issued an anguished statement criticizing Alfonsín for ending the process of justice. Alfonsín's defense of the bill, particularly his characterization of protesters as "extremists who want justice at any price," was criticized by a number of prominent citizens, who argued that justice was not an "extremist" demand in a democracy, and that the law legalized torture and murder.[40] By making such statements, Alfonsín seemed to undermine principles of liberal democracy such as due process, separation of powers and equality under the law. Moreover, the president was visibly aligning himself with the military position and denouncing his original constituency.

Again, however, the judiciary and the human rights organizations reacted in a manner not foreseen by the government. Many court systems in various provinces cancelled their vacations in order to process as many cases as possible before the deadline. The Córdoba Federal Appeals Court demanded that the military *Consejo* transfer all its cases to civilian jurisdiction and postponed its summer recess.[41] Also in December, the judicial ruling on the Camps case again challenged the concept of "due obedience" by convicting and sentencing one police corporal for torture, although he was following orders.[42] The human rights organizations began an appeal against the *Punto Final*

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[38] On December 22, the Senate passed the bill 25-10. In the Chamber of Deputies on December 23, the bill passed 125-17, with one abstention. *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 23 and 24, 1986.

[39] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 21, 1986.

[40] For an example of strong reaction by the independent press, see Michael Soltys, "Argentina not yet a banana republic," *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 11, 1987.

[41] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 30, 1986.

[42] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 7, 1986.

as unconstitutional for violating the principle of equality before the law and constituting executive interference in judicial power.[43] Courts in Tucumán, Rosario and Bahía Blanca also decided to cancel summer recesses in order to process all the cases possible. The Tucumán court, further, extended the deadline by one month within its jurisdiction. Hundreds of new cases were presented to the courts as families rushed to beat the deadline.

In sum, the *Punto Final* had a boomerang effect that backfired upon the government's strategy to end the trials. Emerging constitutional institutions and citizen organizations--democratic forces demanding a liberal or participatory democracy--mobilized to resist the gradual imposition of a guardian system, where military privilege would be preserved and democratic rights and freedoms limited. Thus, the tug-of-war began to pit these democratic actors on one side against the military *and the Alfonsín administration* on the other.

The *Punto Final* law led directly to the next major explosion in the country: the Holy Week uprising in April 1987, where active-duty officers with painted faces (the *carapintadas*) seized garrisons across the country and demanded a "solution" for the trials.

The *Carapintadas* and the First Uprising

In December 1986, the *Consejo* of the armed forces secretly absolved all the accused admirals (who numbered 15) charged with atrocities at ESMA, the navy school (see Chapter 4).[44] Despite this new display of defiance of civilian rule, the government issued new Instructions several days later to federal prosecutors, through Attorney General Juan Gauna, calling on them to utilize the concept of due obedience for the new cases flooding the courts. Again, this executive interference was met with resistance. Federal prosecutor Hugo Omar Canon, for example, said his

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[43] Ibid.

[44] *Clarín*, January 21, 1987, 2.

legal functioning would be grounded "in principles of legality and impartiality, without receiving executive mandates."[45] Peronists in Congress tried to extend the legal deadline for the *Punto Final* but were prevented by the Radical majority.[46]

A conflict arose between Defense Minister Juanarena and the Bahía Blanca court: the latter requested a list of all Fifth Army Corps personnel for its investigations, and the Defense Minister refused. This set up a battle between the judicial and executive branches and demonstrated that the Defense Ministry had begun to resemble a lobby representing the interests of the armed forces in defiance of constitutional courts.[47] Also in February, 1987, the government sent Seineldín--accused of human rights violations in the Giorgi case--to become military instructor for the National Guard in Panama.[48]

In March 1987 the army released a document in which it stated that the aim of the army was not to clarify responsibility for human rights abuses but to totally vindicate the war against subversion and those who fought in it.[49] In early April there was a religious demonstration in the Plaza de Mayo organized by the Church and supported by military sectors. According to a knowledgeable Radical, this demonstration was a testing of the waters for civilian support for a coup. *Golpista* sectors of the armed forces had been approaching civilian allies and heads of

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[45] *Clarín*, January 25, 1987, 10.

[46] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 8, 1987.

[47] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 1, 1987. The Defense Minister, after public criticism, eventually turned over the list.

[48] The government promoted or sent abroad to embassies a number of officers accused of human rights violations, as documented by the human rights organizations. Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 15, 1987.

[49] "Army document defends dirty war role," *Argentine News* (April 1987) 32.

sympathetic businesses regarding this possibility.[50] However, the demonstration was relatively poorly attended. The *carapintadas* also sought to obtain United States backing for a coup in this period. Allies of Lieutenant-Colonel Aldo Rico (including General Heriberto Auel, who held numerous meetings with officials of the U.S. Embassy) tried to convince embassy diplomats that the *carapintadas* were the most reliable custodians of Western Christian civilization and guarantors of a strong alliance with the United States.[51] However, the U.S. embassy did not give the "green light" for a coup, despite the Reagan administration's discontent with the Alfonsín administration.[52] Again, these facts underlined the *political* nature of the *carapintadas'* enterprise; they clearly transcended the bounds of internal military affairs and expressed national ambitions.

On April 15, 1987, the Córdoba Federal Court ordered the arrest of Ernesto Barreiro, the former chief interrogator at the La Perla concentration camp, on charges of torture. The commander of the Third Army Corps ordered his arrest, but his subordinates refused to obey. Barreiro and a number of commando officers barricaded themselves within the garrison. In solidarity, a number of insurrectionist officers in the Campo de Mayo base outside of Buenos Aires took over the School of Infantry. The "Holy Week crisis" *(Semana Santa)* began in this manner.[53]

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[50] Interview with José Manuel Ugarte, Radical Congressional aide, conducted by author, October 29, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[51] Ugarte interview, ibid.

[52] Luis Sicilia, "Una de carapintadas," *El Periodista*, No. 158 (18 to 24 September, 1987) 40. Alfonsín had criticized Reagan's war against the Sandinista government, and also tried to organize other debtor nations to demand political negotiations with the creditor countries, policies that irritated the Reagan administration. U.S. spokesmen also made known their disapproval of the trials of the military. Immediately after the sentences of the *juntas* were announced, Vernon Walters, UN Ambassador and former CIA director, stated that the Montoneros had not vanished but "have simply returned to clandestinity and now are returning." Pablo Giussani, *Los Días...*, op.cit., 432. In March 1986, Reagan said there were subversive training camps in Argentina and several other Latin American countries, a charge denied by Interior Minister Tróccoli. *Argentine News* (December 20, 1986) 23.

[53] For further discussions of the *carapintada* uprisings, see Ernesto López, *El Ultimo Levantamiento* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1988); Hugo Chumbita, *Los carapintada: Historia de un malentendido argentino* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1990); Joaquín Morales Solá, *Asalto de la Ilusión*, second ed. (Buenos

Responding to the government's call, hundreds of thousands of citizens gathered in the main plazas of Buenos Aires and other major cities. Some 50,000 surrounded the Campo de Mayo garrison itself, in an effort to demonstrate civilian resistance to the insurrectionist soldiers. However, military reaction to the uprisings was slow. Troops ordered to go to the Campo de Mayo took circuitous routes, stopping for breakfast; some never arrived at all. The rebels, led by Lt.-Colonel Aldo Rico, demanded a "political solution" to the trials, the retirement of all top ranking officers, freedom for the *junta* leaders, the removal of chief-of-staff Ríos Ereñú, and a major raise in salaries. Alfonsín, who announced that no concessions would be given, finally flew to the garrison after his requests for surrender were ignored and several days of stalemate ensued. He returned to address the crowds in the Plaza de Mayo, asserting that the soldiers, "some of whom were heroes of the Malvinas," were misguided and had agreed to lay down their arms. Alfonsín's reference to "heroes" was met with boos; a large group chanted "This is the result of the *Punto Final*." Recognition of the *carapintadas* as heroes was in fact one of their demands.[54]

It soon became clear that notwithstanding consistent denials, Alfonsín had submitted to a number of the demands of the insurrectionists, despite the massive show of "people power" backing his stance against military threats. Lawyer and author Hugo Chumbita wrote that after Holy Week, the Alfonsín administration issued guidelines to all media through the Minister of Culture, instructing them to curb criticism of the armed forces.[55] This restriction upon freedom of the press was essentially the imposition of a guardian-style constraint within the democratic system, and was a clear product of the *carapintadas*' political intervention. The day after Alfonsín's speech, Ríos

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Aires: Planeta Espejo de la Argentina, 1992); and Verbitsky, *Civiles...*, op.cit.

[54] See "350,000 keep vigil, jubilant over outcome," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 20, 1987, 1, and other press reports from Buenos Aires.

[55] Chumbita, *Los carapintada...*, op.cit., 42.

Ereñú was replaced as army chief-of-staff, another Rico demand. Most of the rest of the high command resigned as well. Furthermore, Attorney-General Gauna announced that a new ruling on "due obedience" was forthcoming. On April 21, there were new reports of unrest and uprisings in the north of the country by army officers. In Salta, Major Jorge Durán insisted his rebellious group was only demanding that the terms of the "agreement" with Alfonsín be honored.[56]

The timing and purposes of the first *carapintada* uprising made clear that the goals of the rebels were *political*. Their actions were designed to intimidate the civilian authorities and challenge civilian prerogatives, such as the commander-in-chief's authority to appoint military chiefs-of-staff and the authority of the constitutional justice system. The *carapintadas* demanded the resignation of high-ranking officers in part because they were seen as too accommodating to the civilian government--and because they wanted their allies in positions of power, with troop commands. In other words, the *carapintada* uprising did represent an internal struggle for power between the authoritarian-nationalist wing that formed the insurrectionist movement and the liberal-rightist high command, which was willing to cooperate with the civilian government. But the demands of the rebels had more profound significance, aiming to dictate to the civilian power and maintain the traditional impunity and tutelary role of the armed forces. As shown, there was evidence that the *carapintadas* were testing the waters for a full-fledged coup, but failed to find adequate support. Certainly the Radicals believed a coup was forestalled by the massive show of "people power."[57]

Despite this event, the government declined to utilize the "Defense of Democracy" law--the Alfonsín administration's own bill, passed in 1984--and sent the case of Aldo Rico, leader of the

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[56] "New army unrest quickly controlled," *Buenos Aires Herald*, April 22, 1987, 1. Rico said publicly there had been an accord with Alfonsín, but the government continued to deny it.

[57] Interview with Raúl Alconada Sempé, high-ranking Alfonsín aide and former Secretary of Defense, conducted by author July 8, 1992, Buenos Aires. Senator Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen also argued that the uprisings were serious coup attempts. Interview with Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen conducted by author, May 11, 1992, Buenos Aires.

insurrectionists, to the military court. Rico and other *carapintadas* insisted that the uprisings were not coup attempts but were aimed at resolving internal military problems, at least partly to insure that military and not civilian courts would hear their cases. Yet this posture was belied by their other written and public statements. For example, the Rico newsletter *Fortaleza* attacked the government's policies in social, political and economic realms and called for a new national direction (see the early part of this chapter). Rico's crime was downgraded from "insurrection," a crime with serious penalties under civilian criminal law, to "mutiny," which under law was less serious and a military offense.[58] Only Rico was arrested; some 14 other officers were sanctioned and some 80 more stood to be denied promotions.[59]

In July 1987, the army commissioned a poll to ascertain the public's views on the democratization process. One of the questions asked whether the respondent would be willing to fight to defend the democratic system. The majority of civilians polled said they *would* fight for democracy. This poll, published in *Ambito Financiero*, raised new questions about whether the armed forces were weighing the possibility of a coup.[60]

Other Concessions to the Armed Forces

In August 1985, a respected columnist wrote: "The government is fast becoming one of the armed forces' most effective apologists," pointing out that now Alfonsín, Defense Minister Carranza

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[58] Americas Watch, "Truth and Partial Justice in Argentina," op.cit., 79, and *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 6, 1987.

[59] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 4, 1987.

[60] The government was also criticized in some quarters for permitting such a quasi-open poll. See *Argentine News* (August 1987) 10.

and Secretary of Defense Juanarena blamed civilians for the dirty war too.[61] In November 1985, in the midst of the bombing wave (see Chapter 7), Alfonsín appointed three military under-secretaries to SIDE.[62] In March 1986, Alfonsín appointed three active-duty army officers to high positions in the Ministry of Defense.[63] In May 1987, the month after the Holy Week uprising, the administration submitted a "Due Obedience" bill to Congress which exonerated all officers under the rank of lieutenant-colonel from criminal charges. The legal argument justifying the government's approach had subtly changed; now, rather than emphasizing the necessity for reconciliation or a time limit (*Punto Final*), the government argued that lower-ranking officers had faced "irresistible coercion" forcing them to commit criminal acts during the dirty war.[64]

The Due Obedience bill established a state of presumed innocence for all lower-ranking officers. Alfonsín called the Due Obedience law the last concession to the military, aimed "to establish democracy for all time," and defended his action as manifesting "the ethics of responsibility."[65] Again there was public opposition and outrage, but within the legislature there was weaker opposition than during the previous debate on *Punto Final*. The day before the debate in Congress, a bomb was defused in the Chamber building. Radical Senator Antonio Nápoli told the press that the rapid trajectory of the bill was due to "a group or sector" of the armed forces

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[61] James Neilson, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 4, 1985. He noted that Carranza had called military-civilian reconciliation "imperious" and that a high-ranking source in the Defense Ministry had said the government would take all necessary measures to halt "the offensive against certain officers." This latter statement reflected military language and views.

[62] "Ríos Ereñú to gain ground in imminent army shake-up?" *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 9, 1985, 7.

[63] *Clarín*, March 8, 1986.

[64] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 10 and 11, 1987.

[65] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 9, 1987, 1.

"demanding, rightfully or not, the treatment of the bill."[66] In short, direct military pressure was applied upon civilian political authorities in order to first, exempt military personnel from constitutional standards and second, secure implicit Congressional authorization and legitimation for dirty war practices. The armed forces successfully pressured Congress to pass legislation reflecting tacit acceptance of national-security norms and justifications.

The bill passed Congress expeditiously. It effectively eliminated the previous exception to exoneration in the case of "aberrant or atrocious acts."[67] Although originally the bill was to apply only to officers with the rank of lieutenant-colonel or lower, pressure from the armed forces caused Congress to extend the law's protection to all ranks under major-general.[68] Other longstanding demands of the armed forces were also subtly fulfilled: Radical Senator Fernando de la Rúa said the dirty war was necessary, although wrongly carried out;[69] Alfonsín said the dirty war was a tragedy "in which no one was entirely a victim or a victimizer."[70] In short, the Radical administration seemed to be complying with the insistence of the armed forces for vindication of the "anti-subversive war" by at least partially justifying it, and evidently moving closer to the military position. A guardian model was taking shape as democratic rights and freedoms were curtailed by military pressures and military tutelage of government policy was consolidated.

Responding to numerous appeals regarding the constitutionality of the Due Obedience law, the Supreme Court ruled (by a bare majority) in June that it was in fact constitutional.[71] Hundreds

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[66] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 15, 1987.

[67] Americas Watch, "Truth and Partial Justice...". op.cit., 70.

[68] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 31, 1987. Soltys called this "craven capitulation to military pressure."

[69] Ibid.

[70] "Alfonsín in Uruguay," *Argentine News* (June 1987) 43.

[71] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 24, 1987.

of accused torturers were freed, Barreiro, Guglielminetti, "Colores," and Astíz among them. The number of officers facing charges dropped from 450 after *Punto Final* to 100.[72] Federal Appeals Court judge Diego Péres resigned, the third such judge to do so in 1987. Generals such as Bussi and Sasiaiñ began demanding that the Due Obedience law apply to them as well. Alfredo Bravo, the administration's Educational Under-Secretary of teachers' affairs, resigned because his torturer was freed.[73] All this was accompanied by a new bombing campaign in Buenos Aires and other major cities carried out by unknown actors. Bombs went off at 20 Radical offices nation-wide on June 24; several judges' homes were bombed on July 1; leaflets appeared in factories urging workers to take up arms against the government.[74] In July a provincial Supreme Court justice, a communist party activist and a judge were shot and a Jewish cemetery was vandalized.[75]

After the *carapintada* uprising, the armed forces seemed to experience a new surge of confidence. As one officer said, "...the first rebellion was a real defeat for Alfonsín. Between 1983 and 1986 he was running a psychological campaign from the government through the media, really a lie being spread to the people that the government was fair, just, that problems were being solved. Holy Week showed that was a lie. After Holy Week, Alfonsín was doomed. The government couldn't hide anymore."[76]

Political speeches and demands by military spokesmen from both "loyalist" and *carapintada*

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[72] *Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría*, "Las Secuelas del Conflicto Militar Se Han Convertido en el Eje del Mismo," January 1989, 22.

[73] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 30, 1987.

[74] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 2, 1987. Police Chief Pirker said evidence pointed to right-wing terrorists attempting to appear like leftists in several of these attacks and in the factories; the leaflets found at bomb sites contained left-wing slogans. See *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 26, 1987. This suggests PSYOPS-style propaganda.

[75] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 5, 1987.

[76] Interview with retired army officer conducted by author, August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires.

sectors, demanding vindication and honor for the dirty war, multiplied. In July, new army chief José Dante Caridi called for the population to "ratify the anti-subversive war" and Defense Minister said this was "a justified claim."[77] Caridi's statements expressed clear support for the goals of the *carapintadas*; the chief-of-staff said the high command shared the thinking of lower-ranking officers and called Holy Week "a friendly warning."[78] *Carapintada* Barreiro said in a magazine interview that the Due Obedience law was insufficient since some officers were still facing charges for human rights abuses.[79] There were new efforts to insert military power within the civilian government as well. For example, army officers submitted a document to Congress offering suggestions on "how to improve civil-military relations" by appointing officers to government posts within the Defense Ministry, SIDE and the committee to study the proposed plan to move the capital to Viedma.[80]

In September 1987 new evidence emerged which verified the overlapping political aims of both the official army and the *carapintada* movement. A report by the intelligence branch of the army (based on an electoral poll it carried out) predicted that the upcoming elections would greatly favor the armed forces given that Radicalism was expected to lose its majority in the Lower House and the governorship of Buenos Aires. In fact, both events did occur. Points 3 and 4 of the intelligence report stated that the army should now consider policies aimed at advancing in the terrain won since Holy Week, including the achievement of better salaries, a higher military budget, vindication of the anti-subversive struggle, and a broad amnesty.[81] The document showed, in other

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[77] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 29, 1987.

[78] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 9, 1987.

[79] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 16, 1987.

[80] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 20, 1987, and "Military seeking new image," *Argentine News* (June 1987) 10.

[81] Ibid.

words, that army intelligence sought to exploit and advance the gains won through the extra-legal political intervention of the *carapintadas*. The *carapintadas* themselves, in a document entitled "Appreciation of political reality in light of Army interests," stated: "The electoral retrocession of the Radicals objectively will permit the political sectors that sympathize with the demands of the Armed Forces to strengthen our tactical actions and achieve our strategic objective."[82] Army chief Caridi's strategy was to pressure the government and obtain the same goals, but through institutional means.

After the elections, the *carapintadas* circulated a four-page memo throughout all the units of the army. The document accused Caridi of failing to recognize that Holy Week had resulted in the achievement of the Due Obedience law and the certain prospect of a total amnesty and the total vindication of the dirty war.[83] At the same time, 500 copies of a film were circulated, in which Rico appeared, criticizing the high command and praising the emergence of a new national army (the *carapintadas*) for the cause of God and Fatherland.[84] The film was sent without charge to politicians, union leaders, businessmen, diplomats and government functionaries, and shown in military installations. These attempts to organize both military *and civilian* support for destabilizing and possibly replacing the government were evidence that the *carapintadas* sought *political* advantage and the re-establishment of a military-dominated state.

In November 1987 a journalist with close ties to the military wrote that spokesmen for the Rico group revealed to him that they "would not see with displeasure a complete change in

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[82] Luis Sicilia, "El Ejército y las Elecciones: La Tormenta de Santarrosa," *El Periodista*, No. 156 (4 to 10 September, 1987) 5.

[83] Luis Sicilia, "Una de carapintadas," op.cit.

[84] Ibid.

government, including the retirement of Alfonsín."[85] According to the article, sources close to the *carapintadas* argued that this "institutional *golpe*" could only be an interim measure, however. Their long-term objectives were "a drastic change, total surgery. For example, what should change is the entire economic cabinet, also the Ministers of Foreign Relations, Education, and Justice, and the replacements should be capable of dialogue with the armed forces, the Church, the unions and the Western powers, without the negative influences that exist today."[86] Here, the *carapintada* spokesmen clearly called for a corporatist form of social organization. These spokesmen accused the Alfonsín government of tilting toward the Soviets and the Sandinistas. Such pointed messages to the government and public opinion again made clear the political goal of the *carapintadas* to return to a corporatist, guardian-model system in which the military was a major (if not the major) "factor of power."

In summary, the concessions by the government failed to appease the military, which felt emboldened to announce new demands. The credibility and the authority of the government was severely compromised in the eyes of the military, as well as most of society, by the sight of the government giving in to military bullying despite the enormous demonstration of civilian support for democracy. In September 1987 the Radicals lost badly in the Congressional elections.[87]

Other effects of the *Punto Final* and Due Obedience laws were to encourage the re-entry of military officers into politics and signal that military political intervention paid political dividends. After the 1987 elections in particular, the government was on the defensive and much weakened

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[85] Jorge D. Boimvaser, "Una escalada de conflictos sociales y otra crisis militar podrían acelerar el llamado 'recambio institucional,'" *El Informador Público*, No. 59 (November 13, 1987). This newspaper, with close ties to military intelligence and the *carapintadas*, is dryly called "Official Bulletin of SIDE" in Argentina, given its propensity to hint accurately of coming events such as the Holy Week rebellion and its rumored links with SIDE.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 13, 1987.

before the resurgent traditional "factors of power" in Argentina.

The Next *Carapintada* Uprisings

In October 1987, the commanding officer at the La Tablada regiment was demoted and transferred due to his support for the *carapintadas*. The lower ranks responded with a form of mass protest: they painted their faces and confined themselves to the barracks until the army chief-of-staff travelled to the garrison twice to negotiate with the rebels.

In January 1988, a second *carapintada* mutiny erupted. Rico, under house arrest, escaped from a military guard and barricaded himself with supporters in Monte Caseros, a military base. Again, various commanders and regiments refused to move against him;[88] smaller outbreaks occurred in Patagonia, Tucumán and other provinces. The national airport in Buenos Aires was seized by commandos in a coordinated action, led by retired air force Lieutenant-Colonel Luis Estrella[89] with right-wing civilians and intelligence operatives. The federal police gave logistical support to the *carapintadas*, for example directing traffic away from an advancing column of *carapintada* tanks in order to clear the way; the police disobeyed orders by civilian authorities to desist.[90] Rico told the press he was still seeking a political solution to the human rights trials. Air force chief-of-staff Ernesto Crespo advocated "dialogue" with the insurrectionists and an agreement with Rico.[91] After several days, Rico surrendered and 282 insurrectionists were detained.[92]

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[88] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 17, 1988.

[89] In March 1987, Estrella had labelled the Alfonsín government "totally and absolutely Marxist." *Argentine News* (March 1987) 36.

[90] Interview with Luis Brunati conducted by author July 22, 1993, Buenos Aires. He gave the order as Minister of Government of Buenos Aires Province in 1988.

[91] "Alfonsín calls in other forces; Rico surrounded at Monte Caseros," *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 18, 1988, 1.

Army chief-of-staff Caridi stated, "Many of the army's aims could coincide, and in fact did coincide, with the issues taken up by the rebels, [but] the fundamental difference was that the group took up positions which went against discipline."[93] In a reenactment of the classical process, the liberal-internationalist faction of the army represented by Caridi sought to utilize the coercive pressure of the authoritarian-nationalist wing in order to press for common demands, while also seeking to keep the latter under firm control.[94] The second uprising was met by calls from the smaller political parties for a repeal of the Due Obedience Law. The government issued a number of contradictory statements. Alfonsín announced that plans had been found among the airport rebels to assassinate him and air force chief Crespo.[95] However, Juanarena and Interior Minister Enrique Nosiglia denied that the president was a target.[96]

In another attempt to gain civilian backing, Rico's family smuggled a letter of his out of his cell in which Rico asked the Argentine people if the time might be right for a new October 17. This was the date in 1945 when mass demonstrations secured the release of Perón from prison; the reference suggested that Rico sought to style himself as the new Perón.[97] He also said that to be Western and Christian meant "there is a readiness to combat--as in the past--any attempt to install a collectivist and Marxist dictatorship,"[98] in a reference to the Alfonsín administration. Again, Rico's messianic *political* aims--to change the government and become the new Perón--were

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[92] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 19 and 20, 1988.

[93] *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 25, 1988.

[94] By 1989 the high command retired many *carapintadas*. By then, however, many of the goals of the armed forces had been achieved.

[95] "1988 begins with a bang," *Argentine News* (March 1988) 45.

[96] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 18 and 19, 1988.

[97] *Argentine News* (March 1988) 47.

[98] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 10, 1988.

illuminated by these statements.

After the second rebellion, the number of officers facing trial was reduced through judicial action from 100 to 20, all of whom were retired. The Supreme Court ruled that numerous First, Second and Third Army Corps generals could be exempted from charges under Due Obedience.[99] In other words, the law's immunity was expanded to include even high-ranking *generals*, with the rationale that they were following orders. In July 1988, Alfonsín stated, "In Argentina there is no room for those who attack the institutions" and emphasized "the people and government's support for the armed forces' efforts to defend our republican system."[100] It was presumed that more clandestine deals were being complied with. According to one source close to the military, "These military crises were successful because in each of them, what they imposed was that Alfonsín was forced to rectify his policies...after the crisis at Monte Caseros, although Rico was defeated, they imposed the broadening of the Due Obedience law..."[101]

Another sobering aspect of the second rebellion was the fact that officers from other branches (e.g. the air force), the police and right-wing civilians were involved. Also, evidence provided by officers in the airport trial indicated that the takeover was part of a genuine coup aimed at taking political power.[102] The trials of the airport assailants several months later underlined the double standard of justice between civilian and military systems. While many of the military insurrectionists were released under the Due Obedience law[103] or given short sentences by the

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[99] *Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría*, "Las Secuelas..." op.cit., 22; Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 26, 1988.

[100] "Alfonsín praises Armed Forces," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 8, 1988, 1.

[101] Interview with Rosendo Fraga, expert on military affairs, conducted by author, August 24, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[102] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 16, 1988.

[103] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 7, 1988.

military courts, the civilian airport assailants, tried by civilian courts under the new Defense of Democracy law, faced long prison terms *for the same crimes.*[104]

In September 1988, Rico called for a coup from his military confinement, saying his followers should "jump the fence because times in Argentina have become dark and the country needs its soldiers to take over again."[105] Military College Director Oscar Salamón said in October that Caridi's army "shares the same values as Videla's."[106] In other words, despite the transition to civilian government, the army was still the *Proceso* army, with the values and ideology of the national-security state. In December 1988, a third *carapintada* revolt erupted when 53 members of the elite *Albatros* unit of the *Prefectura* seized military vehicles and joined Mohamed Alí Seineldín at the Campo de Mayo Infantry School. Some 400 rebels barricaded themselves there; Seineldín had surreptitiously returned from Panama to lead the uprising.[107] The base was surrounded by thousands of citizens and loyalist troops, which watched without firing when the *carapintadas* left Campo de Mayo and drove to Villa Martelli, another base in a crowded urban area, in order to avoid artillery attacks. Villa Martelli was also an important communications and intelligence center.

Again, Caridi arranged negotiating sessions with Seineldín, and publicly supported the rebels' demands. A military source, speaking for the generals, said, "There was no repression because the chiefs of both bands struggle for the identical objectives. The same claims are demanded by all the Army."[108] The administration believed the uprising was a serious coup attempt and even made arrangements to move the government from the *Casa Rosada.* After negotiations ended, news

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[104] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 14, 1988 and July 10, 1988.

[105] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 15, 1988.

[106] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 30, 1988.

[107] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 3, 1988.

[108] Hugo Chumbita, *Los carapintada*...op.cit., 118.

photographers captured the sight of the *carapintadas* celebrating; clearly, they believed their demands had been met. Meanwhile, police and intelligence officers fired on the crowd of civilians demonstrating *outside* the base, killing three.[109]

Regarding the negotiations, Fifth Army Corps commander General Humberto Ferrucci said, "Of course there was an agreement...Colonel Seineldín is a soldier who tried to rush a process that is already in progress and give it more publicity. I agree with his aims but not his methods."[110] Immediately after this rebellion, the armed forces received a wage hike and bonuses; Isidro Cáceres, the general favored by the *carapintadas*, was named as commander of the Second Army Corps, and Alfonsín and Juanarena made public statements with language vindicating the "anti-subversive war."[111] Caridi was also replaced as chief-of-staff--a demand of the rebels--and replaced by Francisco Gassino, former head of army intelligence.[112] The *carapintadas* had succeeded in further tightening the noose around the government, making it clear that they would not accept its policies nor its chosen military commanders. One *carapintada* ally implied that Seineldín's forces also sought to politically damage Alfonsín to insure the victory of the Peronists in the upcoming presidential elections.[113] The guardian role of the military was becoming more deeply implanted.

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[109] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 8, 1988. For a striking 2-page color photo of the *carapintada* celebration, see *La Semana*, (December 1988) 36-37.

[110] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 13, 1988, 1.

[111] *Buenos Aires Herald*, December 7, 1988 and December 18, 1988.

[112] For a discussion of the points demanded in the negotiations by the insurrectionists, see Rosendo Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 116-117.

[113] A *carapintada* ally named Alejandro Gorostiza was interviewed in Alejandra Rey, "'Creí en Seineldín y en Menem,'" *Página/12*, May 9, 1993.

Legal-Juridical Concessions

In Chapter 6 a number of legal-juridical concessions granted to the armed forces by the Alfonsín government were discussed. There were other secret laws and decrees passed which, by degrees, reversed the government's original ban on a military internal-security role. These laws and decrees may be seen as a product of the government's deteriorating determination as constant political intervention and terror tactics, reviewed in Part II, took their toll. Furthermore, the 13 general strikes by Peronist unions, opposition by the Church and the traditional sources of economic power, and the massive foreign debt weakened the administration on other fronts. The Alfonsín government was surrounded, in effect, by the traditional corporate interests in Argentina. As the administration began to lose the support of its original constituency--the majority of the population--Alfonsín was backed into a corner.[114] He began making compromises on many of his original promises, not just in the military realm.

The Alfonsín government enacted a series of secret policies which contradicted its public stance. As we have seen, already in 1984--immediately after the military's self-amnesty was overturned--there were indications that the government was considering an amnesty for the military. In 1985, Alfonsín's Defense Minister, Roque Carranza, issued a secret directive to the military, "Directive of the Minister of Defense 1/85 for the Armed Forces - Military Policy"[115] which contradicted the government's public position on a military internal-security role. The directive was a proposal to introduce the armed forces to what the Ministry called the "Grand Project of National

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[114] According to one survey, peoples' belief in politicians dropped from 61% in May 1984 to 33% to June 1988 to 14% in November 1990. Survey by Dr. Eduardo Cattenberg, cited in *Agora Review*, No. 11 (April 1991), 1. In another survey, respondents were asked if Alfonsín did what was expected of him, did more, or did less. The poll showed 16% said he did what was expected; 54% said he did less; and 31% said everything he did was bad. Poll by Mora y Araujo, Noguera y Asociados, cited in *La Nación*, January 13, 1989.

[115] Ministry of Defense, "Directiva del Ministro de Defensa 1/85 para las FFAA - Política Militar," 29 of August, 1985. Copy obtained by author.

Reconstruction." The directive stated that the Constitution gave the president the right to use the armed forces to resolve internal conflicts (thus undercutting one of the major purposes of the Defense Law).[116] While the document spoke of "the deformed conception of national security" which had existed,[117] it paradoxically stated as an objective "To update the existing doctrine regarding the struggle against terrorism, within the constitutional juridical-legal framework, adapted to the national and international political reality."[118]

The section on intelligence was also vague, calling on military intelligence to acquire intelligence on "probable adversaries."[119] This language signalled to the armed forces an official authorization of national-security ideology and military counterinsurgency functions if "adapted" to the democratic system, and reflected the ambiguous stance of the government.

As we saw in Chapter 6, in 1985 Alfonsín also secretly authorized SIDE, via Decree 1774/85, to carry out secret business activities, a course which allowed the intelligence apparatus to continue to generate and use hidden funds without democratic oversight.[120] The administration also returned large secret budgetary funds to the armed forces after Congress removed them in 1984.[121] Also in 1985, agreements were made by chief-of-staff Ríos Ereñú in the Conference of

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[116] The Constitution is ambiguous on the distinction between national defense and internal security, a point discussed in José Manuel Ugarte, *Seguridad Interior* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Arturo Illia para la Democracia y la Paz, 1990) 139-145. The Defense Law--which Ugarte helped draft--was designed to correct this ambiguity.

[117] Ibid., 3, 8.

[118] Ibid., 12.

[119] Ibid., 10. This document was never made public, but it eventually became known to experts on the military. See, for example, Gustavo Adolfo Druetta, "Herencia militar y lucha parlamentaria," *Nuevo Proyecto* 5-6 (1989), 192-193; his analysis is similar to the above.

[120] This decree was revealed by the *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 7 and 8, 1988.

[121] Article 36 of Law 23,110 of 1984 removed secret funds ("special accounts") from the budgets of SIDE, the armed forces chiefs-of-staff, the police and other security forces. However, the following year, a number of these secret funds were re-established. *Boletín Oficial*, Law 23,110, Article 36, 3. See also J.

American Armies in Santiago regarding a system of continental coordination and interchange on the "subversive problem." According to one internal document written by an adviser to the army, these agreements were ratified by the Alfonsín administration in early 1986.[122] This constituted executive authorization of an internal-security role for the armed forces *despite* Alfonsín's public posture.

In mid-1986 the administration issued decree 1959/86 which consolidated all intelligence--including military--under a Center of National Intelligence (CNI) reporting directly to the president. This decree seemed to undercut the draft Defense Law's prohibition on military internal intelligence-gathering;[123] it allowed the armed forces to participate as full partners in CNI with SIDE and other domestic intelligence bodies. Analysts interpreted this move as an attempt by the Alfonsín administration to obtain intelligence information controlled by the armed forces--and an implicit admission that the armed forces completely monopolized the gathering and systematizing of intelligence information through its internal security networks.[124] According to reports by a newspaper close to the army, the government also sought political information from the military.[125] Again, the government's decree contradicted its public stance as expressed in the Defense bill.

According to internal documents in military circles, government officials also approached the armed forces on several occasions in 1986 to "sound out" military chiefs on assuming a role to repress internal conflicts. The government was concerned about a crisis in San Luis, where it feared

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Iglesias Rouco, "Las leyes secretas," *La Prensa*, September 23, 1985.

[122] "Actualización Situación Militar," August 26, 1986.

[123] Héctor Ruiz Nuñez, "Servicios: Territorio Militar," *Humor*, (January 14, 1987) 25; *Ambito Financiero*, March 10, 1986; Druetta, op.cit., 190.

[124] Ruiz Nuñez, "Servicios..." op.cit., 23-25.

[125] *Ambito Financiero*, op.cit.

opposition Governor Rodríguez Saa might resist intervention by the federal government with provincial police.[126] Also in 1986, the Defense Minister issued secret orders telling the army to prepare for possible intervention to put down a general strike. Apparently these orders were transmitted by the Joint Chiefs to generals and colonels in early April.[127] However, there was apparently resistance among the ranks of the armed forces to undertake any such role as long as Alfonsín refused to openly declare a hypothesis of internal conflict for the military and end the trials.[128] In December of that year, the *Punto Final* was submitted by the government.

In 1987, after Holy Week, the Due Obedience law was passed. Also that year, Alfonsín announced at the annual dinner with the armed forces that as commander-in-chief, he had authorized a special program of intelligence led by armed forces intelligence to halt the campaign of bombings and terrorist acts then in progress.[129] Such internal intelligence by the military was denied under the Defense bill then under discussion in Congress. The Conference of American Armies took place that year in Argentina, as we have seen, where the continuing hypothesis of conflict as *internal subversion* was openly discussed and endorsed by the military delegates.

In 1988 the Defense Law passed, clearly excluding the armed forces from an internal security and intelligence role except as a last resort. However, the Defense Law was significantly undercut after the La Tablada attack by Alfonsín's Decree 327/89, which gave the armed forces permanent membership in the National Security Council (COSENA). Menem's decree 392 in 1990 went further, authorizing military combat operations in cases of "social commotion" (see Chapter

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[126] "Actualización Situación Militar," prepared by an army adviser, June 1986.

[127] "Actualización de la Situación del Sector Militar," prepared by an army adviser, April 1986.

[128] "Actualización..." op.cit., June 1986.

[129] "Advertencia de Alfonsín: Sancionarán a militares que formulen declaraciones políticas," *La Razón*, July 8, 1987, 1.

9). These executive decrees and secret acts constituted a parallel body of law and precedent which contradicted the democratically-debated and passed Defense Law. Then, the Internal Security Law, passed in 1991, abolished Article 13 of the Defense Law via Titulo VIII, Article 38. Article 13 had expressly excluded the armed forces from internal security functions.

Finally, the Alfonsín administration granted regular increases in military salaries over the years in the midst of severe economic crisis, when other public sectors such as state workers, retirees and teachers received no such increases. In March 1986, Defense Secretary Juanarena told Congressional deputies that Argentina had cut military spending more than any other Latin American country (36%). However, even with this reduction Argentina was spending $9100 per soldier as opposed to an average of $6300 in the other countries.[130] In September 1986 the armed forces received a 35% pay hike retroactive to August 1. In December 1987 the armed forces received an 18% pay hike retroactive to October 1. In March 1988 the Defense Minister announced that the 1988 budget would be expanded to accommodate losses from the Malvinas war, despite the fact that most of these losses had been replaced before the transition to civilian government. In July 1988 another pay hike for the military of 30% was granted, despite opposition from the Minister of Economy; in October another of 12% was granted; in December a 20% hike was granted and a $1500/austral bonus given. By May 1989, military pay had been raised 276-320% since the beginning of the year.[131] All these raises demonstrated the *political* power of the military as opposed to civilian sectors.

To recapitulate this section, the civilian administrations, via secret and public decrees and laws, gradually returned to the armed forces the prerogatives they had lost after the Malvinas defeat.

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[130] *Argentine News* (December 20, 1986) 23.

[131] Michael Soltys, "Politics and Labor," *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 9, 1989. The above list may not be complete; figures were taken from press accounts in *Buenos Aires Herald* over this period.

An internal-security role and domestic intelligence function were reauthorized. The termination of the human rights trials and the disguised amnesties signified: a) the continuing impunity of the military, b) the increasing strength of the armed forces *vis-à-vis* the civilian government, and c) vindication of the national-security state and the dirty war, or in less euphemistic terms, a policy of state terror as a means of social control. In effect, the *junta's* self-amnesty, annulled in 1984 by the new democratic government, had been reimposed by degrees. Finally, statements by government officials praising the military reflected another, more subtle objective gained by the armed forces during the 1980s: to overcome the "loss" of the "political war"[132] and regain the honor and prestige of the armed forces.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the political intervention of the *carapintadas*, supported indirectly by the high command, succeeded in attaining many of the objectives of the armed forces as stated in speeches, writings and secret documents cited in this study. Given the impossibility of an old-style coup in the 1980s, politicized sectors decided on a strategy of "low intensity coups," calculated to secure military interests below the threshold of overthrowing the government. A member of CEMIDA, retired Colonel Luis Perlinger, explained Holy Week in this way:

> "I believe that the armed forces made a test of how much they could get through a very limited action. And this testing is going to be repeated--not immediately, but it will be repeated to see how much more they are able to advance, how much more they can get from the government. Right now, there is no chance of a coup d'etat because the North American, Latin American, European and Soviet governments are all against a coup. It would be very stupid for Argentina to go into total isolation from the rest of the world with a coup...It is a probing against the civilian government to win some more space, but not

[132] It will be recalled that the armed forces believed they had won the military war against "subversion" but lost the political war.

with the intention of taking power now."[133]

Given this strategy, it appears that the policy of the Alfonsín government was fundamentally in error even from the point of view of political expediency. If the government had dismissed from the armed forces the military officers implicated in human rights abuses, and allowed the courts to freely pursue the prosecutions, the *carapintadas* would have been denied their institutional and coercive base. That is, the strategy of pressuring and conditioning the government would have been made much more difficult. While one can never know how history might have been, there are compelling reasons to doubt that the government's course was the best one.

The three military insurrections forced an end to the process of military accountability to the civilian system of justice and the claims of the victims of the national-security state. The government participated in this by, first, making justice negotiable through the *Punto Final* law, and second, interfering with and obstructing the functioning of the legal system and the courts. In essence, the political intervention of sectors of the armed forces succeeded in imposing a sort of slow-motion pact or imposition from above, limiting civilian power over the military and securing a military place in civilian domains. That is, these military sectors were able to achieve the type of pact secured by outgoing national-security militaries in Chile and Uruguay, but over time. After the original rejection of the military's self-amnesty in 1984, the president and Congress proceeded to approve, by degrees, higher and higher levels of amnesty for the armed forces over the years, culminating in the executive pardons of the convicted *junta* members by Menem in 1990. These decisions implicitly signaled acceptance of the standards of behavior of the *Proceso*.

In an insightful article, a commentator on Argentine politics observed that the armed forces

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[133] Roy Pingel, "Army officer says military thriving, democracy dying," *The Guardian* (New York), July 29, 1987, 12. For an interesting verification of this analysis from the opposite ideological perspective, see Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit. He argues that U.S. policy and pressure resulted in formal democracies throughout the continent in the 1980s, where militaries were to be strong political actors but formally subordinate to civilians. See, in particular, 9-12, 132.

before 1983 had played a role in Argentine society much like the Soviet Communist Party: responsible not only for defense, but also society's spiritual health, internal politics, economy and culture. During the *Proceso*, the military sought to modify the religious beliefs, conduct, attitudes and even the sexual behavior of civilians, brutally punishing those who resisted. He argued that due to this,

> "...in December 1983 it was necessary to struggle not merely against the military, who were resolved to defend their created corporate interests, but also against a whole political culture. In this, then, the enemies most dangerous to democracy were not the vengeful military men, but well-intentioned individuals who spoke in a reasonable tone of 'national reconciliation' and how good it would be to promote civil-military fraternity."[134]

That is, for democratization to be consolidated, the crucial process to be undertaken was not to come to an accommodation with the armed forces as a political actor, but to restrict them to professional tasks and abrogate their traditional position as a co-governing force.

Another manifestation of the advance of military power over the 1980s was the transformation of members of the executive branch from critics and opponents into virtual lobbyists and defenders of the armed forces. The Defense Ministry became a mechanism to insert a military voice into government policy (rather than the reverse), seeking to pressure the civilian government to meet the demands of the armed forces. Prominent Radicals began to call for reconciliation and respect for the "anti-subversive struggle," moving closer to the military position. The lessons of the trials and the dirty war were gradually eroded by the statements and policies of the civilian government. This process reflected the increasing political power of the military.[135]

In short, the democratization process in Argentina was channeled by military political actors

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[134] James Neilson, "La larga marcha militar," *Noticias* (May 1993) 66.

[135] However, the lessons of the dirty war were not by any means erased from the consciousness of many Argentines. As with the "Vietnam syndrome" in the United States, the political culture of Argentina seems to have been permanently changed by the trials and the knowledge of the dirty war.

so that the national-security concerns and prerogatives of the armed forces would be manifested within democratic institutions and legislation. The civilian sectors were gradually weakened over the years as the state, particularly the executive branch and the military power, were strengthened, culminating with a form of subtle "fujimorization"[136] in Menem's administration (see Chapter 9). As Emilio Mignone has argued,

> "The failure of Alfonsín's military policy facilitated the consolidation and growth of the armed forces as an autonomous power...Although the military consider that they acted legitimately during the repression and see themselves as saviors of the republic, the vast majority of the civil population thinks that the methods used during this period were immoral and aberrant. The armed forces have proved incapable of cleaning their own house or of engaging in self-criticism, and they hold unswervingly to the doctrine of national security. The Alfonsín government was a constitutional government, not a revolutionary one. It did not propose that the armed forces be dissolved. It knew it must share power with them and come to terms, in one way or another, with their ideology. As I said above, however, no effective reform has taken place."[137]

It should be noted that numerous personal interviews and conversations with a wide variety of Argentines in 1992 revealed that opinion was split on the question of Alfonsín's role. Many thought Alfonsín became president in a unique historical moment when he could have undertaken bold steps to bring the armed forces under civilian control; however, he failed to do so out of timidity and poor judgment. Others felt that the armed forces were too politically powerful to accomplish such a change, and that the Alfonsín administration had little choice in its policy-making.[138] As we have seen, the Alfonsín administration argued that its measures were pragmatic means to preserve democracy and establish an "ethics of responsibility."[139] However, the practical

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[136] This term, used popularly in Latin America and named after Peru's president, means the alliance between an authoritarian president with few commitments to democratic mechanisms, and a military interested in a co-governing role through "legal" means rather than coups.

[137] Mignone, "Beyond Fear..." op.cit., 258.

[138] Interviews conducted by author in Buenos Aires, 1992.

[139] *Buenos Aires Herald*, June 9, 1987.

result of many of the government's measures was both short-term and long-term political damage to the democratization process.

First, concessions to the armed forces resulted in generating bolder claims rather than appeasing them. With each new concession, the demands from the armed forces for total vindication grew in intensity and their respect for Alfonsín shrank. The policy of concessions also cost Alfonsín the overwhelming support he had enjoyed from the population.[140] Second, the consolidation of fragile democratic institutions and the establishment of the rule of law were both set back by the monopolization of power in the executive and in the armed forces and the termination of the process of justice. As some noted, the parallel state of the military--the Senate of generals and the lower house of *carapintada* junior officers--had reappeared.[141] Civilian authority was undermined by the growing political power of the armed forces. A double standard of justice emerged, military and civilian, a development which produced cynicism and disillusionment with democracy in society. A nation's system of justice--theoretically responsible to uphold due process and constitutional law--symbolically represents that nation's standards of fairness and justice, right and wrong. When flagrant violations are not judged or sanctioned by the courts or the government, it implies that constitutional limits on the absolute power of the state and the protection of citizens are ephemeral. The rule of law itself comes under question.

The civilian government's acceptance of military pressures resulted in the ratification of the traditional privilege and political power of the "military world." Many of the tenets of the national-security doctrine were eventually upheld by the civilian government and many of the structures of

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[140] Of course, there were other reasons for this loss of support, most importantly the economic crisis and adjustment measures imposed by the government, which resulted in a reduced standard of living for much of the population.

[141] The metaphor is Argentine journalist Rodolfo Mattarollo's, quoted in "Resurge de sus cenizas en Argentina el *partido militar*," *El Día* (Mexico), June 20, 1987, 18.

the national-security state were tacitly or explicitly given civilian authorization. The coercive threats explicit in the *carapintada* uprisings sent the message that the government's continued existence depended, as in the past, on approval of its policies by the military: in essence, a tutelary or guardian model.

To conclude, the fourth expectation was substantially borne out by the evidence. Political intervention by the armed forces did result in the passage of laws and policies reflecting military prerogatives and interests. The second part of the expectation--that military men would occupy civilian functions--was less clearly borne out in the Argentine case during the Alfonsín administration. There were few active-duty military men in prominent positions of public authority. Unlike in most other Latin American countries, for example, the Defense Minister is a civilian in Argentina. However, as we have seen, the Defense Ministry was gradually converted into a virtual military lobby, and a mechanism by which the high command could impose its national-security values and norms within civilian policy-making. Moreover, the chiefs-of-staff behaved as de facto ministers at times.

In sum, the armed forces succeeded in limiting civilian power and democratic rights over this period, imposing elements of a guardian model upon Argentine state and society. Thus, the evidence suggests that political intervention did considerably increase the political power of the armed forces *vis-à-vis* the civilian state and society over time.

CHAPTER 9

THE FIRST MENEM YEARS: DEEPENING INSERTION OF THE MILITARY IN STATE AND SOCIETY

"There is no possibility of a coup today, because today neither the political forces, nor the economic forces, nor the union forces are asking for it. And because what we began in 1976, Menem is finishing today..."

General Luciano B. Menéndez (ret.), 1992[1]

"What we are living in terms of the depoliticization of the people is a heritage of El Proceso. Menemismo is the heritage of the dictatorship."

Congressman Germán Abdala, Grupo de los Ocho
(a group of dissident Peronist Congressmen), June 1992[2]

This chapter examines the first years of the Menem administration, and the continuity of military national-security structures, ideology, and political intervention during this second civilian government. Carlos Saúl Menem assumed the presidency of the Argentine Republic on July 9, 1989, a full five months before the scheduled date. He became the 32nd constitutional president of Argentina, and the first civilian to be handed the reins of government by another civilian since 1928. Despite this apparent manifestation of democratic passage, however, this chapter presents evidence that the insertion of military power within Argentina's state and society deepened in Menem's administration. That is, while they were less openly hostile to this government, the armed forces continued to exercise a guardian role within civilian politics and constitutional institutions, as shown below. The perspective presented in this chapter contrasts with the view that the military is no longer an important political actor in Argentina today.[3]

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[1] Interview with General (ret.) Luciano B. Menéndez, *Somos* (March 9, 1992) 18.

[2] *Página/12*, June 13, 1992.

[3] As noted in Chapter 1, some Argentine scholars expressed this view to me in 1992. The evidence presented in this study leads the author to a contrary position.

As Menem built a new cooperative alliance with the armed forces, he also used diverse authoritarian means to centralize his power and bypass or neutralize the other branches of government.[4] His governing style furthered the weakening of democratic institutions and helped advance Argentina toward a guardian model. Within the armed forces, there were signs that the ideology and structures of the armed forces remained in place, and were in fact strengthened by Menem's policies. There was evidence that "hypotheses of conflict" based on internal enemies (now often couched in terms of "narcoterrorists" rather than "subversives") remained in force, particularly in the army. Active-duty officers, speaking anonymously but, they said, representatively, said the armed forces continued to uphold (and presumably implement) an integrated concept of national security combining both *internal security* and external defense, despite the passage of the 1988 Defense Law. There was evidence of the persistence of intelligence activity and surveillance aimed at the civilian population (including the president and politicians). Also, the military as an institution seemed to increase its control over the civilian judiciary, as shown below.

In 1992-1993, many former *Proceso* functionaries and officers entered electoral races and began to appear publicly at official ceremonies while others acted as aides and advisers to *Menemista* Congressional representatives. Menem appointed military officers to a number of important posts within the government. In his effort to woo the armed forces after his election, Menem quietly began to return a number of prerogatives removed from the jurisdiction of the armed forces during the Alfonsín years. Under Menem, the boundary between military and civilian governments became increasingly blurred.

Apart from the armed forces as an institution, there was new evidence that the *carapintadas*--the movement of insurrectionist, nationalist-authoritarian officers--continued to organize political

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[4] For an excellent summary of Menem's measures, see Alejandro Garro, "Nine Years of Transition to Democracy in Argentina: Partial Failure or Qualified Success?" *Journal of Transnational Law*, V.31, No. 1 (1992) 1-102.

ventures with like-minded civilians. The early anti-Alfonsín alliance between the *carapintadas* and the Menem forces dissolved after Menem's drastic neoliberal economic restructuring alienated the authoritarian-nationalist *carapintada* leaders. A fourth insurrection occurred in December 1990 during the Menem administration. Then, both Rico and Seineldín, dismissed from the army, pursued different strategies to organize their followings and replace Menem's neoliberal model with a nationalist, authoritarian and corporatist model. These civil-military movements lend weight to the view that the *carapintada* leaders and their followers had harbored political ambitions from the beginning, and that military-institutional conflicts were not their sole motivations.

All of these developments meant that the military institution, the *carapintadas*, and retired officers involved in the political process (in tandem with the Menem administration) continued to steer Argentina toward a restricted, guardian-type model. Menem's labor policies and dramatic restructuring of the economy narrowed the democratic opening by weakening labor organization and marginalizing the social service-dependent public. His policies are effectively eliminating the remaining elements of the welfare state. This amounts to nothing less than a profound reconstitution of Argentina's social structure (some call it a "revolution;"[5] others a counterrevolution in terms of workers' rights). Menem's neoliberal model utilized adjustment policies, incentives for foreign capital, privatizations, and withdrawal of the state from social responsibilities such as public education and health. This model was supported by the increasingly small and concentrated bloc of economic interests, foreign interests (especially the U. S. government, international finance, and the international lending agencies), and the liberal-internationalist wing of the armed forces (although grumbling about cutbacks affecting the military has been fairly constant). Most of the population

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[5] For an indication of enthusiastic right-wing foreign support for Menem's policies, see a Hoover Institution booklet: William Ratliff and Roger Fontaine, *Changing Course: The Capitalist Revolution in Argentina* (Stanford: Stanford University Hoover Institution, 1990).

was hard-hit by cutbacks, layoffs, and rising unemployment.

In short, key characteristics of Menem's regime have been: a) a cooperative alliance with the armed forces, b) "rule by decree," willingness to use coercion, and attacks on the press (both open verbal attacks and lawsuits by Menem, and violent attacks by right-wing Peronist gangs upon journalists);[6] c) centralization of power and control over other branches of government, and d) an unprecedented and unconditional alliance with the United States. Under President Menem, relations between the two countries are closer than ever before in Argentina's history. This chapter also shows that the impact of U.S. drug policies has tended to be counterproductive in terms of democratization of the armed forces. The combination of all these tendencies has been a further restriction of the democratic opening in Argentina.

This chapter first discusses the evidence of continuity of the national-security ideology and national-security structures in Argentina. Menem's 1990 decree 392, which authorized a military combat role in "social commotion," is analyzed, as well as other prerogatives returned to the armed forces. We examine the fourth *carapintada* uprising, and further political organizing by this sector. We analyze the political tutelage and defiance of civilian authority by the military as an institution

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[6] During Menem's term, sectors of the press--led by the independent daily *Página/12*--became the most important functioning democratic institution in Argentina, overcoming the inhibitions which were also a vestige of the *Proceso* (although some major papers remain staunchly conservative). *Página/12* and other media (such as radio) became a force for honesty and openness in government, exposing corruption and providing critiques of Menem's policies. There were numerous death threats against and attacks upon journalists between July and October, 1993, before important legislative elections in Argentina. In several cases, members of attacking gangs were found to be Menem loyalists. For example, a gang beat journalists at the *Sociedad Rural* during a Menem speech, and later, one attacker was filmed by a television crew embracing Menem at an official event. Some of the gang members were recruited from the Central Market, which investigators discovered was controlled by a mafia including Eduardo Acosta, a former intelligence officer from ESMA and a navy *grupo de tareas*. Market officials said top members of the Menem government hired thugs from the market, although government officials denied involvement. See, in English, Pepe Eliaschev, "Argentina's War on Journalists," *New York Times*, September 22, 1993, and Nathaniel C. Nash, "Reporters Facing Peril in Argentina," *New York Times*, September 1, 1993. See also Stella Calloni, "La intervención del Mercado Central descubrió una gran mafia," *La Jornada* (Mexico), September 25, 1993. Major newspapers in Buenos Aires carried reports of threats and intimidation of journalists and other sectors on a daily basis during these months.

during the Cóndor II missile controversy, and its actions to influence the composition of a new civilian court system, the *Camara de Casación*. Finally, we evaluate the significance of the armed forces as a factor of power in Argentina today.

The Military-Peronist Alliance

Upon entering office, Menem, in traditional Peronist fashion, sought alliances with the corporate factors of power in Argentine society--the armed forces, the Church, national industrialists, and elites linked to foreign capital. He particularly sought a *rapprochement* with the armed forces. In a veiled slight to Alfonsín, Menem stated at the swearing-in of the new commanders of the military, "You can govern with or without the armed forces, but you cannot govern against them."[7]

Right-wing nationalist factions of the armed forces had strengthened their numerous links with the Peronists even before the 1989 Menem election victory, including contacts with Menem's faction and right-wing union leaders. This process was an expression of the long alliance between authoritarian-nationalists in both civilian and military realms. Military leaders expected a respite from the claims and demands of their perceived enemies in the Radical party and civil society with the coming to power of Menem. Menem sought the backing of the *carapintadas* and the military-as-institution during the 1989 electoral campaign against Alfonsín.[8] The *carapintadas* made clear they wanted the Peronist elected. After Menem became president, the *carapintadas* tried to impose

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[7] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 13, 1989.

[8] Mario Rotundo, an ex-assistant and friend of Menem, said in a press conference on April 7, 1992 that Menem put Seineldín in charge of finding security teams to "guarantee" the presidential election against a possible "self-imposed coup" by Radicals, and that Menem "authorized Seineldín to buy communications equipment and organize a team to safeguard the institutional process." He said Menem as president also held secret meetings with the son of Emilio Massera (former *Proceso junta* member) to discuss pardoning the *junta* members who were then in prison. See *Página/12*, April 8, 1992.

ministers of their choice, further proof of their political objectives.[9]

The armed forces particularly expected a quick end to any accountability to the constitutional courts after Menem's victory. For example, a Defense Ministry source told the *Buenos Aires Herald* in September 1989 that new army chief General Isidro Cáceres promised his officers that not one of them would ever again be required to appear in a civilian court in relation to the "war against subversion."[10] Clearly, the persistent refusal by the armed forces to submit to the judgment of the civilian justice system and rule of law remained unchanged. Rumors began to circulate that Menem was preparing an amnesty for military officers under indictment for dirty war abuses and the insurrections. On September 9, some 150,000 demonstrators filled the plaza, protesting the expected pardons.[11] In October, 100,000 marched again, protesting impunity for the orchestrators of the dirty war and demanding a plebescite. An opinion poll showed 85% of those questioned were against any pardon.[12]

In August, *carapintada* Seineldín gave a public warning from his detention cell (where he was serving a sentence for the third insurrection), once again arguing that amnesty had been one of the points of the pact negotiated to end the 1988 uprising.[13] Finally, after several months of mixed signals and outright denials that he was considering an amnesty, Menem issued a broad pardon of

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[9] Menem's former Minister of the Interior, right-wing Peronist Julio Mera Figueroa, told *Página/ 30* in 1991 that the *carapintadas* "were of great use to us during the [1989] electoral campaign. Afterwards, they became confused, like the Montonero guerrillas 20 years earlier...They wanted to be the liberator-army, impose ministers." Cited in *El Diario/La Prensa* (New York), August 9, 1991.

[10] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 11, 1989.

[11] By October, over one million signatures were collected on a petition opposing a pardon. *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 20, 1989.

[12] *Latin American Regional Report: Southern Cone*, October 12, 1989.

[13] To recapitulate, other points were the removal of Caridi (which occurred) and full vindication for the dirty war (while Alfonsín continued to resist this, Juanarena stated publicly that the repression had been "necessary" in January 1989). See Chapter 8, also *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, February 2, 1989.

over 200 officers in October, 1989. Included were junta *comandantes* Galtieri, Anaya, and Lami Dozo, as well as Generals Bignone, Menéndez, Nicolaides, and Harguindeguy, and *carapintadas* Rico and Seineldín. Menem's pardon bypassed Congress, which would have had to authorize an amnesty, a doubtful proposition according to his own vice president.[14] In a demonstration of reconciliation which had the effect of further exacerbating internal military tensions between the nationalist-authoritarian sector favoring the *carapintadas* and the liberal-rightist sector loyal to the high command, Menem then invited Seineldín to the presidential mansion for a private dinner. After his sentence was served and he was dismissed from the army, Rico held a defiant press conference in full uniform and harshly criticized Cáceres for violating the new spirit of reconciliation. The hostility between the liberal-internationalist commanders and the authoritarian-nationalist junior officers was intensifying.

Two weeks later Menem issued "complementary" pardons of other Rico allies, intelligence officers who had been indicted in 1985 as part of "the 12 *golpistas*," and seven imprisoned Montoneros. However, the most notorious *junta* commanders remained imprisoned. The hostile public reaction to rumors of such an impending pardon, and the repeated street demonstrations of tens of thousands of citizens (including from Menem's own party) caused Menem to delay pardoning the other imprisoned *comandantes*.

Significantly, elements of the armed forces were not satisfied with the pardon. In a representative statement, retired General Bignone said that "the armed forces have different problems; they want the vindication of their action against subversion."[15] Army head Cáceres gave

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[14] Vice president Eduardo Duhalde reportedly opposed an amnesty law in a meeting with Menem, Bunge & Born president Jorge Born, and Air Force commander José Antonio Juliá, and said Congress would never pass it. *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 11, 1989. It should be noted that while amnesties prevent or terminate criminal proceedings, thus "forgetting" past crimes, pardons forgive those crimes.

[15] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 11, 1989.

a fervent speech on August 12 energetically defending the dirty war, saying it "made possible the preservation of the national identity."[16] The next section reviews other military statements and documents which indicated that the national-security ideology still permeated the military.

Persisting Signs of National-Security Ideology

While open attacks on the government and public political statements became more rare after Alfonsín left office, the reason for this seemed to be that Menem acquiesced to the major demands of the armed forces: for amnesty, for an authorized internal security role, for vindication of the armed forces, for access and a voice within the government, and for renewed prestige and honor. Thus, military influence became more subtle and less visible, especially after 1990. Put another way, the armed forces did not react to Menem as they had to Alfonsín because the former was not attempting to place liberal-democratic restraints upon the military, as Alfonsín had in the beginning of his term; in fact, Menem reversed some of Alfonsín's reforms (see below).

On July 12, 1989, the new head of the army, General Isidro Cáceres, made a speech calling for vindication of the methods of the *Proceso*. In a statement that demonstrated the expectations of the armed forces for renewed prestige and final vindication for the dirty war--as well as persisting national-security ideology--Cáceres publicly stated on the occasion of his swearing-in,

> "We are hopeful in the search for solutions for the aftermath of the war on subversion and in the South Atlantic; the population understands that we have fought a legitimate battle in defense of the values of the national identity...we could have made mistakes like the rest of society...but the almost desperate state of the nation shows without a doubt that all Argentines are responsible for some kind of error."[17]

The half-apology and recognition of military errors--though predicated on the assumption that *all*

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[16] *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 12, 1989.

[17] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 13, 1989.

sectors made equally grave errors--was analyzed by some as a gesture of reconciliation by the armed forces themselves toward the new Peronist government. The years of strained-to-violent relations with Alfonsín had transferred the liberal-dominated military's visceral suspicion and distrust of Peronism to the Radicals; now *Peronismo* was the lesser evil.[18]

Despite the receding Cold War in 1988 and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, there seemed to be little change in military national-security thinking. Anticommunism was still a major influence permeating Argentine military doctrine and strategy. Indeed, to most officers, there was little faith that the Soviet threat had really vanished.[19] Speaking for the *carapintadas* in December 1989, Aldo Rico warned against a guerrilla resurgence in Latin America, stating that the Red Army was still intact, and Cuba, Nicaragua and North Korea were still centers of subversion.[20] Also, the armed forces made new efforts to join the Western Cold War alliance on several fronts. Domestically, the armed forces continued to press for an internal security role, as we have seen, and resist civilian oversight and control of intelligence functions.[21] In short, "internal enemies" were still a major "hypothesis of conflict" for the military.

The Menem administration openly encouraged this. Menem himself made known before he took office as president that he wanted to see the Defense Law "modified" in order to grant the

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[18] Noted by Rosendo Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 137.

[19] A retired navy officer told the author that the fall of communism did not have an impact until 1990 or 1991. In 1989, arguments still raged about whether *perestroika* were real or a false front by the Soviets to confuse people. Interview with retired navy officer conducted by author, September 22, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[20] Joe Schneider, dispatch for *Janes Defense Weekly*, December 7, 1989. The author is grateful to him for access to his original dispatches.

[21] Recall the military's resistance to the Defense Law, and the Joint Chiefs' draft bill on internal security, 1991. Also, in their June 1990 draft bill on intelligence reform, Radical Deputies wrote that a multitude of military intelligence organizations continued to dedicate themselves to internal security, in a perceived struggle against "subversion" with "ideological characteristics," and "with a total lack of control, political, parliamentary or judicial." See Cámara de Diputados de la Nación, "Trámite Parliamentario No. 28," Item 10, Bisciotti et al, "Régimen orgánico de información e inteligencia del Estado nacional," (June 5, 1990) 1381, 1382. This bill was still stalled in Congress in late 1992.

armed forces an internal security role.[22] In February 1990, Menem again floated the idea of amending the Defense Law after a weekend meeting with top military commanders and several ministers and aides. He stated that the government was considering changes in the law to allow the armed forces to intervene in domestic unrest.[23] When this provoked wide protest in Congress (among members of the Peronist Party as well), Menem resorted to executive action, bypassing Congress. That same month, Menem's Decree 392 (discussed further below), which contradicted the Defense Law, was imposed, authorizing an internal security role.

In June 1992, then-Interior Minister José Luis Manzano spoke publicly of the need "to combat international networks of terrorists and drug-traffickers." Such "international networks" provided a justification for an military role both domestically and externally.[24] In October 1992, Defense Minister Erman González said, "If in Argentina narcotraffic becomes narcoterrorism or narcosubversion, the armed forces are going to be there to smash it."[25] Such statements frankly contradicted the Defense Law restricting the armed forces to external defense, and sent a powerful message to the armed forces: that despite civilian laws, national security and *internal* concerns still justified other sets of rules.

In 1992, officers stressed in public conferences and statements that the primary role of the armed forces was *external defense* (although secondary roles included involvement in the productive development of the country, defense of strategic assets, and forging the national identity through

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[22] *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 27, 1989. Menem said the points to be changed included "the intelligence question and the possibility of armed forces intervention to preserve order if the security forces should be overwhelmed." However, this latter point--the so-called "firepower clause"--was already part of the law.

[23] Joe Schneider, dispatch to *Janes Defense Weekly*, February 14, 1990.

[24] It should be recalled that the 1987 Conference of American Armies established the struggle against "narcosubversion" as one key inter-American mission. See Chapter 5. This was confirmed at the Conference of American Armies meeting in 1991, held in Washington D.C. See "El ejército entra en la escuela," *Página/12*, April 4, 1993.

[25] *Página/12*, October 16, 1992.

obligatory service for all men.)[26] However, as we saw in Chapter 7, "external defense" was the rationale used to justify the La Tablada repression by the army. That is, even internal uprisings could be portrayed as externally instigated in order to justify a military combat response.

The continuity of national-security values was further verified in an interview with an active-duty officer in 1992. This officer, highly placed in the army, told the author:

> "The Defense Law wanted to separate the concept of security into two different realms: external and internal. And this is what the army did not agree with. Because between the two lies the crucial issue of *intelligence*. If you want to have an effective army, you have to have intelligence and you have to have a unified concept of security. Security cannot be divided up like that. Security is an organic whole, whatever threat to the country. And in order to do its job, the army has to be able to conduct intelligence against possible threats, whether they are from outside or within the country. Hypotheses of conflict change, and the armed forces have to be prepared..."[27]

He also said that Alfonsín's decrees had reauthorized internal security and intelligence functions for the armed forces after La Tablada. This provided more confirming evidence that despite the Defense and Internal Security laws passed by Congress, the military still insisted upon (and presumably acted upon) an internal security mission. Further, it suggested that the armed forces believed this mission to be legally authorized by the parallel set of decrees documented in this study. The implication of this is that the armed forces believed they had won a major political objective from the civilian governments.

As another example of persisting national-security concepts, the commander-in-chief of the army, Martín Balza (widely considered a constitutionalist officer in Argentina), gave a noteworthy

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[26] Closed seminar attended by author, June 1992. Obligatory service, as discussed in Chapter 2, is an important mechanism utilized by the armed forces to instill the values of the military in all male youth. The armed forces fought to keep the draft of civilian men and oppose the 1983 platform plank of the Radicals to abolish the draft; obligatory service continues to this day

[27] Interview with high-ranking active-duty officer conducted by author, September 24, 1992, Buenos Aires.

speech in the XIX Conference of American Armies.[28] In it he said:

> "...we cannot minimize that *the general and primary mission of the Armed Forces is to be an effective military instrument to preserve the vital interests of the Nation, transforming themselves globally as a dissuasive element of credible defense*...The military sectors must adopt themselves to new circumstances and be elements to promote favorable possibilities for the prosperity of their nations. The Armies cannot and should not remain at the margin of this discussion, but rather should reflect on the manner of accompanying their Governments, concretizing their intentions through actions of complementarity and cooperation among the Armies of the region...We believe that the principle of integration [among armies] must be, as we have said, to complement each other in roles of secondary functions, fundamentally in the scientific and technological field of education, of support for the struggle against narcotrafficking and in the face of disasters and natural catastrophes, *keeping the effect of dissuasion that the military instrument must provide before threats and aggression, a non-delegable and non-derogable responsibility of each State and each Army*."[29] [emphasis in original]

Key elements to note in this speech were 1) the persistence of a broad notion of the military role as protecting "vital interests" of the nation, echoing the 1966 national-security law (and despite the new definition provided in the 1988 Defense law), 2) the broadly-defined mission to serve as a central political actor and a co-governing force with civilian authorities, 3) the perceived mission to participate in the development and economic prosperity of the nation, and 4) the implication of a broad definition of the enemy and an expansively-defined hypothesis of conflict. The final sentence is vaguely stated in a manner which might encompass both external and *internal* enemies. In short, this speech (like other statements and publications of the armed forces) reflected the persistence of security-and-development themes, and indicated that an expansive definition of the role of the armed forces--including intelligence, economic and socio-political concerns--was still embedded in military thinking in 1992.

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[28] The date of this conference--events which are closed to the press and the public--was unclear, but probably 1991. Balza's speech was published as "Las misiones de los ejércitos," *Revista Estrategia Regional, Ser en el 2000* (June 1992), 85-87.

[29] Balza, ibid., 86-87.

Enduring National-Security Structures

There was evidence that military internal security and intelligence structures continued to function during Menem's term. During the 1991 debate on the Internal Security law, as we saw in Chapter 6, Congressional Deputies referred to continued surveillance, break-ins, rumor campaigns, death threats, news stories planted by military intelligence in the media, and so on. Isolated cases of dirty war methods occurred as well.

In July, 1989 the son of the former security chief of YPF (retired Colonel Jaime Cesio) was found tied to his bed, murdered. The victim's father, Cesio Sr., had openly criticized the *Proceso* repression and the *juntas* from a democratic perspective during the 1980s. In the trial of the La Tablada defendants, the *Buenos Aires Herald* reported that a person with official court credentials as an Associated Press journalist spent substantial time photographing members of the public and journalists in the audience. AP later denied that the journalist was theirs.[30] In October 1989, Radical Congressional leader César Jaroslavsky accused SIDE of kidnapping Peronist and Radical youths collecting signatures for a petition protesting Menem's pardons. They were forced into a Ford Falcon and threatened at the point of a gun. Jaroslavsky also blamed SIDE for intimidating a railway workers union leader. The unionist was forced into a car by agents in plain clothes who threatened him and gave details about the daily activities of his family. The Radical leader accused SIDE of being "a nest of *carapintadas.*"[31] Also in October, Alfonsín's office was bombed and other Radical leaders accused SIDE of tapping the phones of the UCR. These events caused unease in Argentine society.

Indications of the continuing clash of civil and military institutions over national-security functions were apparent in the early days of Menem's administration. Menem generally came down

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[30] *Buenos Aires Herald*, July 22, 1989

[31] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 4, 1989.

on the side of military officers. In January 1990, a new economic crisis erupted when the value of the *austral* fell to 17-18% of the dollar's value overnight and the stock market crashed. Military leaders made public statements about the risks of approaching chaos and warned the citizens to respect order. On January 24, 1990, Italo Luder resigned as Defense Minister, accusing army chief Cáceres of repudiating the authority of the civilian minister. The two had clashed a number of times over military pay and, more importantly, the role of the armed forces in the event of "social commotion."

Luder complained that civilian authority was being defied by the military officer. The Defense Minister had been excluded from a dinner, hosted by Menem, but including Cáceres, other military commanders, and civilian officials. *The subject of discussion was internal security* and the possibility of future food riots in the wake of Menem's neoliberal program. Cáceres told the gathering the army had "a working hypothesis" to handle such social unrest and said the army was "ever alert in the face of latent subversion." He repeated this in a speech commemorating the first anniversary of the La Tablada attack.[32] Again, this constituted proof that the army continued internal security planning and preparation despite the Defense Law. Further, the military commanders were bypassing the Defense Ministry completely, acting like functional equivalents to ministers in their direct recourse to the president and rendering civilian minister Luder virtually irrelevant. Menem encouraged this by aligning himself with the military.

When Luder issued a disciplinary warning to Cáceres, Menem declined to sanction it. Luder was replaced by former secretary of defense Humberto Romero, a man who shared the military's aim to quickly end the human rights trials (and son of Governor Romero Feris of Corrientes). Romero had resigned (some accounts said he had been fired by Luder) in 1989, after Romero openly

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[32] Joe Schneider, dispatch to *Janes Defense Weekly*, January 24, 1990.

endorsed Seineldín's political positions.[33]

On January 30, 1990, family members of Menem discovered that the office of the president and his private home were permeated with tiny microphones. After the furor died down, the government acknowledged that SIDE was responsible. The head of SIDE--rumored to be close to the *carapintadas*--resigned. Also that month, Rico and an unidentified man claiming to speak for Seineldín separately warned of an impending coup by liberal-internationalist sectors of the armed forces and civilian allies, naming Cáceres, Alfonsín, Peronist party head Cafiero and foreign bankers. Radical Jaroslavsky retaliated by accusing Octavio Frigerio, head of YPF, of financing Rico's movement.[34] Frigerio denied this, but added that he fully backed the *carapintadas*. Food shortages and other necessities added to the growing tension and flying coup rumors.

Menem's neoliberal restructuring of the economy was so dramatic that Martínez de Hoz declared that one of the aims of the *Proceso* was being carried out.[35] In his 1991 book, Martínez de Hoz stated: "The most important achievement of the program of 1976 was to unleash a process of changing the mentality that existed in various sectors of the country, and now today one can say that a certain positive consensus exists on fundamental postulates..."[36] This statement indicated that former *Proceso* functionaries still wished to claim credit for their "reorganization" of Argentina and their attempts to force changes in the mentality of Argentines, as well as emphasize the continuity

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[33] See *La Nación*, August 16, 1989, 5; *Latin America Weekly Report*, February 8, 1990, 1.

[34] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, February 8, 1990.

[35] For data and analysis of Menem's capitalist restructuring, see Mónica Peralta Ramos, "Economic Policy and Distributional Conflict among Business Groups in Argentina: From Alfonsín to Menem," and Carlos H. Waisman, "Argentina's Revolution from Above: State Economic Transformation and Political Realignment," both in Epstein, *The New Argentine Democracy...* op.cit., 97-123 and 228-243 respectively; and William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) 300-307.

[36] José Martínez de Hoz, *Quince Años Después* (Buenos Aires, 1991), cited in Octavio Carsen, "La Transición Democrática en la Argentina de 1992," presentation given in South-South Meeting, Bogotá, January 1992, 2.

of the aims of the *Proceso* under Menem.

In February 1990, the government sharply raised prices on many services such as gas and electricity and devalued the austral. *Carapintadas* Rico and Seineldín and union leader Saúl Ubaldini joined in calling for a "national people's revolution against dollarization," referring to Menem's alignment of the Argentine currency with the U.S. dollar (which caused prices to rise). The *Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado* (ATE) state workers union--with 145,000 members--announced a "direct action" program.[37] Throughout the country, food riots and looting broke out once again; in many cases, women simply walked out of supermarkets without paying.

Decree 392: New Legal Precedent for Military Internal Security

Alarmed by this turmoil, as were the armed forces, Menem issued Decree 392, which explicitly authorized a military combat role to repress domestic social unrest and "internal commotion." The decree went much farther than Alfonsín's decrees. It dismantled Alfonsín's National Security Council (*COSENA*), set up after La Tablada, and gave its functions to the National Defense Council (*CODENA*), established in the Defense Law and never constituted. However, these functions *contradicted* the Defense Law's ban on a military internal security role. Decree 392 also reorganized the Internal Security Committee and included as members the Ministers of Defense and Interior, the chief of the Joint Chiefs, and the head of SIDE, again involving the military in domestic security deliberations.[38] This Internal Security Committee was, moreover, empowered to *draw up contingency plans for future joint operations among the police, security and military forces to quell civil disturbances*, with the collaboration of all the organizations making up the national intelligence

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[37] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, February 8, 1990.

[38] Julio C. Carasales, *National Security Concepts of States: Argentina* (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1992) 50.

system.[39] In short, joint military-security planning and domestic intelligence (both military and civilian) were legalized by the decree; a military "hypothesis of conflict" on internal security was authorized.

The Assistant Secretary for Human Rights resigned in protest and members of both major parties sharply criticized the decree.[40] In a televised announcement, Economy Minister Erman González pointed to the danger that hyperinflation and austerity measures could lead from economic anarchy to social-political anarchy, revealing the fears of the state (including the armed forces) that new social explosions were imminent. With this new decree, another block was put into place in the parallel structure of executive orders authorizing an *internal* role for the armed forces.[41]

In March 1990, army chief Cáceres died of heart failure. Menem passed over General Pablo Skalany--a *carapintada* sympathizer--who was next in line for the position, and chose Martín Bonnet. Menem, like the liberal-internationalist military commanders, viewed Skalany as too close to the *carapintadas* and too close to Ubaldini's opposition faction of the Peronist movement. That is, Menem's interests were moving into line with those of the commanders of the armed forces, despite his original alliance with the *carapintadas*. The military commanders viewed the *carapintadas* as a possible threat to their internal dominance in the army (see Chapters 2 and 3 for the roots of this internal conflict between liberal-internationalists and authoritarian-nationalists within the armed forces.) Menem feared their opposition to his neoliberal restructuring.

Menem's centralization of government powers accelerated in 1990. In that year he engineered Congressional passage of a law expanding the Supreme Court from five to nine members,

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[39] Article 4, Decree 392. See Joe Schneider, dispatch to *Janes Defense Weekly*, March 7, 1990; "Facultan a las FFAA a intervenir en casos de 'conmoción interior,'" *Clarín*, March 3, 1990.

[40] International League for Human Rights, op.cit., 13.

[41] José Manuel Ugarte, Radical Congressional aide, said the decree, like Alfonsín's Decree 327, was "a flagrant contradiction" to the Defense Law. Interview conducted by author, October 9, 1992, Buenos Aires.

and then appointed five. This move was seen as a preemptive move to "pack" the Court with supporters who would declare his security, economic, and labor decrees constitutional, and strengthen executive domination of the state. Also in 1990, Alfonsín accused Menem in a televised speech of plotting to close Congress and rule by decree. Although the administration denied the charge, Peronist Congressman Jorge Yoma--a relative of Menem--confirmed it. Menem's constant use of decrees indicated that he sought to bypass the legislative branch of government. Menem was also charged with using federal intervention powers to consolidate his control of provinces.[42] In 1992, the president began a campaign geared to remove the constitutional prohibition on second terms for presidents, so that he could run again in 1995. A top political priority of the majority *Menemista* faction of the Peronist Party became constitutional reform (which was strongly opposed by other parties).[43]

In short, as Menem consolidated his relationship with the armed forces, he also used diverse authoritarian means to concentrate power and bypass or neutralize the other branches of government. This allowed him to escape constitutional mechanisms insuring accountability to the people. Few checks and balances on executive power remained. In sum, Menem acted to solidify the guardian-style structure of power in Argentina.

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[42] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, April 19, 1990.

[43] In December 1993, both houses of Congress passed the bill to reform the Constitution. The *Menemista*-dominated Senate voted 38 to 7 in favor. The lower house--where the outcome had been more uncertain--voted in favor after learning of secret meetings between Menem and Alfonsín to work out an agreement. After months of harsh criticisms by Alfonsín and the Radicals regarding Menem's "hegemonic project," Alfonsín's bargaining and *fait accompli* undercut opposition. Menem cancelled a scheduled popular referendum on the question; the Catholic Church, Peronist and Radical dissidents, and other sectors criticized the accord. See "Angeloz 'sorprendido' por la jugada de Alfonsín," *Clarín*, November 11, 1993; "Menem y Alfonsín fuman pipa de la paz," *El Diario/La Prensa* (New York), December 14, 1993.

Closer Alignment with U.S. Policy

Menem's foreign policy positions have been more pro-U.S. than any before in Argentine history. In the United Nations, Argentina became one of the leading critics of Cuba's human rights record. Menem called for Castro's removal on a number of occasions in international meetings. The government sent contingents of military and security forces to the Persian Gulf during the 1991 war, despite widespread criticism by party leaders and the majority of the population at home,[44] breaking Argentina's traditional neutrality in foreign wars.

In 1992, Argentina rejoined the joint naval UNITAS exercises with the U.S. navy for the first time since 1981; they were broken off as a result of U.S. support for Britain in the Malvinas war. In 1991, Argentina signed a declaration with Brazil and Chile banning the development and use of chemical weapons,[45] and in 1992 Menem signed the Tlatelolco Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which put Argentina's nuclear sites under the verification of the International Atomic Energy Commission. Argentina had resisted signing this treaty since 1968 for reasons of sovereignty.[46] In early 1992, Menem withdrew Argentina from the Non-Aligned Movement, to express his new alliance with the First World.

In 1991, the Menem government and the armed forces began working closely with the U.S. administration in a joint anti-drug-traffic mission. Military anti-drug operations, it should be noted,

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[44] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, October 18, 1990. Domingo Cavallo, Foreign Minister at the time, stated that Argentina planned to be "part of a new international security system that will emerge from the experience gained from this conflict." Ibid. This move was also interpreted as a means of providing the armed forces with funds from the UN as well as a socially-approved and externally-directed project, re-socializing the ranks away from internal security concerns. It also provided a means to acquire new arms and materiél, as well as strengthening the alliance with the U.S. Leftist and Radical members of Congress called the move unconstitutional, however, since legislative approval was bypassed by the government. See *Ambito Financiero*, September 19, 1990, 13.

[45] *New York Times* September 6, 1991.

[46] *Clarín*, July 4, 1992. On November 10, 1993, the Argentine Congress gave final approval to the Tlatelolco treaty (over the no vote of the majority of the Radicals), after 26 years of resistance. See *Página/12*, November 11, 1993.

are often indistinguishable from counterinsurgency operations; both imply a military internal-security mission. The U.S. administration told Menem that an extensive money-laundering operation was centered in Uruguay and Argentina.[47] In an April meeting attended by Menem, U.S. Ambassador Terence Todman, and the heads of the armed forces, Menem agreed to participate in joint operations with the U.S. against traffic in arms and drugs, including money laundering. Guido DiTella, then Foreign Minister, denied persistent rumors that the DEA had been pressuring the government to include the armed forces in the drug-trafficking fight.[48] In a televised speech, Menem declared war on corruption and drug-trafficking, announcing new "anti-mafia" legislation and other measures. He instructed the *Gendarmería* and air force to take surveillance photos of the entire national territory. Menem also "intervened" the judicial branch in Catamarca after SIDE head Hugo Anzorregui was informed in the U.S. that the province was a center of drug-trafficking.[49] In short, drug interdiction served as a rationale and a mechanism for Menem and the military to further entrench elements of a guardian-style system.

In July 1992 Erman González (now Defense Minister) flew to the United States to request assistance in securing a $300 million credit from the World Bank to finance the restructuring and sale of firms in Argentina's military-industrial complex. He also sought arms sales from the U.S.[50] The Pentagon agreed to sell 54 A4-M fighter-bombers to Argentina later in 1992, the most important

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[47] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, May 30, 1991.

[48] However, in June 1992 the author directly heard a U.S. Embassy source urging a role for the Argentine armed forces in drug-interdiction and multilateral operations. Many Argentine military and civilian sources confirmed the existence of this pressure as well. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters, Melvyn Levitsky, had emphasized in 1990 that the U.S. was resolved "not to Americanize" the war on drugs--implying that local forces were required to do the job. See Douglas Waller et al, "Risky Business," *Newsweek*, July 16, 1990, 16-19.

[49] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, May 30, 1991.

[50] *Página/12*, July 12, 1992.

arms sale to Argentina in 20 years, ostensibly to replace planes lost in the Malvinas war.[51]

Military Political Intervention: The Fourth Carapintada Rebellion

Political intervention and dirty war practices by military sectors continued in Menem's term. In 1989, a series of new bombings of military targets by followers of Seineldín took place (as noted in Chapter 7). Clearly, the enmity between the nationalist-authoritarian *carapintadas* and liberal-internationalist officers was becoming more intense. By April, 1990, the *carapintadas* were dividing into two recognizable wings, one responding to Rico and one to Seineldín. After his dismissal from the army, Rico formed a political party with other retired military and intelligence officers, *MODIN* (Movement for Dignity and Independence). He announced he would run for governor of Buenos Aires province. In the 1991 elections, *MODIN* obtained 600,000 votes in Greater Buenos Aires, nearly 10%, mostly drawn from the "military family," the poorest sectors of the population and disillusioned Peronists. *MODIN* sent four national Congressmen, two Senators, and two provincial deputies to office.[52] Rico's aim was clearly to organize disaffected Peronists, police, retired officers and the poor to form a new ultra-nationalist political movement. However, Rico had not become a committed democrat. For example, Rico said in an interview in May 1992 that "the

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[51] *Clarín*, September 24, 1992. However, press reports in 1983 documented that lost equipment was replaced at that time. According to Augusto Varas, for example, the air force replaced the 109 aircraft lost in the war with 200 more modern planes in 1983. See Augusto Varas, *Democracy Under Siege: New Military Power in Latin America* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989) 52. See also Jimmy Burns, *The Land That Lost Its Heroes: Argentina, the Falklands and Alfonsín* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd., 1987) 263, n.6.

[52] See *Página/12*, April 19, 1992, and electoral analysis by Claudio Lozano and Artemio López, "El nuevo mapa electoral argentino: Las elecciones en el Gran Buenos Aires" (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Estudios Sobre Estado y Participación (IDEP)/Asociación Trabajadores del Estado (ATE), 1991) especially 8. In the 1992 elections, *MODIN* lost some of this support, falling to some 6% in total. However, *MODIN* won approximately the same level of support (10%) in the poorest neighborhoods of Buenos Aires. See *Clarín*, June 30, 1992, 13-14. In the October 1993 elections, *MODIN* received 11% of the Buenos Aires vote and increased its number of representatives in the Chamber of Deputies to 11. *Somos*, No. 888 (October 4, 1993) 60.

people yearn for military governments because they were better than democracies."[53] In 1992, he defended the methods of the dirty war and publicly threatened civilians with different political views.[54] The electoral support for Rico, for former *Proceso* General Antonio Bussi (both of whom were elected as Deputies in October 1993), and for other descendants of the *Proceso*--given their anti-democratic views and human rights records--indicated that some elements of the population were not committed to liberal democracy, and still looked to messianic and authoritarian military figures for salvation in difficult times.

Seineldín's methods seemed to rely more heavily on traditional armed violence and coup threats. He at first focused on the armed forces as his key constituency, although his wing was associated with militant labor leader Ubaldini and he made increasing overtures to civilian supporters. In late 1989, a poll demonstrated that strong support for the *carapintadas* existed in 30 of the army's 84 major units, and was strong among junior officers and non-commissioned officers in the air force.[55] In January, 1990, Seineldín was imprisoned by the army after making a bitter public denunciation of the U.S. invasion of Panama[56] in which he urged armed resistance to imperialism.

After his release, Seineldín was sighted traveling throughout the country, openly forging links with civilian sectors, union and political leaders, and making other political statements. The

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[53] *Página/12*, May 15, 1992.

[54] Challenged by a human rights leader on a radio talk show, Rico retorted, "With communists I don't debate, I combat them...Once, when I had arms in hand, I confronted them and annihilated them..." See "Rico se pinto la cara," *Página/12*, August 28, 1992; see also *Gente* interview with Rico, September 3, 1992.

[55] Poll by Oscar Montoya, *Instituto Latinoamericano de Cooperación Tecnológica y Relaciones Industriales*, cited in *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, September 13, 1990.

[56] Seineldín, as we have seen, was stationed in Panama by Alfonsín, where he trained Noriega's troops. See *El Diario/La Prensa*, New York, October 22, 1990.

press concluded that he was organizing a political, civil-military movement to oppose Menem.[57] In March, he stated that "in these black days, the people are once again looking to their army as the final guarantee of security and preservation of constitutional order."[58]

Seineldín was imprisoned once again in April, 1990 after calling for amnesty for officers and demanding that Menem implement "a national, popular and Catholic program, excluding all imperialisms."[59] His vision for Argentina was a corporatist form of state where the nationalist-authoritarian current of the armed forces would be a central pillar. Two videos began circulating with a scathing appraisal of Menem's administration and talk of the coming "national revolution" by a fully-uniformed Seineldín.[60] SIDE reported that the *carapintadas* were planning another coup attempt in August, with takeovers of army garrisons, radio and TV stations, and public buildings, and seizure of prominent politicians, journalists and other "hostile" individuals.[61] Some journalists were informed that Seineldín had a list of thousands of persons to be eliminated, including many Jews.[62] SIDE's report, made public by Menem officials, stated that *comandos* formed of retired officers and civilians were part of the plotting, supported by unions, business, and government officials (including Menem's estranged wife).[63]

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[57] *Somos* (December 10, 1990) 12.

[58] *New York Times*, April 5, 1990.

[59] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, April 19, 1990.

[60] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, November 22, 1990; *El Diario/La Prensa*, New York, October 22, 1990; *Somos* (December 10, 1990) 12. Argentines spoke of the *carapintadas* as "the parallel army" given the wide support for Seineldín among the troops.

[61] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, September 13, 1990.

[62] Carlos Juvenal, investigative journalist specializing on the military, told the author that Seineldín had stated the need to eliminate the "Marxist-Jewish conspiracy" by killing thousands openly, and said that such a list existed. Interview conducted by author, October 1, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[63] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, September 13, 1990.

Seineldín sent letters to army officers, the press, the head of the army, and directly to Menem. One such letter, written to Menem on October 9, 1990, sharply criticized the army chief-of-staff for alleged discrimination against Seineldín supporters, violation of the 1988 pact (after the third insurrection), and equation of the *carapintadas* with subversives and enemies. This letter also warned:

> "Today, far from unifying itself, the army is even more fractured...[my] final goal is the restoration of our Argentine Army as 'the armed component' ['*brazo armado*,' literally 'armed arm'] of the Fatherland...and the 'safeguard of the highest national interests'...all the conditions are present for events of vindication of such seriousness that neither you nor I could imagine them."[64]

Seineldín was clearly calling for a restoration of the army's traditional role as arbiter of politics and guardian of the nation. He went on to dictate measures to be taken to the civilian president, including "an emergency restructuring, immediately, and a general reorganization, in the short term [of the army]," and--in what seemed a veiled coup threat--warned of "serious acts of vindication" if his advice went unheeded. As articulated by its leader, the discourse of the *carapintada* faction clearly retained many of the values and concepts of the national-security ideology.

Seineldín's attempts to dictate military policy to the civilian commander-in-chief sparked coup rumors throughout the capital. The *carapintadas* also demanded the removal of army chief Bonnet, but it was clear from both their organizing among civilian sectors, and their demands to change the government's social, economic and political policies, that Seineldín and his followers had profoundly *political* objectives.

Given the numbers of *carapintadas* in SIDE, its report of a coming coup may have been part of a PSYOPS deception campaign to instill fear into the government and population. No uprising occurred in August, but in October *Seineldinistas* announced a nation-wide campaign to prevent Menem's return from Europe, calling for a military government until "restricted elections" could be

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[64] Copy of letter obtained by author, dated October 9, 1990.

held.[65]

On December 3, 1990, Seineldín supporters organized a fourth military uprising. A large number of the insurrectionists had been pardoned by Menem in 1989 for joining the third uprising at Villa Martelli. The proximate causes of the uprising were the following: 1) Seineldín and his followers were angry that the *carapintada* leader was being forced to retire by the liberal-internationalist command; this dashed their hopes that Seineldín would become a general, with greater power to influence the army; 2) Menem had not followed through on promises to make Seineldín head of a new drug-interdiction commando;[66] 3) the army chief-of-staff was scheduled to present Menem with a new reorganization plan that very day, which included budget cuts and transfers;[67] 4) President Bush was scheduled to visit Argentina in two days, the first visit by a U.S. president to the country in decades and a clear show of support for Menem. The *Seineldinistas* calculated that Menem would be pressured to negotiate rapidly, given the upcoming visit; and finally, 5) the day of the rebellion was exactly two years after the last uprising by the *carapintadas*.

This rebellion involved some 500 insurrectionists who simultaneously attacked the huge Army Building one block from the *Casa Rosada* and the First Army Corps garrison in the elegant Palermo neighborhood close to the U.S. Embassy. With the capture of these two buildings, the control center of the high command of the army was under the command of the *carapintadas*. Also attacked were the *Prefectura* headquarters, and a tank factory in Boulogne. A column of 12 tanks was also sighted coming toward the capital from Entre Ríos. The insurrectionists included Catholic-

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[65] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, November 20, 1990.

[66] When Menem backed away from this idea, after public objections by the army's liberal-internationalist commanders, Seineldín and his supporters felt betrayed. See "Seineldín retired from active duty; Narc squad post in the offing," *Buenos Aires Herald*, November 2, 1989, and *Herald*, November 29, 1989, when the government cancelled the anti-drug force.

[67] *Wall Street Journal*, December 4, 1990.

nationalist followers of Seineldín from both the army and the *Prefectura's* elite *Albatros* unit--trained by Seineldín during regular cross-military instruction.

A declaration was released on December 3 by the *Seineldinistas* essentially stating their politico-economic program. Its tone was characteristically nationalist and anti-imperialist:

> "...The Army must reconstruct its relation with society, assuming fully its constitutional role...recuperate its past greatness...and at the same time embark upon a profound transformation...We must recognize:
> 1. Some forgot to observe ethical and moral, San Martín-ist conduct. In its place there are proofs of financial immorality and the nationalization of the private external debt.
> 2. The support for a policy and economic scheme contrary to the feelings and necessities of the people...Thus, we have lost the power to make national decisions, to the detriment of the sovereignty of the Republic."[68]

The declaration continued with promises to judge corrupt military officers, to require the Congress to maintain Argentina's traditional policy of neutrality in international affairs,[69] and to terminate the "Gramscian" campaign of discrediting the army before the world and the nation. It concluded by stating that the insurrectionist officers, "in compliance with an inexcusable legal imperative and applying the principle of 'succession of command,' hereby take command of the leadership of the army."[70] The insurrectionists demanded the removal of the army chief-of-staff, Martín Bonnet, to be replaced by Seineldín himself. The document seemed aimed at securing the widest possible civilian support, as well as providing moral and legal justification for the uprising. It demonstrated that the insurrectionists had political as well as institutional aims, and sought to impose their domestic, foreign policy and economic positions upon the government.

The *carapintadas* insisted, as they had always done, that this uprising was purely

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[68] San Martín was a legendary Argentine general who fought for independence from Spain in the early 19th century. This letter was sent--in Ministry of Defense envelopes--to the major press in Buenos Aires. Copy obtained by author, dated December 3, 1990.

[69] This policy was transformed by Menem during the Gulf War, as we have seen.

[70] *Seineldinista* document, op.cit.

institutional, internal, and military in nature. However, this explanation was roundly rejected by all sectors of Argentine society and much of international opinion. As before, this rationale was partially a calculated attempt to circumvent the severe penalties for attempted coups and face more lenient penalties for the lesser crime of rebellion. Claiming that the insurrection was internal also allowed the insurrectionists to maintain the posture that they were not violating the constitution, but were in fact patriots fighting a corrupt leadership.[71]

Bonnet himself contradicted the *carapintadas'* claims, stating that the insurrection had as its objective a coup d'etat and not simply an institutional protest.[72] Menem agreed, and his brother, head of the Peronist Party, said the proof was that the intelligence services had notified the government of a top-secret "hit-list" including Menem, Peronist Congressmen Miguel Angel Toma and José Luis Manzano, and Radicals Storani and former Interior Minister Nosiglia.[73]

Menem reacted strongly to the fourth insurrection. He rejected three attempts by the *golpistas* to negotiate, and angrily stated that a group of entrepreneurs opposed to his free market policies and ending of state subsidies to businesses had financed the rebellion.[74] If true, this, ironically, represented the classic right-wing Peronist coalition of the nationalist faction of the army and national capital, united in opposition to liberal-rightists. The army, along with units of the navy

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[71] In an interview with *Gente* magazine Rico was questioned about his commitment to the Constitution. He said pointedly that his rebellions were "*sublevaciones*" (uprisings or rebellions) and not "against the Constitution. I was not judged for trying to alter the constitutional order..." He also stated that he aspired to be president. *Gente* #1415 (September 1992). *Somos* notes that under the Military Code of Justice, "rebellion" is a lesser crime than "mutiny with spilling of blood" which allows a death sentence. *Somos* (July 7, 1991) 16.

[72] *El Diario/La Prensa* (New York) December 7, 1990.

[73] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, December 27, 1990. It was unclear if this was the same list alluded to earlier.

[74] *El Diario/La Prensa*, December 7, 1990. According to Radical and union sources, persons linked to oil company YPF and cement company Fortabat funded the *carapintadas*. Interviews conducted by author with Radical and union sources, June 25, 1992 and April 28, 1992, Buenos Aires.

and air force, put down the rebellion after hours of fighting. Air force bombardment stopped the tank column, and heavy artillery fire forced the surrender of the insurrectionists inside the Palermo garrison. Some 200 people were wounded and 21 killed in the crossfire, including passengers who were killed when a tank smashed into a public bus near the Plaza de Mayo.[75]

Many observers of the national scene contended that the defeat of the *carapintada* forces in this last rebellion was decisive, and that their power was finally broken. Other observers dissent, arguing that the right-wing, nationalist, messianic philosophy of Seineldín and his followers still strikes deep chords in the military. Seineldín was cashiered from the army and sentenced to military prison "in perpetuity." Yet further evidence of Seineldín's political project appeared almost immediately. Seineldín received numerous visits in his detention quarters by civilian and military nationalists. In October of 1992, *Seineldinistas* organized a meeting of politicized and disaffected officers and civilians in Buenos Aires.[76] An anonymous announcement informed journalists that a new civil-military movement was being launched, to include officers from all over the Americas, including *carapintadas*. The meeting would be addressed by Seineldín by tape-recorded message.[77] Venezuelan *golpista* officers--who participated in a coup attempt in that country earlier in the year--were among those who sent greetings of solidarity.[78]

The movement, called Movement for National Identity and Ibero-American Integration, took place on October 3, 1992, attracting more than 600 persons. Seineldín was elected president despite his imprisonment, and messages of greeting were sent by Manuel Noriega and Lyndon LaRouche.

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[75] See Buenos Aires press coverage, December 3 and 4, 1990.

[76] See coverage in *Página/12*, October 4, 1992.

[77] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 26, 1992.

[78] Interview with Julio Villalonga, investigative journalist, conducted by author in Buenos Aires, October 16, 1992. See also Maria O'Donnell, "Carapintadas del mundo, uníos," *Página/12*, June 10, 1993. The next month, Venezuelan *golpista* officers attempted a second coup in that country.

LaRouche's organization maintained close contact with Seineldín in prison, and reportedly helped fund his political organizing. The tone of the meeting was heavily religious; journalists described it as a fusion of right-wing Catholicism and Islamic fundamentalism. Also in 1992, Seineldín's organization released a document called "Synthesis of the global strategy 'New Order' to be imposed in the Iberian-American nations."[79] This document confirmed the political ambitions and goals of Seineldín and his followers. Lending weight to the view that the *carapintada* uprisings were a political enterprise *from the beginning*, the document argued that "the actions that have occurred since Holy Week in 1987 in all the region [e.g., in Latin America] have been insufficient, because they failed to attack the true causes, that is, the source of the crisis; they have only delayed the effects [of the crisis], but have not stopped or overcome it."[80] This document seemed to predict new, perhaps larger *carapintada*-style uprisings.

In May 1993, the Buenos Aires press reported that the *carapintadas* had opened a news agency in Uruguay, equipped with modern computer technology and staffed by well-known Peronists.[81] Another scandal shook Buenos Aires in June 1993 when Congressional Deputy Alfredo Bravo denounced a conspiracy against democracy being planned by the *carapintadas* and civilian allies, led by Seineldín. Bravo charged that from his military prison cell, Seineldín continued to organize an international *carapintada* movement. Backed by other deputies, Bravo demanded an investigation by the executive branch. Also in June, Seineldín's organization held a semi-public congress in the Hotel Bristol in Buenos Aires and released a document calling for "the advance of

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[79] "Síntheis del proyecto mundialista 'Nuevo Orden' para ser impuesto en las naciones iberoamericanas" is discussed in Alberto Dearriba, "Los carapintada se organizan," *Página/12*, June 8, 1993.

[80] Ibid. The document seems to refer to military uprisings in Haiti (a coup occurred in 1991), Venezuela (1992) and possibly the executive-military auto-coup in Peru (1992).

[81] Alejandra Rey, "Agencia *carapintada* en Uruguay," *Página/12*, May 9, 1993.

the national revolution" and the expansion of a rightist-nationalist civil-military organization.[82] The press reported that Seineldín's organization invited military men from Peru, Panama, and Venezuela and retired officers and other allies from Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Chile and other countries.[83]

Press reports also revealed that both Seineldín's "cell" and that of his right-hand man, Gustavo Breide Obeid, were equipped with a computer, printers, and a phone. Moreover, the *carapintadas* had received some 344 (illegal) visits from prominent right-wing figures including government officials, right-wing journalists, religious leaders, active-duty intelligence officers and military officers both active and retired. Bravo released an organizational chart of Seineldín's organization which showed it had both military and political wings; the chart was reprinted in the press.[84] The Defense Minister, Oscar Camilión, was summoned to appear before Congress to discuss Seineldín's network of political contacts and the potential for destabilization of the democratic system.[85]

Seineldín was clearly directing the organization of a civil-military movement with political objectives, although the actual depth of its support was difficult to determine. Given this organization's international network, however, and its links with messianic military officers from other Latin American countries, the existence of this organization was at least potentially destabilizing for democracy.

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[82] Alberto Dearriba, "Salvadores de la Patria," *Página/12*, June 16, 1993.

[83] Marcelo Helfgot, "Preparan una internacional carapintada," *Clarín*, April 17, 1993.

[84] Alberto Dearriba, "Los *carapintadas* se organizan," *Página/12*, June 8, 1993. See also María O'Donnell, "Seineldín sigue con visitas en Magdalena," *Página/12*, July 22, 1993, "Violaciones de Seineldín a reglamento carcelario," *Página/12*, June 8, 1993, and "Bunker de Seineldín," *Página/12*, June 10, 1993; Armando Vidal, "Los diputados denuncian a Seineldín," *Clarín*, June 7, 1993; Marcelo Helfgot, "Preparan una internacional *carapintada*," *Clarín*, April 17, 1993 for a sampling of articles.

[85] "Camilión va a Diputados por Seineldín," *Clarín*, June 9, 1993. Camilión was appointed by Menem to replace Ermán Gonzales; the former was Foreign Minister during the latter part of the *Proceso*.

Prerogatives Returned to the Armed Forces

Despite the fourth uprising, which provided hard evidence that pardoned military *golpistas* returned to commit new seditious acts, the president pardoned the convicted *junta* leaders of the *Proceso* just two weeks later. This move generated massive demonstrations in Buenos Aires in a so-called "day of mourning,"[86] and raised a storm of international criticism. Argentina's delegate to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Julio Strassera, resigned in protest.[87] Human rights organizations condemned the pardon as part of a bargain with the armed forces and an example of institutional impunity. Menem's popularity plummeted to its lowest point in early 1991, to below 20%.[88]

Immediately, *Proceso* ex-president Jorge Videla made several political statements to the press indicating his defiant rejection of the system of civilian justice and stubborn vindication of the dirty war. Menem angrily warned him in public to cease such statements, which further undercut the president's authority and credibility. In January 1991, a poll showed that 63% of the population thought Argentina's main problem was not economic, but "moral."[89]

Menem continued with his unobtrusive return of military prerogatives to the armed forces. In 1991 Menem brought a retired general into his administration as Under-Secretary of Science and Scientific and Technological Research *(Sub-secretaría de Ciencia y de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas)*, a new policy-making branch within the Defense Ministry created that year to

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[86] Defense Minister González said on television that the government was "preoccupied" by the great number of people who went into the streets to demonstrate against the pardons. Menem immediately denied this. *Somos*, #745 (January 7, 1991) 8.

[87] *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, February 7, 1991.

[88] *New York Times*, February 16, 1992.

[89] Poll by Nudelman Bass, February 2, 1991, cited in *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone*, February 7, 1991.

revitalize Argentina's technological and scientific research. This general was deeply involved in development projects during the military regimes of the 1960s and 70s.[90] In 1992, the president returned the task of airport security to the air force,[91] provoking unrest within the *Gendarmería*, which had received the job in 1984 from Alfonsín. Also in 1992, the president returned port security to the navy as well as the task of policing the sea.[92] Alfonsín had given this job to the *Prefectura* in 1984 as part of the attempt to reduce the security role of the navy in Buenos Aires. According to high-ranking Radicals, the Peronists in Congress also blocked Radical reforms of the armed forces, including a bill to open up and civilianize the education system of the military.[93]

Menem also returned expansive powers to the intelligence organizations. In September 1992 SIDE sent a bill to Congress, sponsored by Miguel Angel Toma, Peronist Congressman, which would allow it to monitor phones without judicial authorization. Head of SIDE Hugo Anzorregui said he had Menem's backing for this. A minister of the executive branch, unnamed, also told the press that if the law failed to pass Congress, the government was "already seeking other alternatives to obtain the same result, because it is necessary to have a juridical mechanism to permit the surveillance of telephones without the interference of judges."[94] As promised, when Congressional opposition arose, Menem decreed to SIDE the right to tap telephones without judicial authorization (Decree 1801/92), overturning another reform of the Alfonsín era, later that month.[95] With this decree, Menem significantly loosened civilian controls on the intelligence apparatus, thus increasing

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[90] Information from confidential source, Buenos Aires, August, 1992.

[91] *Clarín*, January 4, 1992, 6.

[92] Interview with Senator Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen, May 11, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[93] Interviews conducted by author with Radical Deputy Conrado Storani, Jr., September 16, 1992, and Eduardo Estévez, Congressional aide, September 17, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[94] *Página/12*, September 9, 1992.

[95] *Clarín*, October 8, 1992.

its political autonomy. Menem also spoke publicly about the need to "vindicate the intelligence services," and increased the number of military officers appointed to SIDE.[96]

The conflict over the Cóndor II missile project demonstrated that the military institution continued to defy civilian authority--including the president's--on foreign-policy issues. The Cóndor II missile was a high-technology ballistic missile system originally developed secretly by Argentina in coordination with Egypt and Iraq beginning in the late 1970s. Apparently Alfonsín had secretly authorized this clandestine military project via two decrees in 1985 and 1987.[97] The U.S. government strongly protested the development of the technology beginning in 1987, especially concerned about the possible use of the missile by Iraq.[98] In April 1990, Menem agreed to halt the project, and in May 1991, he gave permission to U.S. observers to inspect Falda del Carmen, the secret site of the Cóndor. However, air force officials refused to allow an unimpeded inspection and insisted no such project existed.[99] Other high-ranking officers made public political statements condemning the civilian government's decision.[100] This implied that military officers believed their assessment of national security and foreign policy objectives--unlike the president's--represented the true interests of the nation. This case was another example of the armed forces functioning as judges

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[96] Interviews with Carlos Juvenal, October 2, 1992 and José Manuel Ugarte, October 9, 1992, Buenos Aires. See also *La Nación*, August 7, 1992, when Menem inaugurated a new strategic security course for intelligence service officers and called for vindication of the intelligence services.

[97] Evidence to this effect is presented in Eduardo Barcelona and Julio Villalonga, *Relaciones Carnales: Cóndor II* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1992). Cited also in *Clarín*, March 1, 1992.

[98] "The Cóndor is Grounded," *The Economist*, June 8, 1991, 48. See also Fraga, *La Cuestión...*, op.cit., 67.

[99] *New York Times*, May 13, 1991.

[100] For example, the former chief of the air force (1984-1989) said bitterly that to cede to the pressures of the United States made Argentina into a banana republic. The head of the air force argued that the project should not be dismantled but converted into other uses (some called for his arrest for such defiant statements). See Julio Villalonga, "Menem y las fuerzas armadas," in Atilio Borón et al, *El Menemato: Radiografía de dos años de gobierno de Carlos Menem* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Letra Buena S.A., 1991) 230-231.

and tutors of civilian politics and government policies, and guardians of Argentina's destiny.

The project had been blocked by the U.S. during the Malvinas war,[101] but military officers from the three countries surreptitiously continued their attempts to develop the surface-to-surface missile, buying technology overseas and utilizing dummy corporations. The armed forces raised their own secret funds to finance the project.[102] Although Defense Minister Erman González announced again on May 28, 1991 that the Cóndor would be rendered totally inoperable and dismantled,[103] the controversy surfaced again in 1992, when it was revealed that the Cóndor project had not been disactivated and was still being protected by the air force.[104]

In September 1992, Menem decreed the creation of a new structure for the high command of the armed forces: the *Comité de Jefes de Estados Mayores* (COMJEM), the Committee of the Chiefs of General Staffs. The committee was created by Decree 1379 and included the three chiefs of the armed forces and the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was given a role as part of the Committee of Crisis, established by the Defense Law, to be convened in situations of emergency. The plan also created a new post as president of the committee.[105] *This position was virtually a vice minister of defense* and gave the military a voice in defense and security policy-making.

The creation of this post was opposed by civilian Defense Minister González, who saw it

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[101] According to one officer interviewed, the system was inoperable because in the early 80s the U.S. blocked the import of the necessary guidance system technology. Interview with retired navy intelligence officer conducted by author, August 26, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[102] *New York Times*, May 13, 1991.

[103] *New York Times*, May 30, 1991.

[104] *Clarín*, August 20, 1992, 22.

[105] Menem endowed air force brigadier Andrés Antonietti, a close friend and protegé, with the post, bypassing normal seniority procedures of the armed forces. This created ruffled feathers and subdued protests among the officer corps; Defense Minister González also expressed disagreement with Menem's choice. *Buenos Aires Herald*, August 31, 1992; *Clarín*, September 22, 1992.

as rivaling his own function.[106] Overall the plan increased the role of the military in defense policy-making; Alfonsín had rejected a similar plan in 1984. The COMIJEM also gave more power to its military head than any one officer had possessed since the return to democracy in 1983. The head of the COMIJEM was the nexus between the executive and the armed forces, between military decisions and government strategies. He was entitled to make arms purchases and investment decisions. In short, this one officer had more power than the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Since the officer he appointed, Andrés Antonietti, was a *Menemista*, Menem was increasing his control over the armed forces in the short term. However, in the long term the new structure expanded military participation in formerly civilian functions, and set the stage for potential conflicts of legal power between the civilian and military realms.[107]

Manipulating Fear: Menem's Use of the Military Threat

In June 1992, Menem again faced growing social unrest as a result of his neoliberal economic policies. Protest demonstrations confronting presidential speeches in Salta (June 1992) and Jujuy (June 1992) were repressed by hundreds of riot police. Demonstrations of teachers, students and parents protesting the disintegration of the public education system began to occur on a weekly basis in Buenos Aires, growing increasingly more militant. The demonstrators demanded the government invest more in public education and raise the salaries of teachers.[108] One

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[106] *Página/12*, September 2, 1992.

[107] For example, article 3 of the decree blurred lines of responsibility between COMIJEM and the Defense Minister by giving COMIJEM the following function: "establishment of priorities for the acquisition of necessary means to satisfy the operational requirements of the Armed Forces and the Security Forces, emerging from Joint Military Planning, assisting the Minister of Defense..." Cited in *Clarín*, October 22, 1992. The Defense Minister and COMIJEM head Antonietti battled publicly regarding whether to buy U.S. planes which the latter thought were obsolete.

[108] Teachers earned about 150-300 pesos a month at this time, which was roughly equivalent to the same amount in dollars. The monthly cost of living was four or five times that amount (estimated by the author, who was living in Buenos Aires that year.) By comparison, an army corporal earned $467 and a general

demonstration in late June drew 100,000 people, and after this Menem issued a warning which sent shock waves throughout the country. Menem said publicly that a former ERP guerrilla

> "is behind the activities of some sectors in Argentina. Don't send your children to the streets because they might become victims of these subversives...Be careful...or we may end up with another contingent of the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo clamoring for their children."[109]

Menem's warning, widely condemned as a naked threat of another dirty war, was quickly "explained" by the Minister of the Interior, the Justice Minister, and the governor of Buenos Aires, all of whom denied that there was any "subversion" in the capital. The Secretary for the Struggle Against Narcotrafficking was the only government functionary to support Menem's thesis. He stated that Menem had recently received "precise reports" about the activities of subversive groups and the possibility of a "subversive resurgence."[110] Menem's manipulation of the underlying fear in the country was effective. After his statement, participation in the demonstrations dropped off sharply.

Whether by coincidence or not, two weeks later (on July 23, 1992) the *Ley de Seguridad Interior* was "reglamented" [that is, officially regulated and specified] with little publicity, giving the armed forces, "in exceptional cases," a role in internal security. The day after Menem's "infiltration" statement, the press reported that the Internal Security Council created by this law would meet *that day*, despite the fact that the law was not yet reglamented. The government would not reveal whether the hypothesis of a subversive resurgence would be on its agenda.[111]

The Internal Security Law had established the formation of a Congressional committee to oversee the intelligence organizations and exercise civilian control of domestic security functioning.

$3037. Eduardo Barcelona, "El sueño de un ejército full-time," *Página/12*, April 26, 1992.

[109] Gabriela Cerruti, "Cazafantasmas Parte III" *Página/12*, July 10, 1992, 2.

[110] *Clarín*, July 14, 1992.

[111] Ibid.

However, Radical legislators complained in late 1992 that formation of the committee was being blocked in the Senate by Menem's forces.[112] Furthermore, the armed forces were exerting intense pressure upon Menem to obstruct civilian oversight. In April 1992, Joint Chiefs head Admiral Emilio Ossés sent a memorandum to Interior Minister Manzano "suggesting" that the reglamentation of the Internal Security Law "circumscribe the attributes of the Legislative Branch regarding the intelligence organizations" and limit its authority.[113] According to Radical sources, the Defense Law as well was still facing resistance from the armed forces, manifested by pressures upon the executive branch.[114] This situation provided more evidence that the armed forces continued to resist the requirement of the Defense Law to confine their role to external defense. One Congressman said,

> "The Internal Security Law sets up for the first time a parliamentary commission for controlling the intelligence services. But what happens? The law is sanctioned, promulgated. And we in Congress have asked for the setting up of the commission. But after a year, it hasn't been constituted. Not for our lack of trying, but rather due to the pressure being imposed by the armed forces on *oficialismo*. We think by the end of this year, this commission should be set up...and it will have broad powers. It can be sure that no wiretap of telephones, interference in private life happens without current judicial authorization, for example. In terms of internal themes. In terms of external themes, with the legal checks that correspond...but in no form will it permit any type of political operation, internal operation for political ends."[115]

Menem's decree authorizing SIDE to monitor telephones without judicial approval--which occurred just after this interview--seemed to be aimed at neutralizing in advance the oversight power of the still-unconstituted parliamentary commission. Another Radical source confirmed that the

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[112] The commission was finally established in July 1993.

[113] Eduardo Barcelona, "Seguridad interior no se toca," *Página/12*, April 2, 1992.

[114] Interviews conducted by author with Conrado Storani, Jr., Radical Deputy, September 16, 1992, and José Manuel Ugarte, Congressional aide, October 9, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[115] Interview with Conrado Storani, Jr. conducted by author, September 16, 1992, Buenos Aires.

government was attempting to put obstacles in the way of forming the commission and give expanded powers to SIDE in advance.[116]

Greater Military Insertion into the Judicial Branch

There were indications that military ambitions to reverse the reform of the Military Code of Justice--bitterly resented by the armed forces since its passage in 1984, but widely hailed as a major democratic reform by many sectors of civil society--would bear fruit during the Menem administration. There were many signs in late 1992 that the military was strongly pressuring the government to select certain judges for a new court system, called the *Cámara de Casación*, inaugurated by the only Radical Minister in Menem's administration, León Arslanián. This court, part of a judicial reform modernizing Argentina's legal system,[117] was to be the most powerful court after the Supreme Court, and was the brainchild of Arslanián, who had participated in the trials of the *juntas* as a judge. He unveiled the court and then resigned as Minister of Justice.

Arslanián made known his concern that too many clients of the president were being nominated as possible judges by the executive branch, including Juan Romero Victorica, a right-wing Peronist with close ties to the military.[118] Arslanián was also frustrated with the Supreme Court and presidential chief of staff Eduardo Bauzá, expressing doubt that the corruption charges against

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[116] Interview with José Manuel Ugarte conducted by author, October 9, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[117] In January 1992, Congress approved Law 24,050, a reform to the penal code which established oral and public trials for the first time in the country's history. It also strongly curbed police authority when making arrests and safeguarded the rights of the victims.

[118] In a case widely seen as government-inspired persecution of critical journalists, Romero Victorica had brought a case against journalist Horacio Verbitsky, accusing him of masterminding the Born kidnapping by the Montoneros in the mid-1970s. Due to public opposition, Menem could not name Romero Victorica as a judge of the new court. However, he appointed him chief prosecutor.

"Yomagate" judge María Servini de Cubría would be pursued.[119] Another reason for the resignation was that the Economy Ministry provided only $30 million of the $430 million needed for implementing the reform.

When Arslanián resigned, all the secretaries, under-secretaries and directors of the Justice Ministry also turned in their resignations. Arslanián told Menem the department opposed the hand-picked appointment of new judges for the new public system.[120] Former *junta* Prosecutor Julio Strassera and many other professional associations and individuals also criticized Menem's choice of Romero Victorica and other nominees.[121] The Buenos Aires Bar Association called Romero Victorica "ethically and politically unfit in view of his having publicly sided with state terrorism and on numerous occasions defending its instigators, especially ex-General Ramón Camps."[122] Spokesmen for Arslanián said he was suggested by a Supreme Court judge who acted as a voice for the armed forces.[123] The daily *Página/12* published the backgrounds of all the nominees, revealing that many were functionaries or judges during the *Proceso*.[124] Again, these events demonstrated

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[119] The "Yomagate" case originated in Spain when a Panamanian caught in a drug raid said high aides to Menem were involved in an international money-laundering conspiracy. Amira Yoma, Menem's Appointments Secretary and the sister of his wife, was questioned on suspicion of money-laundering, as was her former husband, Ibrahim al-Ibrahim, a former Syrian colonel who was a senior customs officer at Ezeiza airport. See Nathaniel C. Nash, "A Drug Scandal Embroils Argentina's President," *New York Times*, August 7, 1991. In another twist to the case, in 1992 Judge Servini de Cubría (in charge of the case) was mildly sanctioned for revealing evidence to the family and otherwise acting unprofessionally. *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 6, 1992.

[120] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 7, 1992.

[121] Strassera said: "Political favors are being paid with appointments that are really a disgrace...Romero Victorica has no academic background. But further, he is strongly suspected of being vulnerable to Executive Power pressure...the government is inexorably advancing toward authoritarianism." *Página/12*, September 6, 1992.

[122] *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 6, 1992.

[123] *Página/12*, September 6, 1992.

[124] See, for example, *Página/12*, October 4 and 11, 1992.

that democratic sectors resisted the imposition of a guardian system.

It became clear that the armed forces were pressuring Menem and other civilian allies to name judges to the new court who would be sympathetic to military interests. The overriding reason for this seemed to be that the armed forces envisioned the establishment of the *Cámara de Casación* as the first step in a gradual process of reversing the despised Military Code reform of the early Alfonsín years.

A prominent retired judge explained the nuances of the situation, which he described as a major and ominous concession to the armed forces.[125] The central function of this superior court system was to resolve conflicting juridical rulings and interpretations of law among the 30-odd lower courts in the capital and other federal penal courts in the nation. The Military Code was to be used in cases of military men accused of common crimes in this new civilian court, but more importantly, the new penal code transferred the Alfonsín-era automatic civilian appeals mechanism from the Federal Appeals Courts to the new court.

In other words, the new law established that only the *Cámara de Casación* was the site for the automatic civilian review of military cases, thus centralizing this function and removing it from the numerous federal courts. *All* military cases would be reviewed by this court, giving the armed forces a compelling reason to pressure Menem regarding the selection of judges. This judge confirmed that Menem was naming judges very close to the military and judges from the most right-wing and authoritarian sectors of Peronism. Confirmation by the Senate was required, but the Senate was dominated by *Menemistas*.

An army source confirmed to the author that military jockeying for a role in the choosing of judges for the new court was the first step leading to the expected reversal of the Military Code

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[125] Interview with Jorge Torlasco conducted by author, October 13, 1992, Buenos Aires.

reform of 1984.[126] He expressed confidence that the hated reform would be overturned by the Menem administration, but gradually, and that the new Court was an interim step.

Unease was widespread in the legal profession concerning the *Cámara de Casación* due to the violation of the principle of separation of powers. Protests were voiced about the intervention of the executive (aligned with the military) in the justice system. Theoretically the Magistrates Association was solely responsible for the initial selection of judges. On September 22, when the new Justice Minister Jorge Maiorano presented the initial list of 18 candidates to Menem, seven judges resigned in protest due to the method used to choose the judges.[127]

In April 1993, Menem named an active-duty military officer as secretary of the *Cámara de Casación*,[128] an officer who immediately began the process of requesting retirement from the army. This development added further weight to the suspicion that the military sought to exercise control over this new court, with the collusion of the Menem administration. The ex-major was a close associate of the chief of the Joint Chiefs, suggesting that the military as an institution would gain strategic influence within the constitutional court system. Again, this suggested the consolidation of military power within civilian institutions and the solidifying of its guardian capabilities.

U.S. Stress on Drug Interdiction

There was much discussion in 1992 in Argentina about the U.S. objective of creating a transnational inter-American force to maintain democracies and fight drug-trafficking in the

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[126] Interview with active-duty officer conducted by author, September 24, 1992, Buenos Aires. He vehemently stressed the aggravation and disruption experienced within the armed forces due to this reform, which was considered an unwarranted intrusion by civilians into the military system of discipline and law—essentially, into their separate legal system. A navy officer (interviewed separately) offered similar criticisms. Interview with retired navy officer conducted by author, September 22, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[127] *Buenos Aires Herald*, September 23, 1992.

[128] "Un militar en la Casación," *Página/12*, April 8, 1993.

hemisphere.[129] In Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, the Pentagon had sent military advisers and troop contingents to assist the armed forces in drug interdiction[130] during the 1980s. The U.S. prescription for a military role in drug-interdiction appeared to conflict with Argentina's domestic laws by providing a new rationale for internal security functions. The Argentine military seemed to be resisting such a role as a primary mission, despite clear U.S. pressure, in 1992. This resistance suggested some suspicion of U.S. motives. During the Malvinas war the armed forces felt the U.S. government reneged on its Rio Pact commitments; the U.S. was also resented for encouraging military regimes and then abandoning them. Furthermore, some sectors of the armed forces saw drug interdiction as a police job, beneath the honor and position of the armed forces.

U.S. pressure was evident in October 1991 during an address by Ambassador Terence Todman to military and civilian intelligence officers in a conference at the Argentine National School of Intelligence. He offered an implicit and at times explicit rationale for an internal security role for the armed forces. After speaking of the new world order and the collapse of communism, Todman listed a series of key changes in the current world situation, such as the collapse of communist ideology and the dominance of free-market ideology, which reduced "the importance of ideological battles."[131] Todman spoke of the importance of democratic systems, in which "the

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[129] See, for example, *Clarín* special supplement July 23, 1992.

[130] Many analysts acknowledged that in practice U.S. drug-interdiction efforts often merged with counterinsurgency campaigns and objectives. Furthermore, often U.S.-supported governments, armed forces and irregular armies were themselves involved in drug-trafficking, as in Central America, Afghanistan, Bolivia, Haiti, Panama, Peru and Colombia. See, for example, Richard L. Berke, "Foreign Policy Hurt Drug War, Senators Say," *New York Times*, April 14, 1989; James LeMoyne, "Military Officers in Honduras Are Linked to the Drug Trade," *New York Times*, February 12, 1988; Richard L. Berke, "Bennett Calls Use of Army Possible," *New York Times*, September 9, 1989; and Michael Klare, "Fighting Drugs with the Military," *The Nation*, January 1, 1990, 8-12. For an analytical assessment of U.S. policy, see Coletta Youngers, "The War in the Andes: The Military Role in U.S. International Drug Policy," *WOLA Briefing Series: Issues in International Drug Policy*, Briefing No. 2 (December 14, 1990).

[131] Published as Terence A. Todman, "Los servicios de inteligencia en los sistemas democráticos," *Revista de la Escuela Nacional de Inteligencia*, V. 1 #1 (1st semester, 1992) 49.

recognition of the role of the people in decisions regarding their destiny" was paramount. However, his ninth and tenth points listing "current dangers" sent a mixed message:

> "9. The growing threat of narcotraffickers and the capacity and desire of those involved in this traffic, to the point of whatever extreme, to ruin legitimate governments and impose their will;
> 10. The continuation of the threats of terrorists and subversives with their own goals and with the cruelty to attack wherever the opportunity presents itself, including objectives outside their own borders.
> ...the fundamental point is that whatever the form might be...*the democratic governments will continue needing a national strategic intelligence capability in order to defend their sovereignty from external and internal enemies* [emphasis added]..."[132]

Todman later reiterated in the speech the importance of an intelligence capacity to defend national sovereignty against "external and internal enemies." Using phraseology recalling cold war oversimplifications, Todman urged the cooperation of national intelligence services of different countries in the fight between "democratic countries" and "narcotrafficking and international terrorism."[133] He also referred again to the importance of sharing information "on extremist domestic groups."[134]

While stating that this did not mean using intelligence for political purposes, Todman's message carried an ambiguous meaning, for later he emphasized that "the establishment of special covert operations against extremist domestic groups and external enemies [are]...the most controversial"[135] and that in the United States, proper oversight by Congress was required. Todman then seemed to undercut this call for accountability by stating, "Given the highly politicized nature of legislative organs in a democracy, we have understood that it is better to limit reports on

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[132] Ibid, 50.

[133] Todman, ibid, 51; *supra* footnote 130: often U.S. allies in so-called democratic countries have been themselves involved in narcotrafficking.

[134] Ibid., 52.

[135] Ibid.

the activities of intelligence to those few *pre-selected members* of the legislature, and their key assistants...[persons] mature and responsible..."[136] [emphasis added]

Several civilian political figures asserted to the author that U.S. pressure upon the Argentine armed forces to assume the role of drug interdiction was producing a very negative effect in the struggle to transform the armed forces' national-security focus on domestic politics and internal security.[137] There were fears that offers of substantial funds might again prove too tempting to resist. While military spokesmen continued to reject a primary role as drug-interdictors in 1992, except as suppliers of logistical assistance to the *Gendarmería* and police, the fusion of the concepts of *terrorism* and *narcotrafficking* signified that the armed forces could still justify internal security and intelligence against citizens with the rationale of drug interdiction. At least as early as 1987, military representatives from most countries in the hemisphere, present at the Conference of the American Armies, had discussed this fusion, citing *Sendero Luminoso* of Peru as the prototype.[138]

Conclusion

As noted earlier, some analysts argue that the armed forces today are no longer a political actor, and are significantly less powerful due to budget cutbacks.[139] It is the case that reductions in funds have led many lower-ranking officers to hold second jobs. The number of conscripts has been cut back, and exercises and training have been curtailed. The army is carrying out a

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[136] Ibid., 54.

[137] Interviews conducted by author with high-ranking Radical functionary, July 8, 1992, and with José Manuel Ugarte, October 9, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[138] See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the Conferences of American Armies, especially the 1987 meeting in Buenos Aires.

[139] For a discussion of the impact of budget cutbacks on the armed forces, see Eduardo Barcelona, "El sueño de un ejército full time," *Página/12*, April 26, 1992.

restructuring by consolidating its bases in various parts of the country. There are fewer public political declarations by military officers.

Despite these developments, this author takes a more cautious, and perhaps more pessimistic, view. As shown in this chapter, there is substantial evidence that the armed forces continue to wield power *within* the government, in an authoritarian alliance with Menem, and that they provide him with a crucial base of support. Open hostility and political attacks on the government like those against the Alfonsín administration have largely ceased, but the evidence suggests that the reason for this is the sense of shared interests between the military-as-institution and the Menem government. Significantly, the Cóndor II incident--which did generate open public protests and defiant, autonomous behavior by the air force--was one of the few times Menem disregarded the demands of the military (responding to U.S. demands instead). Moreover, while budget cuts have indeed caused complaints and difficulties within the armed forces, defense still receives more funds than the education and culture, health and social action, and justice ministries combined.[140] This indicates the priorities of the government. Further, both Alfonsín and Menem regularly raised the salaries of the officer corps, in contrast to other sectors such as teachers, retired people, and other workers.

Under Menem, the armed forces have a larger voice in policy-making, as we have seen. A military officer serves as a functional vice minister of defense, and military officers (active or retired) serve in government intelligence posts, Interior Ministry and other positions, and as government aides. The military has active links with and channels to *Menemista* Congressional representatives and the executive branch. The armed forces also have close contacts with the prosecutor and many of the judges of the *Cámara de Casación*; a recently retired officer is secretary to this new court. More importantly, the national-security values and objectives of the armed forces

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[140] Eduardo Blanco, "El poder militar: el promedio histórico del gasto militar supera el 15 por ciento de los recursos públicos," *La Maga* (January 6, 1993). He notes that the armed forces receive for their institutions a sum ten times that designated for scientific investigation for the entire country.

have been echoed by the president himself, who has supported a military internal security role in speeches and via executive decrees. Menem has granted greater latitude to SIDE: he loosened civilian controls on the intelligence body and authorized it to intervene telephones without judicial permission.

Thus, the Menem government has publicly reinforced the position that the armed forces should have an internal security mission and a domestic intelligence function. While the Menem government is diversifying the mission of the armed forces (such as the inclusion of troops in UN peace-keeping operations),[141] it also enacted Decree 392, legalizing a hypothesis of internal conflict for the armed forces. The Menem government also used its allies in Congress to block reform of the military (such as the education reform proposed by the Radicals) and obstruct civilian oversight of the armed forces (the constitution of a citizen review board of the intelligence apparatuses).

Finally, the armed forces are pleased with Menem because he pardoned the officers indicted for the first three insurrections and human rights violations, as well as the *Proceso* commanders convicted of presiding over the dirty war. These pardons set back the struggle to hold military officers legally accountable to civilian justice and sent a meaningful signal to the armed forces and society. Some of these officers went on to participate in another insurrection against the government, in December 1990. Others went on to organize political followings and reintegrate themselves within Argentina's political process. Former *Proceso* functionaries began to appear in public. For example, on the 1993 anniversary of the March 1976 coup that installed the *Proceso*, former junta member Roberto Viola made a declaration on radio for the first time since his pardon,

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[141] However, in public statements armed forces' spokesmen categorize peace-keeping as a "secondary" and not a primary mission.

saying "there was no state terrorism" and that even Alfonsín had not opposed the 1976 coup.[142] Osvaldo Cacciatore, the air force officer who was designated mayor of Buenos Aires during the *Proceso*, ran for legislative office in Buenos Aires on the Ucedé ticket in October 1993.[143] Former commander of the Third Army Corps, Luciano B. Menéndez, appeared on the official podium during a holiday in Córdoba July 6, 1993.[144] Former *junta* members Emilio Massera and Jorge Isaac Anaya appeared on the podium during the official swearing-in of a new navy chief-of-staff in July 1993. Similarly, former *Proceso* junta members Basilio Lami Dozo and Rubens Grafigna took part in the formal ceremony for the new air force commander in July.[145] These appearances by the former commanders of the *Proceso* stirred fear in the population and provided a graphic illustration of the continuity between the national-security state and the armed forces under Menem.

As suggested by the military statements in this chapter, national-security values and norms continue to permeate military thinking and planning. New "hypotheses of conflict" focused on drug interdiction and "narco-subversives" provided an incentive and a rationale to continue internal intelligence, internal security and counterinsurgency-style operations within the national territory. The promotion and financing of this role by the U.S. government have reinforced the sense of guardianship of the civilian population.[146] Moreover, there was evidence of a continued tendency

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[142] "Polémica entre Balza y Viola por el '76," *Clarín*, March 25, 1993. Army chief-of-staff Balza countered by saying publicly that the army now had "incorporated culturally the concept of unrestricted respect for the continuity of republican institutions." However, he did not express support for *democracy* per se.

[143] "Cacciatore: 'Siempre fui un demócrata," *Clarín*, July 12, 1993.

[144] "Menéndez, un colado y posible candidato," *Página/12*, July 13, 1993. The governor and other officials insisted he was not invited.

[145] "Massera volvió a escena," *Página/12*, July 14, 1993; "Asumió Molina Pico y ya reclamó," *Clarín*, July 14, 1993; and José M. Pasquini Durán, "Al revés," *Página/12*, July 24, 1993.

[146] For example, semi-secret joint commando training operations were carried out in September 1993 in the province of Misiones, involving U.S. and Argentine army troops, near the borders with Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. All three armed forces in Argentina participated in other joint operations with U.S. forces. See Stella Calloni, "Maniobras militares conjuntas de Argentina y Estado Unidos," *La Jornada* (Mexico),

to conceive of the military role in expansive terms, as shown in the speech to the Conference of American Armies by army chief-of-staff Balza.

The *carapintadas* continue to organize among civilians and officers, attempting to build a movement to return Argentina to a corporatist and non-democratic form of state. These authoritarian-nationalist officers view the liberal-internationalist command of the army with almost as much hostility as they do civilian governments. For this reason, the high command acted quickly to repress the fourth *carapintada* insurrection in 1990. In this case, again, the interests of the high command converged with the interests of the Menem administration to remove the *carapintada* threat.

Thus, the military patterns of behavior which appear to show a less political and more subordinate role may rather signify the growing *fujimorization* of the Argentine government. Named after Peru's president, the term means the alliance between an authoritarian president with few commitments to democratic mechanisms, and a military interested in a co-governing role through "legal" means rather than coups. It should be recalled that this was the model preferred by the *azul* sector of the armed forces in the 1960s (as opposed to the *colorados*, who preferred direct military rule). That is, it appears the armed forces have secured their goal, discussed in the secret documents from the early 1980s reviewed in Chapter 4, to achieve institutional participation *within* the civilian government, as a factor of power and permanent guardian of civilian politics.

Some Argentine analysts point to signs of progress in civil-military relations. One is the series of seminars organized by academics and Radical and Peronist party members, which brought together officers, scholars, party activists, and other civilians in the early 1990s. This meant a certain opening in terms of reaching greater understanding between the civilian and military worlds. Also on the positive side, the most fanatical *carapintada* leaders had been retired from the forces

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September 15, 1993.

by 1992, providing greater prospects for depoliticizing the armed forces. Finally, the navy and the air force had taken steps to send selected cadets to civilian universities in order to expose them to different ideas and perspectives. As one retired *Gendarmería* officer noted, "...some officers [are now] sharing courses with civilian students. It's an achievement of democracy, before it was inconceivable that an officer would sit next to a civilian. This is also a generational change, that now young officers are beginning to think of civilians as brothers too; in the past there was always an attitude that civilians were like extraterrestrials."[147]

Despite this rather optimistic view, however, the actual depth of this change was questionable. For example, the army created its first university for cadets in May 1991, implying further segregation between civilian and military youth.[148] Moreover, even greater interaction between civilians and selected officers in classrooms and occasional conferences is not sufficient to ensure a change in the military institution as a whole. While it is positive that the key *carapintada* leaders are no longer on active duty, it should be recalled that the armed forces as a whole--both liberal-internationalist and authoritarian-nationalist currents--supported the dirty war. Liberal-internationalist officers led the *Proceso,* and shared the national-security doctrine's suspicion of liberal democracy. Similarly, the army-as-institution (that is, primarily liberal-internationalist) espoused national-security concepts at the 1987 Conference of American Armies, and in the 1991 Joint Chiefs' internal security bill, as shown in this study.

Some point out that Argentina is also the Latin American country most advanced in its Congressional legislation limiting the role of the armed forces to external defense and proscribing an internal security role except as a last resort. However, serious questions remained regarding the

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[147] Interview with Eduardo Garay, retired *Gendarmería* officer, conducted by author, September 25, 1992, Buenos Aires.

[148] *La Nación*, May 23, 1991, 8.

effectiveness of this legislation, as shown in this study, given the attitude and interpretation of the armed forces (for example, during the La Tablada attack) and the precedents set by contradictory executive decrees.

The most important transformations affecting Argentina today, perhaps, lie in the larger social, economic and political context rather than within the armed forces institutionally. First, there has been a sea change in the political consciousness of many sectors of the population, who manifest a new rejection of military coups and regimes. Many civilian sectors have recognized that coups and military regimes provide no solutions to Argentina's protracted economic, political and social problems. However, as noted earlier, the popular support for Rico, Seineldín, Bussi, and other anti-democratic officers as well as the calls by right-wing civilian sectors linked to the Ucedé and economic elites for vindication of the dirty war, indicated that a social base still exists for authoritarian solutions. There was, however, a strikingly high consciousness in society about the political implications of the national-security doctrine and the internal security role of the armed forces. All this had a major impact upon the armed forces, who no longer found the same willingness among civilian sectors to tolerate coup plots.

Another key factor was the position of the United States. While the U.S. obsession with involving the armed forces in the fight against "narcoterrorism" posed the danger that an internal security role would continue to be financed and legitimized by the world's sole superpower, no "green light" existed for a coup. This position, however, might be subject to change if new perceived threats to order or to the stability of the current socioeconomic model arise in Argentina. If this occurs, powerful economic elites (national and international) committed to the current politico-economic system might be expected to rethink their options, as in the past. At any rate, the danger of a coup was not the most important threat to democratic consolidation in the 1980s and 1990s in Argentina. Rather, the increasing insertion of national-security norms and structures within the

framework of democracy--that is, the introduction of key elements of a guardian model--was the phenomenon most striking.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that in the case of Argentina, the slow-motion pact (or series of pacts) imposed by military actors on the Alfonsín administration was detrimental rather than conducive to democratization. This seems a generalizable conclusion, one which transcends the particular case of Argentina. Persisting military political power in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Central American countries has also sharply confined civilian options in a variety of areas. The most important areas affected have been civilian justice and the rule of law, political freedoms, foreign policy, and defense and security policy broadly defined to include labor policy, social welfare policy, and industrial policy.

In Argentina, as we have seen, the legislative and judicial branches as well as the "watchdog" organizations of citizens were variously coerced, undermined, or restrained by military pressures (at times in tandem with the executive) during Alfonsín's term. The executive branch itself was subjected to coercive, political and ideological pressures from sectors of the military. Military officers regarded liberal-democratic freedoms of the press, of speech and assembly, of dissent and so on as dangerous to national security and favorable to "subversion" long after the 1983 transition. Activities normally protected by constitutional law were still considered threatening to national security. The gradual imposition of military guardianship during Alfonsín's tenure reconsolidated military control of the civilian population and gave the armed forces a place within the institutional framework and within policy-making. Menem has fortified this arrangement via his authoritarian alliance with the armed forces, his weakening of democratic institutions, and his return of various prerogatives to the armed forces. The military's place in the political process and the political institutions has been solidified.

It is instructive to recall some of the political objectives of the national-security state as documented by internal military documents from the *Proceso* era (reviewed in Chapter 4). Among the stated goals of military commanders were 1) "to assure the continuity of the *Proceso* via the democratic path,"[1] 2) "to progressively transfer the government to civilians, while the armed forces maintain the power,"[2] and 3) "to support the constitution of a solid civic movement that makes its own the objectives of the armed forces and perpetuates them in government."[3] These goals demonstrated a desire to *legalize* and *institutionalize* military power and national-security norms, values and structures within the framework of democracy. That is, the military sought a transition from direct military rule to a guardian system. This did not come about as military planners had hoped. But as this study has shown, multidimensional political action by various sectors of the armed forces succeeded in forcing civilian authorities to take incremental steps to conform to military demands and criteria over time. Today, the armed forces have secured a voice within the political system, despite their less-visible political activity.

In this chapter, we review the major arguments made and summarize the evidence documented in this study. We evaluate the original hypotheses and expectations in light of our findings. Finally, we draw some conclusions about the significance of persisting military power and national-security structures and ideology for democratization.

The Hypotheses and Expectations

The structure of the argument presented in this study was as follows. We hypothesized that

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[1] "Primeras Bases para la Propuesta Política de Unión Nacional," op.cit., 35.

[2] "Consideraciones sobre el Proceso de Institucionalización y el Movimiento de Opinión Nacional," op.cit., 4.

[3] Ibid., 5.

Argentina's armed forces retained a core of counterinsurgency structures and ideology enduring from the national-security state, based on an expansive vision of national security which encompassed domestic politics. These structures and ideology embedded in the state shaped the democratization process, affecting political participation, policy formulation, and relevant political actors and conditioning the form of democracy that evolved.

Four expectations were derived from these hypotheses. The logic of the argument was that if the four expectations were fulfilled, this would mean that the hypotheses did in fact signify a reasonable explanation for developments in Argentina. Evidence of the persistence of *national-security ideology and doctrine* (the first expectation) would indicate that the armed forces or sectors thereof still viewed the political process as a national-security concern. That is, they continued to view the proper function of the military as still to monitor, judge and control civilians as part of an anti-subversive mission. Evidence of enduring *national-security apparatuses and structures* after the transition (the second expectation) would signify the capability of the armed forces to continue to carry out this role, through use of intelligence organizations and repressive bodies. The continuity of *dirty war methods* (the third expectation) would demonstrate that within the constitutional system, remnants or structures of the national-security apparatus were continuing to act in ways reflecting the legacy of the *Proceso*, utilizing means of intimidation, coercion, and terror. Finally, *political intervention* was expected to continue (the fourth expectation) as a means for the armed forces or politicized sectors to achieve their political objectives and to pressure civilian government through use of open, extra-legal and coercive mechanisms. In each chapter, we discussed how the democratization process was shaped and conditioned by each of these elements.

It was further hypothesized that a significant determinant of the volatile civil-military conflicts of the 1980s in Argentina was the effort by politicized elements of the military-security apparatus (indirectly supported by the rest of the armed forces) to include key military prerogatives

and national-security values within the developing democratization process. That is, these conflicts were fundamentally political in nature; key segments of the armed forces sought to obtain *political* objectives. The complex process of confrontation, bargaining and pressure increased the military voice in important policy-making areas *within* the constitutional framework and re-instituted a co-governing role for the armed forces.

In essence, the armed forces sought to steer the democratic process toward a guardian model, in which the power and prerogatives of the military were preserved and national-security values, norms and structures institutionalized within the constitutional system. Both the insurrectionists (the *carapintadas*) and "loyalist" officers sought similar immediate goals, such as vindication of the counterrevolutionary strategy of dirty war, an end to military accountability to civilian justice, the granting of amnesty or pardon, and recognition of the armed forces as a "factor of power" within the state. The two currents disagreed about long-term goals--that is, their preferred organization of state and society--along the traditional lines of the contending liberal-rightist versus nationalist-authoritarian perspectives. Yet both major currents sought to secure and increase military influence within state and society. The loyalists asserted that they disapproved of the coercive methods of the *carapintadas*, but they exploited the political advances that resulted.

In this study we have presented substantial evidence that structures of the national-security state and national-security ideology did in fact remained embedded in the state (and parts of society); dirty-war incidents and abusive practices did continue, with anonymity and impunity (while on a lesser scale than the *Proceso*); and political intervention by elements of the military to achieve political objectives did take place. We have also shown that a conflict developed between democratizing sectors on one side and conservative civilian and military sectors on the other, a tug-of-war over which form of democratization would evolve. Before analyzing the implications of these findings at a higher level of abstraction, we will briefly review the building blocks of the argument.

Recapitulation of the Argument

A fundamental premise of this study is that the formation of the Argentine military's national-security doctrine was a decisive element in Argentine national politics from the mid-1950s up to the present. We saw that this doctrine was a product of institutional interests and prerogatives accumulated over decades in Argentina by the armed forces, fused with national and international political influences in the context of the Cold War. This study argues that the national-security doctrine became the organizational and theoretical foundation for a new form of state--the national-security state--in Argentina (and elsewhere), which was antithetical to a democratic model. Chapters 2 through 4 traced the organizational and ideological development of the armed forces and the factors culminating in the national-security state, summarized below.

In the absence of external enemies, the army in particular developed an expansive mission over the first forty years of this century which could justify its predominant position in state and society. Military men felt themselves to possess superior qualities which enabled them to best represent the highest interests of the nation, in contrast to squabbling and venal politicians. Many civilians shared this view. As the army became more politicized, competing internal currents with contending political viewpoints and positions emerged. The liberal-rightist current, which held sway from 1930 to 1943, allied itself with the export-oriented land-owning class and increasingly with representatives of national and international capital. It sought a liberal, free-market economic model and a strong role for the military as a "factor of power" within the state. The authoritarian-nationalist current, exemplified by Perón and his followers, sought an autonomous-corporatist model of development based on national industry, and political independence from foreign hegemonic powers. Both currents, especially after 1955, were virulently anticommunist.

After the 1955 coup which overthrew Perón, the newly-dominant liberal-rightist current took steps to eliminate Peronist influence within the military. These officers expelled thousands of

Peronist officers in 1955-56 and sought a new military doctrine to replace Perón's anti-imperialist and nationalist version. In this context, new foreign influences--particularly French and then U.S.--were welcomed and began to penetrate the Argentine military. Especially after the Cuban revolution, U.S. policy-makers sought and gained a monopoly on the training and financing of Latin American armies. Strongly influenced by U.S. organizational and ideological doctrine, the mission of the Argentine armed forces was gradually transformed from external defense to *internal security*, steeped in Cold War concepts and anticommunism.

U.S. national-security policy-makers regarded independent nationalism as dangerously close to communism, or at least open to communist manipulation, and for this reason, reacted against nationalist movements in many cases. Peronism as a form of authoritarian nationalism was regarded with hostility by U.S. policy-makers, who sought to imbue the militaries of Latin America with respect and deference toward the U. S. way of life and the free market system. For the liberal-rightist current of the Argentine military, such concepts meshed with their own deeply-rooted fears of Peronism and the masses, and provided a justification for surveillance and proscription of the Peronist movement. Gradually, the new political orientation and set of beliefs embodied by the new doctrine permeated the military institution. The new national-security doctrine legitimated and widened the military's political role; the "subversive threat" employed political means, thus requiring the counterrevolutionary forces to be permanently vigilant, involved in monitoring the political process and preventing the rise of "subversion." In other words, domestic politics became incorporated within the new national-security doctrine.

The new Cold War doctrine of national security thus provided a rationale for a form of military tutelage of society and repression of Peronism, as well as all forms of leftism and communism. That is, these doctrine legitimized or promoted national-security states (directly ruled by the armed forces) or guardian systems (civilian governments restricted to varying degrees by the

military). The doctrine also provided the Argentine military with a permanent enemy and an exalted mission--as crusaders against the "international communist movement"--that justified their self-perceived position as guardians of the nation. The new mission provided practical advantages: it united the forces and their competing currents and opened the way to new international contacts and U.S. military and development aid. Finally, as understood by the intensely Catholic and absolutist currents of the Argentine military, the new mission allowed the armed forces to realize their true vocation as upholders of Western, Christian civilization in a holy war against evil. The concepts of "security and development" formed the core of the new national-security doctrine.

In 1966, the military imposed its first national-security state, centered upon the concepts of security and development. The national-security doctrine was used to justify the overthrow of a "weak" civilian government which was incompetent and insufficiently anticommunist, in the eyes of the armed forces. The national-security ideology formed the theoretical and organizational foundation for this new form of state. The military abolished all constitutional channels of participation, suspended political parties, repressed dissent, "intervened" unions and universities, and opened the economy to foreign investment as a means of speedy development. The military was beginning to resemble an ideological political party (or, better said, three political parties). In 1970, serious (although small) guerrilla organizations emerged in Argentina and began to undertake acts against the military government. The period between 1970 and 1976 was a volatile time when ideological polarization intensified in Argentina. Although the military allowed Peronists to form a civilian government in 1973, the armed forces gradually spread their national-security structures throughout the country and began to implement a dirty war of disappearance and assassination against political opponents.

The second case of a national-security state created by the armed forces in Argentina was the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*, installed in 1976. Convinced that Peronism as a force,

particularly the power of labor, the left, and the populist project had to be eliminated from Argentina, the military overthrew the government in March 1976 and installed a more drastic version of a national-security state. Key objectives of the *Proceso* were to promote "Christian moral values," eliminate labor as a political force, and essentially eradicate the nationalist-populist project from Argentina. The armed forces sought to dismantle the structures of Peronism, disarticulate all leftist political opposition, and align the thinking and values of all Argentines to the military's national-security mold. The *junta* delegated the economy to Martínez de Hoz, a prominent neoliberal with links to the oligarchy and international capital. As we saw, the new model was supported by the "factors of power" in Argentina as well as the Ford administration and the international lending agencies.

The *Proceso* utilized national-security norms and practices to institute a clandestine system of repression which disappeared, tortured and murdered thousands of dissenters, activists and ordinary citizens as well as guerrillas. The dirty war methods employed by the *grupos de tareas* instilled a sense of terror and submission in much of the population. The *Proceso* institutionalized national-security structures, ideology and dirty war methods in Argentina.

We saw that in the military government, plans were in progress to formulate the best way to ensure "the continuity of the *Proceso*" after permitting carefully chosen civilians to take office. This controlled transition to a guardian model was planned to make permanent the military tutelage of politics, and establish national-security norms and structures *within* the constitutional framework. However, due to rising social unrest, and then the Malvinas debacle, the military was not able to force its measures upon any civilian forces. The transition took place with the military at a relatively weak point in terms of its influence on state and society. Nevertheless, the armed forces still exercised substantial control of the actual transition process, which took place over a period of some 18 months after the Malvinas defeat.

In our analysis of the continuity of the national-security doctrine after the transition in Chapter 5, we found a pattern which substantiated the expectation that the national-security ideology continued to orient military thinking and planning up to the end of Alfonsín's administration and into Menem's. The evidence consisted of

> 1) Numerous public statements and articles by military spokesmen from both the hierarchy and the insurrectionist sector, decrying infiltration by "subversion" in government and in political life, and propounding the "permanent ideological war,"
> 2) Confidential documents which proposed ways to make hegemonic the military interpretation of the dirty war and justify a military political role,
> 3) Secret transcripts from the Conference of American Armies showing how the military delegates regarded liberal freedoms as dangerous to national security, how they planned to maintain guardian roles within new constitutional systems, and how they established independent "anti-subversive" foreign policies (at times in conflict with national law),
> 4) Political lobbying of the chiefs-of-staff before Congress showing their determination to maintain an internal security and intelligence role for the armed forces, and to reinstitute their status as commanders-in-chief, along with other prerogatives removed in 1984,
> 5) A reserved draft bill on internal security prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1991 (during the Menem administration), which authorized a military combat role in case of strikes, vandalism and disturbances among other things,
> 6) Documents and testimony by Congressional representatives, journalists, human rights advocates and others indicated that domestic surveillance and intimidation of civilians were ongoing throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s.

All of these confirmed that national-security ideology and concepts still permeated the thinking of the military hierarchy in the 1980s and early 90s. Expansive notions of the role of the armed forces in society, to monitor and control domestic politics, organizations, media and religious groups, continued. Military leaders continued to warn of impending "subversive threats" and demand domestic intelligence and internal combat functions, equal political status to civilian authorities, and decision-making authority in defense and internal security policy-making, broadly defined. A key hypothesis of conflict continued to be communist-sponsored "subversion" and the military still saw liberal-democratic freedoms as inimical to national security. In short, the armed forces still defined their mission in terms of the "internal enemy." There was little reform of their perceived guardian vocation in society.

In Chapter 6 we examined the persistence of national-security structures after the transition

to democracy. As predicted, such structures and organizations endured, many virtually intact since the days of the *Proceso*. During the Alfonsín administration segments of the intelligence apparatuses--largely unaltered after the *Proceso*--played an autonomous and anti-government role. The evidence included:

> 1) SIDE head Roberto Pena found "special operating forces" of ex-*Proceso* intelligence officers and civilians conducting PSYOPS, monitoring unions, religious groups, students, journalists, and political figures, and attempting to influence politics, e.g. through producing propaganda against the Beagle settlement and helping to organize FAMUS masses,
> 2) Military intelligence continued to carry out secret and unaccountable money-making enterprises,
> 3) Civilian commando groups under orders from military intelligence carried out bombings, robberies of sensitive documents, attacks and other terrorist acts, according to Pena as well as internal military documents,
> 4) The intelligence organizations withheld and manipulated vital information to undermine the Radical government; there was evidence suggesting deception, misinformation and *doble juegos* used against the government.
> 5) Some intelligence groups ostensibly working for the government were in fact involved in a) counterintelligence against the government, and b) extortion-kidnappings being investigated by the government,
> 6) Some private security organizations staffed by retired and active-duty officers functioned as centers of plotting against the government,
> 7) Numbers and deployment of intelligence personnel and troops indicated the continuity of national-security structures; budgets for the armed and security forces, and intelligence organizations, continued to exceed any other government department,
> 8) Legal-juridical structures aggressively demanded by the chiefs-of-staff confirmed that the military sought to maintain its internal security mission and regain former prerogatives (e.g. to conduct autonomous operations beyond civilian control).

In Chapter 7 we examined how dirty war methods and operations by remnants of the national-security state persisted after the transition. We analyzed the practices of vestiges of the *grupos de tareas* and commando units (the latter a base of the *carapintadas*); we also evaluated the continuity of abusive practices by military and security forces toward civilians. The evidence included:

> 1) The remnants of the terrorist *grupos de tareas* continued kidnappings and extortion of wealthy businessmen after the transition, committed with impunity, which were linked to military intelligence circumstantially but never conclusively,
> 2) In 1984, a number of PSYOPS-type operations took place, including boxes of bones sent to relatives of the disappeared, radio interruptions by voices warning of new coups and lists

of future disappeared persons, coordinated and multiple death threats sent to human rights activists, judges and lawyers, journalists, and political activists; some of the latter were kidnapped, threatened and tortured,
3) Flyers attacking the government and vindicating the dirty war (probably by *carapintadas* implementing "acción sicológica") were circulated, with the slogan "Viva the Fatherland and Viva the Argentine Army!"
4) A wave of bombings in 1984-1985 and again in 1988, targetting schools, hospitals, cafes and other public places, created anxiety and fear in the population and sought to narrow the political opening; most observers and political figures blamed remnants of the *grupos de tareas* or disgruntled military and intelligence officers,
5) The police, also a holdover from the *Proceso*, engaged in practices of brutality, extrajudicial executions and torture of civilian suspects throughout the period; in 1993, they also engaged in "ideological persecution" in tandem with other security forces.
6) Cases of army officers' use of torture against conscripts continued through 1992,
7) The La Tablada episode--the attack on a military garrison by leftist assailants--demonstrated that the military acted autonomously, without civilian orders, against the "internal enemy," despite the Defense Law, and then justified this on grounds of the "permanent war against subversion." La Tablada suggested the continuity of military PSYOPS as well as abusive practices and military overreaction (although the assault itself was clearly a violation of law).

We found, in short, that there was a discernable continuity between these practices and those carried out by the national-security state, as predicted, providing evidence of persisting remnants of the national-security state.

We examined political intervention by sectors of the armed forces to determine whether it increased the political power of the armed forces as a whole. We found that insurrectionist uprisings by the *carapintadas* gradually encircled the Alfonsín government with credible threats, effectively making the government hostage to their demands. This process (particularly the first three uprisings) had the passive support of the majority of the troops, while many loyalist commanders endorsed the goals, but not the methods, of the insurrectionists.

In other words, the continued survival of the government was increasingly dependent on approval by military sectors; and almost all military sectors wanted Alfonsín out, especially by 1989. Alfonsín, faced with socioeconomic crisis, hyperinflation, military threats, other hostile corporate actors, and the evaporation of his government's legitimacy, did agree to leave office five months early after Menem's electoral win.

Evidence of the political intervention of military sectors included:

1) Insubordination and resistance by individual officers refusing to appear before civilian courts in 1984; the government moved to have the cases of active-duty officers transferred to the military court system,
2) As military pressures increased, the government took incremental steps to reduce the number of trials, transfer cases to the military court, exonerate active-duty officers, and limit the length of the judicial process, implicitly ratifying the traditional impunity of the officer corps,
3) The *Consejo Supremo* of the military, despite the government's interest in giving it a self-cleansing function, acted to exonerate the officers accused of human rights violations, vindicate the dirty war, and block the implementation of civilian oversight,
4) The *carapintadas* organized four insurrections between 1987 and 1990 and tested the waters for a coup, according to reliable sources. They sought to force the government to accede to their demands, and help propel Alfonsín out of office, to be replaced by a Peronist government (seen as more sympathetic to their nationalist-authoritarian design for the nation),
5) Statements by high-ranking officers emphasized that the goals of the military hierarchy were synonymous with those of the *carapintadas*. Both sectors demanded public ratification of the legitimacy of the dirty war strategy as a means of attaining national security, and an end to the claims of civilian justice,
6) The leaders of the *carapintadas* increasingly sought and cultivated civilian backing from businessmen, union leaders, religious figures, and politicians as well as internal support within the armed forces.

As we saw, Alfonsín's strategy of exonerating most of the military officers accused of human rights crimes went awry as democratic institutions (courts, legislature, human rights organizations, some of the press, and popular opinion) began to function independently. Essentially, a tug-of-war developed between these sectors on the one side and the military and Alfonsín administration on the other. This tug-of-war symbolized the struggle between sectors demanding the liberal or participatory models of democracy, and those seeking to limit the process to protect the prerogatives of the military (effectively creating a guardian model). Ironically, while Alfonsín wanted a liberal system, his government moved increasingly closer to the military position over time. This was due to a complex and interacting set of factors, analyzed throughout this study.

First, the traditional policy of the Radicals was to coexist with the armed forces as a factor of power. This corresponded to the traditional stance of civilian governments to allow the armed forces to operate autonomously in their own realm. Alfonsín was reluctant to impose civilian control

within the military realm, although he tried to remove military controls within the civilian realm in the beginning of his term. Second, Alfonsín increasingly attempted to placate the armed forces as the *carapintada* insurrectionists grew more dangerous and the "loyalist' commanders warned that they were losing control of the troops. Alfonsín was subjected to multidimensional military pressures--ideological, political and coercive--all focused on limiting or reversing his attempts to establish civilian control of the military. Ideological pressures included the military's constant insistence that the dirty war was justified to protect the republic and that therefore the trials of military officers should be ended. Politically, the military commanders demanded the inclusion of national-security norms and values within laws and structures of the civilian government (finally incorporated in Decrees 83/89, 327 and 392, the anti-terrorist legislation of 1989, and other executive directives integrating military intelligence within domestic security functions). Coercive pressures upon Alfonsín included anonymous dirty-war practices and PSYOPS-style destabilization, which generated fears of "ungovernability," as well as the *carapintada* uprisings, which further magnified the fears of the democratic forces. All of these pressures upon Alfonsín were reinforced by U.S. policy, which strengthened the independent Pentagon-Argentine military relationship and provided little concrete assistance for Alfonsín. Indeed, as we have seen, Reagan officials hinted that the trials should end and that "subversion" was still a danger in Argentina.

All these pressures merged to move Argentina toward a guardian model. The executive branch was converted by degrees into the military's most active protector and defender. The reactions of the judiciary, the legislature, some of the press and the population, however, showed that these emerging democratic actors were rebelling against the guardian model materializing from the de facto alliance between the executive and the military. Court rulings repeatedly derailed the Alfonsín strategy to limit the prosecution of justice; the legislature strengthened Alfonsín's bills regarding the military (in the early years); some independent press organs criticized concessions to

the armed forces; and massive public demonstrations and polls showed significant opposition to Alfonsín's strategy as well.

The *carapintadas* formulated a political program--despite their claims to be subordinate to civilian power--which called for a nationalist-authoritarian, corporatist form of state. Documents, newsletters, public statements, and secret documents by the *carapintadas* substantiated their political aims. The *carapintadas* sought to render the Alfonsín government helpless, discredited, and incapable of governing; substantial evidence suggests that they sought to force Alfonsín out and pave the way for a Peronist administration, which the Seineldín faction particularly saw as closer to its authoritarian-nationalist politics. Alfonsín's "doubletalk" and his efforts to establish liberal-democratic norms--particularly civilian control of the military, through the trials of the *juntas* and the reform of the Military Code--earned him the hostility of all sectors of the armed forces, even though these efforts were truncated by military reaction (backed by civilian and corporate allies). Over all, the *carapintada* uprisings were organized to fall below the threshold of a traditional coup: they were probing actions and calculated strikes aimed at achieving particular goals.

In short, the Alfonsín administration was increasingly surrounded by *all* the traditional corporate interests of Argentina, which were, to varying degrees, hostile to his government. The debt crisis and absence of significant aid from abroad added to the difficulties of the government and further narrowed its options. In this context, the government issued a series of secret decrees and policies which reversed the Radicals' original ban on a military internal security role and at times contradicted its public stance. These acts demonstrated the growing political power of the armed forces and the corresponding weakening of the civilian government; the administration was forced to return prerogatives to the armed forces and implicitly authorize structures and ideology of the national-security state.

The evidence of the construction of a parallel set of laws, contradicting the democratically

debated Defense and Internal Security laws, included:

> 1) The Defense Ministry's secret 1985 Directive 1/85 to the armed forces, which said the president had the constitutional right to use the armed forces to resolve internal conflicts, contradicting the government's original public stance on a military internal security role. The Defense Law, then under discussion in Congress, removed this mission from the armed forces. The Directive also called for utilizing "the existing doctrine regarding the struggle against terrorism" but within the constitutional framework,
> 2) Government officials provided military chiefs with non-public assurances that the human rights trials would be "arranged" despite the government's public stance; through a series of measures, greater and greater numbers of accused officers were essentially amnestied,
> 3) Alfonsín secretly authorized SIDE to continue to carry out secret money-making activities and returned large and unaccountable budgetary funds to the armed forces and SIDE, after Congress removed them in 1984,
> 4) The government apparently ratified the successive Conference of American Armies agreements regarding a continental internal security role for the military,
> 5) There were other examples of implicit or explicit government recognition and authorization of a military role in domestic intelligence and internal security, such as secret instructions to military officers regarding the possible use of troops to combat strikes and provincial governments,
> 6) After La Tablada, Alfonsín's decrees expressly contradicted the Defense Law by giving the armed forces permanent membership in the National Security Council and implicitly authorizing a military role in investigating and combatting "internal enemies." Anti-terrorist legislation incorporated longstanding military national-security norms such as punishment of "ideological enemies."

In short, the political intervention of the *carapintadas*, indirectly supported by the troops and the high command, and constant pressures by the military hierarchy, succeeded in imposing a slow-motion "pact" with the government. The Alfonsín administration was increasingly subject to the tutelage and judgment of the military. The democratic process was channelled by military political actors so that their national-security concerns and values and their prerogatives would be institutionalized within democratic legislation and institutions. The power of the citizenry and democratic institutions were weakened as military prerogatives were strengthened. With the Menem government, a more pronounced "fujimorization" is occurring, with the reconstruction of the Peronist-military alliance within the neoliberal state Menem is creating. In short, the fourth expectation was substantially fulfilled: political intervention by the armed forces did result in the passage of laws and policies reflecting military prerogatives and national-security interests, and the

reinsertion of military power within the political process.

Today in Argentina, the armed forces are less vocal as a separate factor of power. However, as we saw in Chapter 9, the Menem administration has moved further than did the Alfonsín government to integrate and incorporate the armed forces *within* the government. Menem has returned prerogatives taken away by the Alfonsín government and appointed military and intelligence officers to important positions. He has governed with an increasingly authoritarian hand, centralizing power within the executive branch, and imposed a dramatic neoliberal restructuring of the economy. The combination of these trends has produced a blurring of the border between military and civilian governments and further weakening of democratic institutions. We saw these trends demonstrated by the following:

> 1) National-security concepts and values--especially the insistence on domestic intelligence--have persisted in military statements and demands,
> 2) "Hypotheses of conflict" implying a military internal-security role (sometimes couched in terms of fighting "narcosubversion") were openly stated by Menem and administration officials, indicating the continuity of internal security as a military mission,
> 3) There has been continuing surveillance and harassment of political figures and activists during the Menem administration, indicating the continuity of national-security structures,
> 4) Dirty-war methods have been employed against political activists and journalists by clandestine groups linked to military-security forces and Peronist gangs,
> 5) Menem--who, like the military, wanted to modify the Defense Law to allow a military internal security role--issued Decree 392 explicitly authorizing a military combat role in "social commotions" to achieve this. He pardoned the *carapintada* insurrectionists in 1989,
> 6) The fourth *carapintada* uprising in 1990 was the bloodiest and largest yet. Nevertheless, in 1990 Menem pardoned the remaining *junta* leaders,
> 7) The continuing development of the *carapintada* movements (now separating into Rico and Seineldín factions) showed their ultra-nationalist and corporatist visions of state and society went beyond the internal struggle for power in the army,
> 8) Menem has returned various prerogatives to the armed forces, and awarded powerful posts within government to military men and former *Proceso* functionaries (such as his appointment of current Defense Minister Oscar Camilión of *Proceso* days and his creation of a virtual vice-minister of defense, staffed by a high-ranking active-duty officer). Menem has also remilitarized intelligence functions and appointed military allies to a new civilian court (which will hear all military cases), thus insuring military influence in the civilian justice system. According to one highly-placed military source, this was seen in the army as the first step to overturning Alfonsín's 1984 Military Code reform, which had increased civilian control by abolishing separate military jurisdiction for common crimes.

We saw that U.S. drug policy (like previous U.S. anticommunist policy) has encouraged an

internal security role for the Argentine military by offering both financing and legitimation for a military role in fighting "narcoterrorism." This is in essence a new rationale for domestic intelligence and a military internal security role. That is, U.S. policies have continued to foster anti-democratic or undemocratic tendencies in the armed forces, and values and practices which tend toward a guardian model.

To conclude this section, we have made the case that the four expectations arising from our interpretation of Argentine politics were substantially fulfilled. In other words, we have amassed sufficient evidence to substantiate the interpretation offered: Argentina's armed forces retained a core of counterinsurgency structures and ideology enduring from the national-security state, based on an expansive vision of national security which encompassed domestic politics, and sought to narrow the democratic opening and steer the democratization process toward a guardian model.

While Argentina today is not an obviously militarized state, the continuity of such structures and ideology beneath the surface of civilian rule means that the potential exists for more reversals of democratic gains. In effect, the evidence suggests that military loyalty to democratization is still conditional. This situation has not been tested by the Menem government, with the exception of the Cóndor II incident, which showed continued military resistance to and defiance of civilian decision-making authority. Menem reestablished an alliance with the armed forces early in his term, and his decree 392 reflected national-security values. Conversely, military subordination to civilian control and commitment to democracy *was* tested by the Alfonsín government. In that case, military defiance and political autonomy were more obvious. In other words, the relative quiescence of the armed forces today does not necessarily constitute proof of depoliticization or commitment to a deepening of democracy, nor reform of national-security structures and ideology. In the next section we assess the shifting balance of power between civilian and military worlds and the impact upon the democratization process of military political and national-security activity after 1983 in

Argentina.

The Balance of Power between Civilian and Military Worlds

We have seen that the political power of the armed forces was gradually expanded during the Alfonsín years (if one takes the post-Malvinas military as a starting point). During Menem's term, there has been a further expansion of political influence by the armed forces upon government policy-making, as shown in Chapter 9. That is, the military has remained a politically autonomous actor and acted as a political partner rather than a depoliticized force to be commanded by civilians. Substantial evidence indicated that the national-security ideology, which has shaped the mission and hypotheses of conflict of the Argentine military for decades, has continued to orient at least some of the planning, operations, training, intelligence and risk-assessment of the military. The continuity of national-security structures meant that the armed forces retained their capacity to monitor and control "the internal front," a prerogative which steered the democratization process toward a guardian model.

In the various chapters we discussed how the continuity of national-security structures, ideology, dirty war methods and political intervention affected the democratization process in Argentina. Here we attempt to organize the data in a slightly different way, in order to provide a measurement of the progress made to democratize Argentine state and society after the 1983 transition. The typology below examines military prerogatives in two realms, military and civilian. Such a procedure allows us to weigh the balance of power held by civilians versus the military. Some of Stepan's categories of military prerogatives are borrowed to evaluate these realms.[4] First, we assess the degree of civilian control within and direction of the military realm; second, the degree

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[4] Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics...*, op.cit., 94-97; Stepan's categories are also adopted by Jorge Zaverucha in his excellent article "The Degree of Military Political Autonomy during the Spanish, Argentine and Brazilian Transitions," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 25 (May 1993) 283-299.

of military intrusion into and control within the civilian realm. This latter area--the major focus of this study--is less well-studied in the literature, yet it must be assessed in order to obtain a fully accurate picture of the degree of democratization in a state and society.

Control of Power within the Military Realm

1) Military mission and doctrine: Here, we have seen, the government of Alfonsín was able to make very little impact. The government never succeeded in providing the armed forces with a new, clear mission. Each force continued to formulate its own mission; particularly in the army, national-security concepts continued to orient the process. Congressional representatives from the major political parties, understanding that the national-security doctrine was a major source of politicization and role-expansion, tried to abolish it through the new Defense Law. However, as we have seen, the armed forces continued using the old 1966 definition of national security despite this effort. After the La Tablada episode, army commanders justified their assumption of commander-in-chief responsibilities and autonomous combat actions by citing the permanent war against externally-instigated subversion, thus using the Defense Law to justify their actions as external defense. The Menem government was favorably disposed to authorizing an internal security role for the armed forces; cabinet officials announced the intent of using the armed forces to fight "narcosubversion" domestically. This core area of military political autonomy, in other words, was not brought under civilian control after the transition to civilian government.

Additionally, the three branches of the armed forces maintained their autonomous control of military education, a key vehicle for perpetuating and transmitting the political culture of national security. Despite the original plans of the Radicals to "civilianize" military education and curricula, this did not occur. While the navy began sending some cadets to civilian schools, the army continued to resist this, and recently inaugurated its own university for cadets. Finally, the Radical

Platform promise to abolish the draft was never implemented, due to military opposition. Indeed, in 1988 the Defense Ministry--responding to military complaints regarding a shrinking army--announced that the army would *increase* conscription. Now 30,000 conscripts would be drafted per year, 2500 more than in 1987 and 5000 more than in 1986.[5] This reflected, again, the growing political power of the army over the term of Alfonsín's administration. The armed forces continue to use the obligation of military service to orient and mold all male youth in the ways of military culture (also, conscripts are often used as virtual indentured servants by the upper ranks).

2) Defense and Security policy:[6] The 1987 Conference of American Armies documents provided evidence that the Argentine army continued to formulate its own parallel defense and security policies, despite the Defense Law under discussion in Congress. The Conference documents showed that the armies adopted counter-subversion and counter-narcotics policies for both domestic situations as well as those spanning national borders (the latter essentially a separate foreign policy). As we saw, both Alfonsín and Menem implicitly or explicitly endorsed this by issuing decrees or secret executive directives authorizing military decisions. The defiance of the air force regarding the dismantling of the Cóndor II missile indicated that this force refused to submit to civilian decisions in the defense area and continued to act according to its own policies.

As we have seen, the armed forces never accepted the civilian demand to terminate their domestic intelligence operations. While the Defense Law formally prohibited a military internal-security role, this study gathered substantial evidence from a variety of sources that the military (particularly the army, and less so, the navy) continued to carry out internal security operations and intelligence. The Radicals themselves acknowledged that they had not been able to bring military

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[5] *Buenos Aires Herald*, February 25, 1988.

[6] This category combines two of Stepan's categories: control of intelligence and control of police.

intelligence under civilian control.[7] SIDE, directly under the executive branch, also acted in autonomous and anti-government ways during Alfonsín's term, as shown in this study.

The army hierarchy continued to formulate its own contingency plans despite civilian law in the event of social commotion, labor unrest, or guerrilla attacks, based on national-security concepts. Moreover, the army's Department of Production--which conducted business operations such as tourist agencies, money-changing houses, security services and so on--continued to supply unaccountable funds to army intelligence.

The Alfonsín government removed the police, the *Prefectura* and the *Gendarmería* from the control of the navy and army respectively in 1984. However, army officers continued cross-training of security forces;[8] through this vehicle, national-security ideology and insurrectionist political ideas were transmitted and followings organized to undermine civilian rule. Moreover, the police and large segments of the other forces were holdovers from the *Proceso.*

3) Control of enterprises: This study has not examined the military-industrial complex at great length. The Alfonsín administration did gain formal control of the military's economic enterprises in 1983 (under the *Ley de Ministerios*), and transferred their operation to the Ministry of Defense. However, throughout Alfonsín's term, he was unable to privatize or control to any significant degree the many industries controlled by the armed forces, particularly the *Fabricaciones Militares* complex, due to fierce opposition from officers and army engineers. Menem has only recently begun to

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[7] Recall Alfonsín's admission that the intelligence services were "impenetrable," as well as other statements and documents by Radicals cited in this study. See also the 1990 intelligence reform bill by the Radicals cited in Chapter 9.

[8] For example, Seineldín, the most charismatic and important *carapintada* leader, specialized in training groups of commandos and was in charge of providing counterinsurgency instruction to police, navy officers, and officers from the *Prefectura* and *Gendarmería* beginning in 1963. Chumbita, *Los carapintada*..., op.cit., 223.

privatize some of these.

4) Role of Legislature:[9] There are seldom detailed hearings on defense matters in which major policy issues are discussed and approved. As we saw, the parliamentary review board of intelligence operations sanctioned by the Internal Security Law was resisted by both the armed forces and the Menem administration. Although it finally began meeting in mid-1993, it lacks enforcement capability and is basically an advisory body. The executive branch retains the capability to designate funds for military intelligence (as Alfonsín did in 1985). The 1990 Radical bill to reform the intelligence services, military and civilian, has been stalled in Congress and opposed by military sectors; in the preface, the bill's authors write that there is "a total lack" of any type of political, parliamentary or judicial control of these organizations.

Control of Power within the Civilian Realm

1) Military in Government Positions:[10] Alfonsín did appoint a civilian Defense Minister and reduce the status of the heads of the armed forces from commanders-in-chief to chiefs-of-staff. However, over time and due to military pressures, the Defense Ministry was converted from a vehicle for imposing civilian control of the military into its opposite: a mechanism to insert military control within civilian policy-making. Furthermore, this military voice reflected the values and norms of the national-security ideology, which meant an extension of military influence into non-defense areas impacting upon political freedoms. Finally, in situations of tension, the chiefs-of-staff bypassed the Minister of Defense and went directly to the president, essentially acquiring the status of ministers

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[9] This is Stepan's category five.

[10] I combine four of Stepan's categories here: military relationship to the chief executive, coordination of defense sector, active-duty military participation in cabinet, and role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees in defense policy formulation.

(a fact noted by some Radicals).[11] Similarly, in crisis situations, the chiefs-of-staff acted operatively like commanders-in-chief, conducting combat operations and assuming control of security forces (as in La Tablada) without civilian authorization. Thus, substantial de facto control by the armed forces in the Defense Ministry persists.

Additionally, Alfonsín did appoint military officers (retired) to lower-level Defense Ministry positions and advisory roles, as we have seen. Menem went farther by creating a new post which is virtually a vice-minister of defense, filled by an active-duty officer. Menem also appointed a former *Proceso* Defense Minister, Oscar Camilión, as Defense Minister. In sum, while the armed forces do not *formally* control the defense ministry, they do enjoy significant influence. While they have not been able to secure the budget levels they desire, defense receives more funds than all other government ministries (as shown in the study) and military personnel have been awarded regular pay hikes and bonuses, unlike other public sectors.

2) Accountability to Constitutional Law and Civilian Justice: There were major legal-juridical achievements during the Alfonsín administration: the Military Code reform, which abolished recourse to the separate military justice system for all but narrow disciplinary transgressions; and the civilian trials of the *juntas*. However, despite these early assertions of civilian control, the Alfonsín administration was finally unwilling or unable to establish military accountability to civilian law and justice or allow the courts to function. While Alfonsín refused to overturn the convictions of the *juntas*--the administration's symbol of the rule of law and ethics--Alfonsín did authorize various thinly disguised amnesty measures. Moreover, the military officers participating in the various military insurrections were tried by military rather than civilian justice despite the passage

[11] 1989 self-evaluation document prepared for a Radical meeting to assess Alfonsín's tenure, by a Radical participant, op.cit. Document in possession of author.

of the Defense of Democracy law and the Military Code reform (although civilian appeal was implemented as under the reform of the Code). The administration by degrees abandoned its attempt to reestablish one law and one justice system for all Argentines, civilian or military, thus perpetuating the dual systems of law for military and civilian worlds. Menem then pardoned the *junta* commanders and almost all the military insurrectionists.

Military prisons were generally more comfortable and considerably more relaxed than civilian prisons in terms of permitting visitors, interviews, leave passes, barbecues, access to office equipment and other perquisites to *carapintadas* and *Proceso* commanders, reaffirming the dual standards of justice. For example, insurrectionist Aldo Rico enjoyed 72-hour leaves every week when under military imprisonment in 1989, and was permitted to travel within a 60 km. radius of the Campo de Mayo.[12]

3) Consolidation of Democratic Freedoms: We have seen that freedoms of the press, of speech and assembly, of communication, and of organization were directly or indirectly threatened by military groups or clandestine remnants of the national-security state. Acts of terrorism and intimidation perpetuated fear in the population, muted criticism, and divided and weakened the democratic forces. The limits of the acceptable political spectrum were narrowed by military spokesmen's constant equation of critical press reporting, dissent, human rights advocacy, and political activism with "terrorism" or "subversion." Many officers equated the exercise of these freedoms with "Gramscian operations" by subversives (e.g. the continuation of the "ideological war with subversion" on the political-ideological plane). That is, many officers assumed that dissent, promotion of human rights, criticism of a military role in politics, or opposition to the dirty war were symptoms of the continuing ideological war with subversion. "Normal" political debate and participation were subject

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[12] Joe Schneider, dispatch to *Janes Defense Weekly*, August 23, 1989.

to intimidation tactics and condemnation by numerous military spokesmen as well as the attacks of clandestine groups, with chilling effects on openness. The legacy of fear in Argentina has at times been enough to silence dissent, as shown by Menem's warning to demonstrating teachers and students in 1992. His warning, evoking the image of new contingents of Madres of the Plaza de Mayo clamoring for their disappeared children, seemed to imply the threat of another dirty war if political freedoms were exercised too vigorously.

4) Establishing Respect for Human Rights: The bombing campaigns, kidnappings and other violent acts during the Alfonsín and Menem years signified a direct attack on the right to life and other human rights. If basic human rights are systematically threatened, one cannot describe a political system as a democracy. The constant military vindications of the dirty war gave notice to civilian sectors that the armed forces continued to believe that massive abuses of human rights were justifiable in the name of national security. Such declarations were a form of veiled threat, and a use of fear and intimidation as political weapons to constrain the democratization process. Abusive practices by armed and security forces against civilians continued as well. In short, military respect for human rights--a key aspect of democratization--remains in question.

5) Military Political Organizing: We have seen that the *carapintadas* promoted a nationalist-authoritarian, Catholic political program among military and civilian sectors, and directly criticized the government in economic, cultural, political and spiritual areas. Such open political opposition--in effect, the continuation of a military party or parties--was clearly an indication of a politically autonomous role by a sector of the military. The *carapintadas* regarded the Alfonsín administration itself as riddled with "subversives," and took open and direct actions to impose their will on the government. The number of seditious officers involved in the four uprisings actually *increased*

rather than diminished, despite--or because of--the concessions of the government. Further, the uprisings spread from mainly army officers to encompass officers from the air force, the *Prefectura*, intelligence organizations, and right-wing civilians. These trends signaled the growth of forces interested in destabilizing the civilian government and curtailing the democratic opening.

Today, both the Rico and Seineldín wings of the *carapintadas* are pursuing political programs among various civilian and military constituencies, contributing to a new form of militarization of the political process.

6) Military Influence upon Judicial, Legislative and Executive Branches: The military hierarchy sought to insert national-security norms and values within legislation by Congress and policy-making by executive branch authorities. Alfonsín's decrees and anti-terrorist legislation of 1989 reflected longstanding military demands and national-security norms, giving the military a policy-making function and installing the military in an internal security role, effectively reversing the Defense Law's ban on such participation. Menem's Decree 392 authorized a combat role in domestic disturbances and an internal security mission for the military. While the 1991 Internal Security Law allows a military combat role only as a last resort, it does not specifically abrogate these executive decrees. The military was able to make its will felt in terms of the judicial system as well, preventing trials in constitutional courts of military officers and securing amnesties and pardons from the executive and legislative branches. The increasing success of the armed forces in accomplishing all this was an indication of their political power. They were capable of moving the center of gravity of the Alfonsín government and politics in general steadily to the right, and "containing" civilian power. Each new concession and admission of weakness by the government generated bolder claims from politicized officers rather than satisfying them.

We have argued that both the "loyalist" officers and the *carapintadas* preferred a guardian

system where civilian power would be controlled and limited and the military would exert decisive power in the state. The liberal-rightist current preferred to exercise power within the institutional framework, as we have seen, molded to reflect national-security interests, prerogatives and norms (similar to the *azul* model of the 1960s), while the *carapintadas* found Alfonsín's "social democratic" project intolerable and urged the return to a nationalist, authoritarian, corporatist model. Both currents resisted giving up the ability of the armed forces to determine political outcomes, trapping the Alfonsín government in a political pincer movement. Both, in short, remained suspicious of liberal democracy and sought to create their preferred models of state and society.

The typology above demonstrates that the armed forces remain a "factor of power" in Argentina with significant political autonomy within military realms and substantial influence within civilian realms. Military prerogatives remain high in key areas in Stepan's terms.[13] The stronger these military prerogatives are, the weaker are civilian control and democratic institutions. The categories above showing military power within civilian realms demonstrate that military influence has encroached upon the democratization process. Civilian government has not achieved the subordination of the armed forces, despite Menem's good relations with the military. Rather, it appears that Menem and the armed forces have established an authoritarian alliance, a more subtle version of Fujimori's regime in Peru, in which the military remains a co-governing force.

In terms of military intrusion into the civilian realm, we have seen that the armed forces were able to influence, narrow and condition the democratization process through multidimensional political action, in order to direct the evolving state and society toward a guardian model. The rule of law and the consolidation of fragile democratic institutions were set back; the traditional privileges and power of the armed forces were consolidated on several levels. In sum, the balance of power

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[13] In his article, Zaverucha also notes that military political autonomy in Argentina is high in the three most difficult areas, those which impact most strongly on democracy. Zaverucha, "The Degree..." op.cit., 298-299.

between civilian and military worlds tilted toward the armed forces over the course of the period examined. This occurred because the national-security ideology and structures of the armed forces penetrated the political process *under civilian government* and military power was inserted within the constitutional system.

Theoretical Implications

How do these findings relate to the overarching question of how democratization occurs? That is, what are the theoretical implications of the Argentine case for theories of democratization?

We have argued that the armed forces sought to steer the democratization process toward a guardian model in Argentina, a model which would preserve the traditional interests of elite sectors as well as the military and restrict the political influence of subordinate social sectors. Certain liberal freedoms and the independence of branches of the state--the executive, the legislature and the judiciary--were weakened as a result of combined actions and pressures of the military-security forces (as well as other powerful actors) after the 1983 transition. That is, the liberal-democratic model (and not solely the more "radical" Rousseauian model) was threatened by the continued impact of a politicized military and persisting national-security ideology, structures and organizations.

We have seen that a process of democratization did occur in Argentina after 1983, but this process embodied a struggle over which form of democracy would emerge, and especially, the proper role of the armed forces. The tensions engendered by the contending expectations and aspirations of different social sectors and political actors were signs of the volatility of this process. While some important strides were made in terms of democratization, Alfonsín finally failed to impose civilian control over the armed forces, which gained political weight over the course of his administration. This political weight has been absorbed into the government by the Menem administration, in a renewed Peronist-military alliance.

In theoretical terms, the case of Argentina suggests, then, that to the extent that structural remnants of the national-security state endure, liberal democracy (as well as participatory democracy) are endangered and limited. Key sectors of the armed forces (and their civilian allies) still see these forms of democracy as threatening and seek to implant guardian systems. Given this realization, it becomes clear that "pact" or "imposition" theories of democratic transition are vulnerable because they are largely silent on the impact of persisting military political power within democratization processes, the focus of this study. The impact of military power within Argentina's democratization process moved state and society toward a guardian model, where military tutelage and prerogatives were reconsolidated.

National-security states were originally constructed to stifle dissent and terminate or severely control participation and social mobilization. The armed forces suspended liberal freedoms and launched campaigns of severe repression against perceived political enemies. The state and society were completely militarized. In all the transitions of the 1980s in Latin America, the militaries demanded various prerogatives and guarantees before withdrawing from government. As we have seen, a number of authors argue that pacts among elite actors have been the most promising way to insure the democratic transition. Yet the case of Argentina suggests that pacts which perpetuate and solidify military power and national-security structures and values serve to brake, not encourage, democratic openings. The emergence of more open democratic polities, where the rights of the majority are recognized and expanded, is blocked by the authoritarian structures left in place. That is, "transitions from above" serve to perpetuate institutionalized military political power, thus posing an obstacle to opening processes. While such systems may be stable (at least in the short term) and even liberalized (and certainly preferable to military regimes), they fall short of being full democracies. They are rather guardian forms, hybrids which combine some mixture of military power and control with civilian government and the constitutional framework.

In short, guardian models are neither full democracies nor necessarily a transitional stage *toward* full democracies. Rather, they are a distinct organization of political power in which democratic freedoms are restricted and the political process is subjected to the tutelage of the military and the constraints of national-security values and structures. That is, a guardian model may be an authoritarian end in itself, conforming to the military view of a "protected democracy." On the other hand, there is a tug-of-war between democratic sectors and civilian-military "guardians," as we have seen, reflecting the fact that democratic forces have amassed at least some power to counter military power. That means that, in comparison to national-security states, such systems are more open; there is more political latitude for democratic sectors to contest authoritarian power and struggle for change (although they are subject to persecution).

In fact, other dimensions are important in assessing the political significance of the armed forces in Argentina today. We have suggested that the reason for more subdued military behavior today may not be due to advancing democratization or civilian control. It might also be argued that the traditional enemies of the Argentine armed forces--the left, and *Peronismo* itself as a powerful opposition actor --were contained by 1992. Menem had succeeded in recreating Peronism as a neoliberal system, while also largely neutralizing labor opposition. The industrial base that had empowered the unions in former times had been drastically reduced; workers had been disciplined both by terror and by economic crisis and restructuring. There was no leader strong enough to unite the workers' movement in defiance of Menem. There was general acceptance of the neoliberal model as the only possibility among the social sectors most injured by it.[14]

Thus, the armed forces are not being called upon by the traditional "factors of power" to repress the longstanding challenges to the system. Bluntly put, the armed forces had, first, largely

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[14] This may be changing. In December 1993 violent confrontations occurred in La Rioja and Santiago del Estero when thousands of workers--unpaid for months--rioted, burned and seized government buildings. Dozens were wounded and nine people were killed.

neutralized the threat from below through the dirty war and, second, gained most of their political objectives from the Alfonsín and Menem administrations (a halt to the trials, amnesties and pardons, vindication--at least partial--of the dirty war, authorization of an internal security role, a voice within constitutional structures, and so on). Therefore there was little need for an overt military coercive or political presence. However, this is not sufficient basis to assume that if a political challenge were to arise again, the armed forces would not return to their accustomed role "to save the nation from chaos." This is especially the case given the persistence of national-security values and structures.

The findings of this study suggest that if greater democracy is achieved through the struggle of excluded sectors to obtain entry into the political system (as structuralist theories posit), then the persistence of remnants of the national-security state--installed to keep major sectors excluded--is detrimental to that process. The military retains its longstanding function to contain social mobilization and prevent a major change in power relations, a function now legalized within the institutional framework. Thus, transitions via pacts or imposition are likely to produce guardian models, where the military continues to monitor and control civilian government and the civilian population.

A final word on the role of the military *vis-à-vis* other political actors and social forces is in order. This study has shown that the military has not acted alone in Argentina, and indeed requires some social backing (from either internal or external actors) in order to take power and to rule. That is, we have confirmed Potash's observation, quoted in Chapter 2, that military politicization is partially a result of the continuing propensity of civilians to seek alliances and political coalitions with military men and the military institution. In Argentina today, *Menemistas* have sought to reestablish organic linkages with the armed forces *within the government* in a way the Alfonsín administration never did. Now that Menem has succeeded in winning a Congressional

mandate to amend the 1853 constitution (and probably serve a second term as president), it is possible that he will implement further authoritarian measures to centralize power, and perhaps further strengthen the prerogatives of the armed forces to insure their allegiance. Additionally, if U.S. policy-makers continue to finance undemocratic practices by the military via funds for drug interdiction, a similar undermining of democracy will occur. Both of these developments would further weaken democratic institutions and freedoms and further introduce a guardian system in Argentina.

Thus, while the armed forces seem quiescent in Argentina today, it is premature to say they are no longer a political actor. The persistence of national-security structures and ideology and the continued involvement of the military in political power are trends which call for a more cautious assessment. The most likely manner in which military power and influence are likely to be felt is via the insertion of national-security values, interests and concepts within the legislation, political process, and institutions of democracy, resulting in a particular form of restricted and controlled, guardian-style system.

APPENDIX

Major Interviews

It should be noted that I have respected the wish for anonymity expressed by some of the active-duty and retired officers and civilian functionaries interviewed, who are not included in the following list. It should also be noted that numerous attempts to interview former President Raúl Alfonsín did not meet with success.

Civilian politicians and government functionaries

Raúl Alconada Sempé, high-ranking advisor to Alfonsín, former Secretary of Defense, former Secretary of Foreign Relations.

Luis Brunati, Peronist deputy and member of *Grupo de los Ocho*.

Eduardo Estévez, researcher and Radical legislative aide.

Dante Giadone, former Under-Secretary General for Alfonsín.

Gustavo Ferrari, Radical Party activist and former Alfonsín adviser.

Conrado Storani, Jr., current Radical deputy and head of Congressional Defense Committee.

Luis Tibiletti, retired army officer and Peronist legislative aide.

Juan Carlos Torre, former Under-Secretary of the Economy under Alfonsín.

José Manuel Ugarte, attorney and Radical legislative aide.

Hipólito Solari Yrigoyen, Radical Senator.

Military and security officers

Col. Horacio Ballester (ret.), CEMIDA leader.

Col. Gustavo Cáceres (ret.), former Alfonsín adviser.

Eduardo Garay (ret.), *Commandante de la Gendarmería.*

Capt. Marcelo Marienhoff (ret), former navy intelligence officer.

Capt. Guillermo Montenegro (ret.), instructor at *Escuela de Guerra Naval*.

Juan M. Zorzenón (ret.), *Commandante General de la Gendarmería*.

Human rights leaders

Nora Cortínas, *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, Linea Fundadora.*

Graciela Fernández Meijide, leader of *Asemblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos.*

Emilio Mignone, attorney, educator, and head of *Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales.*

Marta Oyhanarte de Sivak, attorney and political activist.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and head of SERPAJ.

Scholars and journalists

Jack Blum, U.S. lawyer and government investigator.

Atilio Borón, director of EURAL, scholar and political activist.

Rut Diamint, scholar of military affairs.

Gustavo Druetta, scholar of military affairs.

J. Samuel Fitch, U.S. scholar on Latin American military.

Andrés Fontana, scholar of military affairs.

Rosendo Fraga, military historian and director of *Centro de Estudios Unión de la Nueva Mayoría.*

Alejandro M. Garro, legal scholar and lecturer at Columbia University.

Ernesto López, scholar of military affairs.

Carlos Juvenal, journalist and expert on military-security issues.

Claudio Lozano, Director of *Instituto de Estudios Sobre Estado y Participación* (IDEP), institute of *Asociación Trabajadores del Estado* (ATE).

Thomas Scheetz, scholar of military economy and defense issues.

Nicolas Tozer, managing editor, *Buenos Aires Herald.*

Julio Villalonga, investigative journalist and expert on the military.

Lawyers and judges

Octavio Carsen, attorney and human rights activist.

Juan Méndez, Director of Washington office of Americas Watch.

Horacio Méndez Carreras, attorney involved in prosecuting human rights cases in the 1980s.

Jorge Torlasco, attorney and former federal judge in the trial of the *juntas*.

Research Collections Utilized

In Argentina, the author utilized the archives and/or libraries of the following:

- Bibliografía La Ley
- *Buenos Aires Herald*
- Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
- Centro de Estudios Unión de la Nueva Mayoría
- Círculo Militar
- Congreso de la Nación
- *La Prensa*
- TELAM, the state news agency

Additionally, access to the personal libraries and archives of Octavio Carsen, Andrés Fontana, Joe Schneider, and Luis Tibiletti in Buenos Aires is gratefully acknowledged.

In the United States, the author utilized the following collections:

- City University of New York libraries
- Library of Congress, Hispanic Room
- National Security Archives, Washington D.C.
- New York Public Library
- New York University government documents library

Primary newspapers and magazines consulted

Argentina: *Ambito Financiero; Argentine News; Buenos Aires Herald; Clarín; Gente; La Razón; La Nación; El Periodista; La Prensa; Noticias; Página/12; Página/30; Siete Días; Somos.*

United States: *El Diario/La Prensa* (New York); *Latin America Regional Report: Southern Cone; NACLA Report on the Americas; Newsweek; New York Times.*

Military and Military-related Journals/Argentina

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de Guerra; Revista Militar; Seguridad Estratégica Regional.

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