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Security Communities, Defence Policy Integration and Peace Operations in the Southern Cone: An Argentine Perspective

RUT DIAMINT

This article contends that the combined efforts of the ministries of foreign affairs and defence in nine countries of South and Central America, the G9, can be considered a nascent but not yet developed security community. Due to a growing capacity for crisis management which includes the search for political solutions to structural conflict and to political, economic and social deficits in Haiti, the article demonstrates that South American countries are developing a novel concept for post-conflict response. Finally, in the context of democratization, Argentina's participation in peace missions generates domestic elements strongly committed to peace operations.

The South American response to the crisis in Haiti – centred on prominent participation in the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) – marks the moment when the region's states went from being the beneficiaries of international cooperation to being its suppliers. This has resulted in a marked increase in crisis management capability on the continent. Each of the nine countries that cooperate in the so-called G9 group of troop contributors to MINUSTAH – Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay – has described such an increase as being the result of a clear government decision. There is a high political cost for governments in the deployment of forces to missions abroad, which present obvious risks such as the death of their citizens. However, in the case of MINUSTAH, Southern Cone governments' commitment to international crisis management was greater than the political cost of losing public support; this represents a remarkable democratic advance.

Within these states, rational bureaucracies supported by the rule of law worked with consistency and predictability to achieve successful results. The combined efforts of the ministries of foreign affairs and defence in these nine countries enabled the differences in the training, logistics and military doctrine of each state to be overcome, and thus should not affect the uniformity and standards between successive quotas for each country's participants. Civilian leaders provided political continuity and international sustainability, allowing these efforts to reach beyond traditional military—military cooperation.

This new crisis management capacity, aimed at providing varied solutions to a devastated Haitian population, sought to preclude any negative effects on the population arising from the presence of foreign troops; indeed, it alleviated much suffering and hardship, laying the foundation for the proposed

reconstruction of the social fabric under UN aegis. MINUSTAH is an interesting case for examining these notions: although it is a peace operation, it also illustrates the limitations of purely military interventions. Indeed, resolving the recurrent crises in Haiti calls for a response to structural conflict and political, economic and social deficits that have resulted in violence and government instability.

This article has four purposes. The first is to assess whether this mechanism can be considered an emerging security community in South America, both in the sense given by Barnett and Adler, and in that developed by Øle Wæver. The second is to evaluate the performance of a novel form of consultation among South and Central American troop contributors to MINUSTAH: the 'G9' or '2 × 9' mechanism, which created a means for coordinating action and communicating commitments in the framework of contributions to MINUSTAH. Third, the article will illustrate differences between South American troop contributors and other donor countries in their efforts to gain greater weight for the region in international decision-making processes. Finally, the article discusses Argentina's participation in peace missions; with the advent of democracy, military participation in UN peace operations became one of the primary tasks of the armed forces and a prominent foreign policy objective.

An Embryonic Security Community

The undeniable success of the 2×9 coordination mechanism does not preclude critical reflection. The question arises: does this arrangement represent a regional security community? According to the concept of the security community coined by Karl Deutsch and taken up later by Adler and Barnett, security communities are characterized by the existence of an acceptable basis of shared values and interests and an expressed willingness to resolve conflicts along peaceful paths.²

Both components of this definition seem to dispel expectations of building a regional security community around peacekeeping participation in the Southern Cone. Wæver described a security community as a 'non-war community', proximate to the notion that underlies the thesis of a 'democratic peace'. Wæver also suggested that these communities *construct* their interest as part of a region that shares values and identities, shaping their perceptions centrally in relation to their neighbours' perceptions, thus transcending the sovereignty-based modes of action.⁴

Considering these conceptualizations, what kind of security mechanism is the 2×9 ? First, it is more than an ad hoc mechanism because, although it emerged as a specific proposal for a specific purpose, it operates in continuous support of a mandate agreed by the UN Security Council. This sets the legal framework for multilateral action and commands acceptance of rigid rules of engagement. Therefore it is consistent with the actions, principles and objectives previously set in the decisions of the Security Council for peace operations. Also, it is an important step in transcending the sovereignty-based action of South American countries – a key principle of relations in the region since the nineteenth century.

Second, the 2×9 grouping is not solely an ad hoc mechanism, because it is the result of a long process of security cooperation in South America beginning in the mid-1980s. Without going into detail, it is useful to recall negotiations on the limitation of weapons of mass destruction as a result of regular bi- and multilateral meetings between ministries of foreign affairs and defence; bilateral peaceful negotiations of border disputes; confidence- and security-building measures agreed in the framework of Mercosur and the Andean Community of Nations; increasingly frequent joint exercises and military manoeuvres, led by civilian teams in the ministries of defence and foreign affairs; continent-wide regular meetings of defence ministers; the Amazon Treaty arrangement; the establishment of the South American Defence Council within the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR); and numerous other initiatives that transformed historical rivalry and competition into cooperation and the creations of shared norms (see Herz in this issue).

Third, the 2×9 arrangement is more than just an ad hoc mechanism because it promotes a specific and established philosophy of humanitarian intervention and because it incorporates lessons learned over the medium and long terms. The aim is to influence permanently, from a South American perspective, the way the UN chooses, organizes and develops peace operations. This is a deliberate policy that has yet to be rendered continuously effective. However, there is a consensus among G9 members that the mechanism can produce effective outcomes based on the fact that member countries have had similar experiences in their recent history to those facing mission recipient states currently in domestic conflict.

While the 2 × 9 arrangement is clearly more than an ad hoc mechanism, it is fair to say that these attempts at security policy cooperation and coordination have been held back by the low levels of institutionalization endemic in South America. Consequently, these initiatives cannot yet be referred to as a regional security community. Although in South America states have taken an explicit decision to resolve differences by nonviolent means, institutional frameworks to this end are, at best, still under construction. A security community requires a system of political networks, of multiple actors both public and private, involving the formal and informal channels of communication and production of meaning which give such a strong community its cohesion, influencing and determining a security identity among members.⁵

In contrast, in South America there is no defining element, for instance, with respect to a hemispheric and subregional security architecture. Nor has there been an identification of regional strategic vulnerabilities and common threats; the development and use of defence technologies has not been sufficiently discussed; and there are still deficits in civilian control of the armed forces, as evidenced in the South American Defence Council of UNASUR.⁶ These shortcomings must be overcome if a security community is to be constructed.

The 2×9 group might best be described as an *emerging* security community. This group of South American countries has created a discussion forum that has generated significant progress in homogenizing defence and security policy and the acceptance of basic rules and principles suggested by the Organization of

American States: civilian control of the armed forces, and civilian management of defence issues. This emerging defence community seeks a consensus based on shared values, where participation is not limited to the traditional actors, but is open to a range of participants, from economic and public health officials, to education workers and sports teachers, to social activists. Such participation is laced with debates that encourage reflection and constant review.

For example, participation in Haiti triggered a debate among academics. Some claimed that this was an intervention force not much different from other imperial experiences of the past (such as American imperialism in Latin America), with the sole difference that the new imperialists, this time, were South Americans. Other scholars pointed out that the participation of civilian ministries of foreign affairs and defence showed it was not purely a military intervention. The latter added that the programmes of cooperation – such as community orchards and sanitation projects – offered a contrasting profile to the US model. Finally, some remarked that the joint negotiations between South American states, without the participation of major powers, was a sign of humanitarian assistance encouraging novel community values. What adds value to this experience of subregional participation is its humanitarian and democratic substance, which seeks to address not only military requirements, but also a myriad of other problems that are similar to the economic and social deficiencies in the participating contributor countries.8 Together, this can be taken to constitute a unified South American contribution to the debates on post-conflict reconstruction.

The joint response to the crisis in Haiti has increased conflict management capacity and experience in South America; these states have now made the move from receivers to providers of international cooperation and assistance. This cooperation also raises the point that, rather than contributing to a context-specific peacekeeping stabilization force, these states are developing a more broadly cast conflict resolution tool. Not that there are similar situations to those of Haiti in any South American country; however, the policy coordination implemented parallel to MINUSTAH could serve as a basis for dealing with other crises on the continent. The negotiated resolution to the *coup d'état* in Honduras and the rapid joint response to the February 2010 earthquake in Chile are in part a result of the negotiation dynamics developed in the context of the Haitian case.

Normative Values and South American Peacekeeping Cooperation

In May 2005, the deputy foreign and defence ministers of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay began a series of meetings to seek solutions for the Haitian crisis and to ensure the maximum success of the stabilization mission in which their armed forces were involved. There was a commitment to improving international responses in the context of this Chapter VII UN peace operation established by Security Council Resolution 1542 of 30 April 2004.

A year later, officials from the four countries concurred that the crisis was political, economic and social in nature, and that therefore its solution was not

merely military. Reflecting their own national experiences of violence, conflict and crisis, the participating nations highlighted MINUSTAH's potential in strengthening human rights and establishing law and order, as well as fostering economic, social and political development in Haiti as an essential component of democratic governance and development. The outcome was an informal working group of representatives from the foreign and defence ministries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, the so-called 2×4 (two ministries from four countries), charged with coordinating common policy positions and actions at all levels of cooperation in Haiti, as a means of improving what was considered to be insufficient aid provided to the country. Although initially support for the electoral process and the restoration of legitimate governance in Haiti emerged as a priority, eventually a longer-term, strategic perspective was embraced regarding mission objectives. In addressing the question of order, previous UN missions in Haiti had failed to consider the need to improve living standards.

With the objective of streamlining a joint response and in order to democratize decision-making for action in Haiti, the four South American participants were inclined to rally other South American countries to become involved in the mechanism. Representatives of Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru joined for the next round of discussions in Chile in August 2005, with a view to 'strengthening democratic capacity-building and achieving transformation and improvement to the quality of life of the Haitian people'. ¹⁰

These officials made clear that these policy coordination forums were not addressing the military aspects of the mission, which were governed by rules of engagement established by the UN, but rather the improvement of democratic conditions in Haiti. The first focus of the coordination mechanism was squarely on electoral assistance. Officials were concerned with ensuring comprehensive voter registration and refining the organization of the electoral process. They sought to facilitate participation of all political parties and groups, without exception, provided that these groups expressly renounced the use of violence. MINUSTAH set the basic security framework for conducting the voting process, but the members of the 2×9 mechanism – based on their own experiences with the transition to democracy, consensus-building and the fostering of a stable political system – facilitated the creation of real conditions of convergence between distinct political actors. This type of experience marks a clear advantage for South American troop-contributing states in peacebuilding missions.

Another difference between the South American approach and that of other contributing nations was related to the use of force. Brazilian MINUSTAH Force Commander Gen. Heleno Pereira stated on several occasions that the situation in Haiti could not be resolved only through the involvement of military forces, and that the mission was to safeguard peace and not to be used as a means of repression as requested by some states. The General's fear – shared by commanders from the other South American forces – was that the Haitian people would consider the mission an occupation. Moreover, such a bias would counter the intent of diplomatic measures promoted by the 2×9 aimed at finding alternative responses to the crisis, such as the joint mission they were carrying out with the UN's Economic and Social Council Advisory Group on

Haiti. Participating countries were not seeking to alter the terms set by the UN. On the contrary, they were trying to find more efficient ways to fulfil the objectives of the mission within the strict framework of UN principles. These differences came about, on the one hand, because '[t]he concept of peacebuilding, within and beyond the UN system, remains ill-defined'. On the other hand, resistance to military repression was a major product of the recent democratization process in South America.

In investigating the variations in commitments to peace operations in South American states, Arturo Sotomayor argues that variations can be explained in terms of security doctrine and the integration of military and foreign policy roles (see also his contribution to this issue). He further contends that, as blue helmets should remain neutral and impartial, major powers are inappropriate participants in peace operations because of their geopolitical interests. The issue of not being neutral and impartial is not a risk in South America, as South American countries do not have the same geopolitical interests as the major powers; the foundation that legitimizes the actions of South American countries operating in Haiti is a vocation to solve the problems of the region based on the specificities of South American experience.

Post-conflict reconstruction is now a subject of extensive discussion in both UN and academic circles. Here, one might consider the Canadian perspective on peacemaking as a pioneering reorientation towards social problems:

Military personnel now work with police and other experts to return conflict societies to security. These experts may include regional and municipal administrators; judges and prosecutors to develop judiciaries and run courts; media, health, tax and social policy advisors; child protection experts; facilitators and mediators; and even people to manage basic services such as sewage treatment plants or railways.¹⁴

This suggests that five decades of experience have demonstrated that peacekeeping forces alone are often insufficient to help countries make the transition from war to lasting peace. The lesson reinforces the importance of understanding the specific nature of a given conflict and suggests the value of recognizing that in crisis situations there are both individual country perspectives and a unified South American perspective. However, six years after MINUSTAH was established, and despite numerous critical analyses, comprehensive solutions have not yet been identified. In March 2010 the MINUSTAH Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Edmond Mulet, conceded that the strengthening of institutions was one of the highest priorities in Haiti's reconstruction, predicting that, '[i]f you do not face that situation right now, we will have peace operations and international interventions in Haiti for the next 200 years'. 16

Differences between Troop Contributors and Donors

During these six years of MINUSTAH, several states have considered alternatives to certain decisions taken within the ambit of the UN. Divergent points of view have been expressed, particularly on the issue of resource allocation for the

reconstruction of Haiti. The first example of these differences came at the beginning of the mission. On various occasions donor governments had expressed fears about the conduct of elections;¹⁷ indeed this was a touchy subject for donor countries and some international financial organizations, which wanted to allocate resources only after the legitimization of a new government that had demonstrated its ability to handle economic reconstruction programmes.

The 2 × 9 members understood that this delay compromised the electoral process itself, and therefore called for concrete and timely compliance with financial commitments to Haiti. 18 For the South American states, without this impetus the registration process itself was threatened, because they saw the absence of any incentives for redirecting structural violence in the country and convincing the population of the benefits of voting. Although peace operations are never purely military and carry out a myriad of civilian political or administrative functions, sometimes on a large scale, a capacity to be involved in domestic political issues is not the subject of Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) training goals. The Brahimi Report indicated that the UN had not progressed in its capacity to gather data and analysis from countries where a peace force was being planned. It similarly denounced the absence of a UN doctrine on the use of force and of clear mandates for its military operations. 19

Such levels of international cooperation were never attained within the period expected by troop contributors, and especially by the Haitian authorities. At the donor meeting in Washington in 2004, US\$1.3 billion was pledged for development projects; however, six months later, only US\$250 million had been disbursed. This dilatoriness remained unchanged. At the December 2006 meeting, held in Madrid, the Dominican Republic Foreign Minister, Carlos Morales Troncoso, complained to the International Conference for Economic and Social Development in Haiti that the promises of resources made by donor countries at the first conference had 'not been kept'. He lamented that in two years of meetings between the Haitian authorities and donor countries, Haiti had been pressured on five occasions to improve political and social conditions in the country, though aid providers have shown no urgency in making resources available. ²¹

Another donor conference, 'For the New Future of Haiti', met in New York City on 31 March 2010 after the January earthquake had left more than 222,570 Haitians dead, 300,572 injured and nearly a quarter of the population displaced. Apart from a US\$15 billion pledge for the reconstruction of the country, this conference was a political success, not only in terms of the money raised, but also in terms of the dynamics of agreements between donor states and the active participation of NGOs, of Haitian civil society and of the private sector. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated that there had been 'unprecedented solidarity'. The atmosphere of the meeting was optimistic that previous failures would not be repeated. In this context, to underline its legitimacy as an actor, Brazil committed itself as an important donor, President Lula joining the presidents of France and Chile at the UN in September 2004 to launch 'Action against Hunger and Poverty'. In May 2010 Brazil became the first international contributor to the Haiti Reconstruction Fund with a

US\$55 million contribution to the multilateral mechanism to help Haiti rebuild after the earthquake.²⁵

While the disbursement of funds pledged at the donor conferences did not take place at the expected time, and the funds were not channelled into the most urgent reconstruction projects, it is fair to say that from the start the modest programmes implemented by participating nations had important economic and social content. The specificity of the 2×9 mechanism is that it seeks to create social capital within Haitian society, while respecting the fundamental goals of social cohesion: to pacify, to project democratic attitudes, to build confidence in the political and justice system and to promote civic virtues.

A second subject that raises differences between important actors is the duration of the mission. Several G9 countries began to accept that their contribution in Haiti would go on for longer than they had expected, but were also concerned about the prospect of casualties. The discussions within the 2×9 mechanism have always raised the question of designing an exit strategy that leaves conditions for Haiti's political, social and economic viability. The conditionality accorded with the UN Secretary-General's call to engage in sustainable and long-term aid as the only way to stabilize Haiti. 27

The values and commitment expressed by the countries of the 2×9 give rise to hope that, by promoting norms of social interaction, missions such as MINUS-TAH would establish common criteria for peacebuilding action both in Haiti and among contributing nations, all in the context of a less confrontational era in the continent's history.

Argentina and Peace Operations

Argentina's involvement in peace operations began in 1958, as part of the UN Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL). Beginning in the early 1990s, there was a qualitative change in Argentine participation in response to various interests and needs. First, there was an emphasis on cooperation towards global peace. The second goal was to assign a new mission to the military which strengthened civilian control: peace operations were henceforth handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not by the Ministry of Defence. A third purpose was to foster regional détente. Fourth, participation was an indirect way of improving the professional status of military personnel then suffering cuts in budget and materiel. Finally, such a shift allowed the international community to regain trust in the Argentine government after it had been considered the aggressor in the Malvinas/Falklands conflict. Since the return to democracy in 1983, successive Argentine governments have developed initiatives to establish civilian control of the armed forces and to formulate defence policy in line with democratic principles and international consensus.

In the 1990s, Argentina took a leading role in promoting regional cooperation through organizations to control and ban the use of weapons of mass destruction, the creation of democracy clauses as a condition of membership in multilateral organizations, the civilian control of the military as a precondition for democratic consolidation, and more active participation in peace operations under UN

mandates. To date, more than 35,000 members of the Argentine armed forces and police have participated in 30 peace operations and as of July 2010 nearly 900 Argentine troops were deployed in the Middle East, Sudan, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Western Sahara, Cyprus and Haiti.²⁸

For Argentina, in contrast to its neighbours, realignment with UN proposals represented a desire to reconnect to the 'international community'. In addition to redressing its status after the Malvinas/Falklands War, the country's dreadful human rights record under military rule required the new democratic governments to demonstrate a visible role in contributing to global peace. Argentine leaders felt that this cooperative role should be developed in a distinct regional context; however, its neighbours initially did not share this urgency for reconciliation and threat reduction.

The role of peace operations on the Argentine political agenda has varied throughout the democratic period. While during the Carlos Menem administration (1989–99) the strategy was centrally aimed at reintegrating Argentina into the global community, for the next government (Fernando de la Rúa, 1999–2001) peace operations served to assign a mission to the military in the absence of a clear defence policy.²⁹

None the less, the collective security framework spearheaded by the UN has been considered by all administrations since 1983 as an opportunity to create alliances with the central powers (G8, the Security Council) and participate in setting 'the global agenda'. Argentina long occupied a marginal position in the international system – a situation not helped by the Malvinas/Falklands conflict. In 1992 there was a significant change in Argentina's traditionally neutral stance when it engaged directly in Operation *Desert Storm*. Following this, Argentina fostered links with NATO, and improved relations with the UK and consistently committed to UN peace operations.

As a result, defence policy was crafted following new assumptions about the role of military force in the international order which differed significantly from regional understandings that had historically informed policies. Efforts were also made to distance defence policy from the internal persecution of citizens which had characterized military rule. Peace operations were seen as a means of advancing the democratic transformation of the armed forces. This gave the military a clearly defined central role, summed up succinctly by former defence minister Oscar Camilión: 'the basic defensive role of the military today is played in international operations conducted within the framework of United Nations'. The 1998 Defence White Paper made explicit the importance of peace operations as part of the national interest. At the beginning of this new era, the military resisted these missions, interpreting them as a diversion from their core function of defending national sovereignty. Several years later, however, the armed forces were expressing their pride in participating in peacekeeping. ³²

Strongly influenced by the ideas of cooperative security³³ and the liberal institutionalism represented by the UN,³⁴ the Argentine government actively pursued an agenda of global and regional cooperation. Related to this role, Argentina launched an initiative in 1993 for the creation of the White Helmets (WH). On the one hand, it was partly a response to the process of demilitarizing Argentine

domestic and international politics, and partly a vehicle for including civilians in peace missions to address poverty in countries in conflict. On the other hand, there was a prospect that the creation of the WH, together with the intention of President Carlos Menem to mediate the conflict in the Middle East, would be sufficient grounds for promoting the Argentine President as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.³⁵

Despite these dubious origins and an initially negative reaction in the UN that this initiative would be incompatible with the peacekeeping system, it was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1994 and the Organization of American States in 1998. Although Argentina made no significant investment in the WH once Menem left office, in 2003 the WH proposal to the UN was reactivated as part of the human rights policy of the Kirchner government. The White Helmets Commission is a humanitarian aid and peacekeeping agency, a civilian peace corps that focuses on assistance to populations afflicted by natural and other disasters by promoting an effective transition from emergency aid to recovery, reconstruction and development.³⁶ It works on three pillars: community organization; preparation and incorporation of volunteers into operational teams; and local prevention and management of risks.³⁷ The WH could be considered a 'third party' in interventions, offering the distribution of humanitarian and technical aid, and in the management of social problems. Given that contemporary conflicts have a pronounced social component, and taking into account inter alia an increasing gap between rich and poor, and migrants flows, the frequency of environmental disasters, and competition over resources, the WH incorporates a human security profile in which civilians have a role in addressing structural violence. In the Haiti earthquake in 2010, the WH played an outstanding part in providing health care and nutrition for the population.

In the regional order, these efforts culminated in the creation of a bi-national Argentine–Chilean force for peace operations, the Cruz del Sur (Southern Cross) force, an important achievement for the future of regional relations, which opened up the prospect of further defence cooperation and helped to definitively end mutual conflict scenarios. Apart from difficulties that hampered both Argentina and Chile in uniting their respective armed forces – ranging from historical mistrust to differences in eating habits – both countries had to overcome the scepticism and suspicion of DPKO officials. Argentina and Chile's contribution was not seen as a selfless service to global peace, but as an unexpected and inexplicable initiative by two countries that had hitherto played antagonist roles within the DPKO.

Argentina is a peripheral country in terms of international clout, does not have a meaningful deterrent capacity and has not redefined the role of its armed forces in the light of any perceived transnational threats. Nor is it perceived as a threat by any other nation. After the Malvinas/Falklands War no relevant actors advocate military instruments to end the UK presence on the islands or to support claims to Antarctic territory.³⁸ In accordance with a broad consensus in favour of solving problems through international institutions, a reform of the Constitution in 1994 brought the country into line with the recognized principle that international law supersedes national law. However, an unstable defence policy landscape results from an incremental 'negotiation' between internal and external

actors, public and private interests working simultaneously on several levels, together with a faltering passage from balance-of-power thinking to a focus on peace dividends and back to unilateral realism. Successive administrations have made constant adjustments to the military apparatus and its role without engaging in a comprehensive review of overall defence policy. It was therefore not in the modernization of its defence capacities that Argentina evolved new and clearly defined new objectives. Its greatest achievements came in the field of cooperation, through the implementation of several initiatives via the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States, its military cooperation and confidence-building measures, the participation of the Argentine armed forces in UN peace operations, and increased military cooperation activities within the continent.

Building on this success will require continuous dedication to dialogue, negotiation, transparency, consistency, professionalism, the rule of law and the reduction of conflict scenarios. However, this endeavour faces two main problems. First, despite regional and global developments, one must recognize Argentina's 'implementation deficit'. Although the country developed a strategy to coordinate policies and criteria, actively involving officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the chiefs of the three armed forces, there remains a pronounced lack of coordination in policy management. Second, several countries in the region are engaged in nationalist projects, in which the modernization of their armed forces and increase in their defence budgets threaten regional cooperation.

To address these problems, the Ministry of Defence is carrying out a comprehensive programme of training, recruitment, equipment, doctrinal development and international cooperation with regard to peace operations. The creation of the Argentina Joint Peace Operations Training Centre (CAECOPAZ) – the first fully fledged such centre in South America – in 1995 was a natural consequence of this objective. The Canadian model – based on assistance from the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre – was chosen in the hope that it would orient the military to a very different profile from that of the dictatorship era. Since its creation, all defence ministers have made official visits to CAECOPAZ.

For the political authorities, missions such as MINUSTAH or the UN Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) are pillars of Argentine foreign policy.³⁹ Argentina initiated the establishment of the Latin American Association of Peace Operations Training Centers (ALCOPAZ), involving other centres in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay, whose purpose is to promote greater efficiency in peacekeepers' performance in line with the requirements of international conflict management.

The ministerial agenda also includes a series of measures aimed at enhancing the role of women in defence issues. Argentina plays a leading role in this regard and is widely seen as a candidate to provide the first female force commander for a UN peace operation. Every year, in commemoration of International Women's Day, the Ministry publishes information about its 'Gender Equality and Defence' programme, summarizing the measures taken throughout the year. Moreover, the Ministry has developed guidelines to prevent domestic violence

and gender discrimination, and has established an Observer Unit for Women in the armed forces, which produces a survey about the integration of women in the military. In this vein, Defence Minister Nilda Garré brought a gender perspective to the design and development of the Argentine contingents participating in UN peace operations. Argentina and Uruguay are the major contributors of female soldiers to MINUSTAH. The Argentine Defence Ministry further paid homage to the women deployed on peace operations who, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'risk their lives serving those who need most, fulfilling their duties with courage, professionalism and commitment; this is why they are an example to all women in Argentina'. 41

In making the first visit by an Argentine president to the peace force in Haiti in March 2008, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner stated that '[t]his is not a military mission, is a deeply humane mission approved by democratic institutions',⁴² a stance taken by her husband and predecessor Nestor Kirchner (2003–07). This suggests that the political elite accepts the normative foundations of the 'responsibility to protect',⁴³ but seeks to minimize the use of force and the military nature of the mission. Moreover, post-dictatorship administrations have used peace operations to strongly modify the armed forces towards a profile linked to democracy and the protection of human rights. For both Kirchners, who have been very critical of the military's past record, this profile is better suited to their perception of the international agenda.

This agenda includes South-South cooperation and strong subregional engagement. As a consequence of the development of the Cruz del Sur force, the government also proposed the creation of a bi-national engineers company with Peru. Similarly, alongside the Argentine-led ALCOPAZ initiative, the government has suggested the creation of a South American Centre for Strategic Studies and a South American College of Defence in Buenos Aires, under the auspices of the South American Defence Council.

At the same time, the Argentine military's experience in dealing with the past, particularly the extensive human rights trials, has generated a humanitarian conscience and a predisposition to accomplish a social role. The idea of the postmodern soldier as a warrior, a peacekeeper, a policeman, a diplomat, a social worker, is readily adopted by the nation's military.⁴⁴

Conclusions

In the Argentine context, one can clearly point to norms that have gained strength although material conditions have not followed suit. The 'responsibility to protect', norms of humanitarian intervention, coordination between civilian actors, government representatives and the military in conflict resolution, the realization that peacebuilding requires long-term action – all of these notions find in South America committed and receptive actors primed to take part in global decision-making. They are conscious of having something positive to contribute based on their own histories of political, social and economic upheaval. These countries also have experienced conflict and recovery from natural disasters. Resolving the recurrent crises in Haiti forced a response to structural

conflicts and political, economic and social deficits that have resulted in violence and government instability.

The G9 states intuitively realized that their own experiences allowed a fuller understanding of the particular conditions prevalent in Haiti. As a report from the Stanley Foundation pointed out, '[f]or each country, a single strategic plan for peacebuilding is essential. This plan must be country-focused and developed on the ground by an empowered country team working in full collaboration with national and local leadership and supported by headquarters offices of UN agencies and other international organizations.'⁴⁵ The intention of the 2×9 states is to provide a specific contextual vision in the hope that future UN missions will be crowned with success.

NOTES

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