

THE STRATEGIC MILITARY PLANNING IN ARGENTINA (2003-2013): REFLECTIONS ON THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF DEFENSE

Luciano Anzelini¹, Iván Poczynok²

1. Introduction

The national defense policy of Argentina has experienced advances and regressions since the democratic return in 1983. This result has been connected to the dynamics that civil-military relations have inherited from the dictatorial period. The necessity to subordinate the Armed Forces dominated the defense agenda during most part of the democratic period, constituting the core problem of this jurisdiction.

The democratic governments implemented various initiatives that underpinned the civil control of the Armed Forces and that also caused, from a normative point of view, what has been characterised as a “basic consensus”. These measures restricted the autonomy of the men in uniform, whether through the demilitarization of civil functions or through the specific delimitation of the martial responsibilities.

¹ International Relations and Political Science Professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires and Universidad Nacional de Quilmes. PhD researcher of the Gino Germani Research Institute at the Faculty of Social Sciences of (UBA) and invited researcher of the Social Sciences Department of Universidad Nacional de Quilmes. E-mail: luciano_anzelini@hotmail.com.

² Sociology Professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). Researcher of the Gino Germani Research Institute at the Faculty of Social Sciences of (UBA) and invited researcher of the Social Sciences Department of Universidad Nacional de Quilmes. E-mail: ivanpoczynok@yahoo.com.ar.

The habilitation of the spaces required for the exercise of the political administration of the jurisdiction did not necessarily implied, however, that civilians have fully developed this task. The performance of the democratic authorities in the area of defense had its shades of gray. At times, these deficiencies were associated to the very restraints of the domestic political conjuncture; at others, they were a result of the planning of the specific agenda of the sector, though.

This paper studies how the Ministry of Defense managed the tasks under its responsibility during 2003-2013. The analysis focuses on the conduction of the strategic dimension of the sector; in particular, on the relative responsibilities of the military strategic planning. In this frame, the demarches of ministers José Pampuro (2003-05), Nilda Garré (2005-10) and Arturo Puricelli (2010-13) are resorted to.

The time framework defined for the study of our object assumes that a set of unprecedented measures were implemented. For the first time since the return of democracy, for example, an effective debate on the conduction of the strategic dimension of the defense policy was addressed. Nevertheless, for reasons that are object of analysis during this article, the empowerment process of the political conduction survived along with ambiguities and setbacks that, during the same period, made the absence of a solid consensus regarding the results of the sectorial agenda evident.

This article is organized as follows. Initially, the theoretical spectrum, on which our study object is built, will be presented. We refer to the differences between “defense policy” and “military politics” proposed by Jorge Battaglino (2011), as well as the categories of “civil-democratic government” and “civil-military dualism” developed by Marcelo Sain (2010). Our concept of “political administration of the defense” will be a result of the conjunction of the first author’s types. In the second part of the paper, the practiced agendas of the ministerial tenures between 2003 and 2013 will be examined. This section contains a review of the political context faced by the ministers and is focused mainly on the professional aspects of the sector. Finally, a few conclusions are presented, while some lines of actions in terms of strategic planning of the defense are also formulated.

2. Conceptual focus and recent background

The governments' defense policies, as well as the criteria that organize the design of their military instruments, are susceptible to approaches from a myriad of conceptual points of view. In our country, the origin of this field of research is relatively recent. Its emergency begins at the democratic transition, and the route of its academic agenda – mainly in the sociology and political science fields – has been accompanying the bloom of the sector's public agenda³.

It explains why the experts' attention has been focused on the democratization of civil-military relations for such long time. Thus, the challenge to subordinate to the Armed Forces has gathered the concerns of academics in respect to “what to do about the military”. This slant concerning the “military question” dominated the researches on the problem not only in our country, but also in most part of the continent⁴.

In the beginning of the 21st Century, a qualitative change in the approach of the military affairs took place, though. This renovation was probably linked to the consolidation of the democratic regimes at a regional level and, especially on the case of Argentina, to the displacement of the problem of civil control at the margins of the agenda. Accordingly, the Argentine academic sphere began a process of analysis that conducted, on the one hand, the identification of the established programs' debilities in previous years and, on the other hand, the search for the incorporation of new themes with respect to the debates on defense.

Our conceptual focus is directed towards the renewal of sectorial studies, and it is based on the distinction, within the jurisdictional agenda, of the two kinds of responsibilities: the civil control of Armed Forces and the conduction of the strategic dimension of defense.

As aforementioned, we use the conceptualization proposed by Jorge Battaglini (2011) in this study. In fact, we employ the term “military politics” to refer to those initiatives that present as an objective to limit the political

³ It does not mean, however, that works on the Armed Forces' organization were not produced before the return of democracy. However, the thoughts about military problems provoked little interest among the civilians (Stepan 1988, 156-157).

⁴ See Fontana 1984; López 1987; López 1994; Stepan 1988; Moneta, López and Romero 1985; López and Pion Berlin 1996; Sain 1994; Sain 1999; and Diamint 1999.

influence that the Armed Forces tend to develop (Battaglini 2011, 242)⁵. For its part, the concept of “defense policy” is reserved to address definitions of strategic, doctrinal, organizational or operative character, which set the ways of use of military force and have the assurance of state survival as a main goal (Battaglini 2011, 243).

From the confluence of both elements, the “political administration of the defense” emerges as a product. It is understood as the effective political conduction of the whole of the question that forms National Defense. This broad definition contemplates both the policies that tend to subordinate the military to political power (military politics) and the establishment of strategic definitions for national defense (defense policy). The expression “political administration of defense” definitely embraces – and transcends – the traditional notions of “civil control”⁶.

The differentiation between military politics and defense policy eases the visualization of a spectrum able to characterize the sectorial agenda’s evolution since the return of democracy. Since 1983, and until the first years of 21st Century, military politics has maintained a certain preeminence, which enabled the approval of a normative axis that contributed to the decrease of the Armed Forces’ corporative power⁷. Hence, it was able to substantially reduce what David Pion-Bernin (1996, 16) defined as the “offensive autonomy” of the military, that is to say, their disposal to defy the civilians’ political authority.

However, even when the administrations of Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), Carlos Menem (1990-1995 and 1995-1999) and Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001) delegated some priority to the “military politics” question, the same process did not happen in respect to the “defense policy”. The attention to strategic

⁵ According to this vision, the “military politics” also comprehends the formation and capacitation; the public health system; the habitation policies; the management of pay increases; and the human rights policy.

⁶ Our conceptual frame regards itself as tributary to the restrictive or “of civilian control” approaches to the defense (see Huntington 1957; Janowitz 1967; and López 1994). The notion of “political administration” that is presented in this study recognizes an anchorage in the “civilian control”, since it incorporates the definition of large guidelines in terms of strategic military planning.

⁷ See Ley de Defensa Nacional N° 23.554 de 1988; Ley de Seguridad Interior N° 24.059 de 1992; and Ley de Inteligencia Nacional N° 25.520 de 2001.

questions was unstable and stayed largely connected to the implementation of other agendas of political or economic nature⁸.

This characterization of the agenda before 2003 constitutes the starting point to introduce one of this analysis' research premises. Simply put, we understand that there was a deficit regarding political administration of defense until the period in question since the subordination of the Armed Forces was not accompanied by great strategic guidelines or by a consequent integral, organic and function reform of the military system of defense (Montenegro 2012).

From the aforementioned questions we approach a second category, connected to the conditions through which the political administration of defense is exercised, that is to say, to the way the military politics and defense policies are articulated. For that to be done, it is propitious to present the difference between the patterns of control that Marcelo Sain has defined as "civil-democratic administration" and "civil-military dualism" (Sain 2010, 30). The "civil-democratic administration" is a pattern of control of the defense that supposes: 1) the exercise of the political-institutional administration over the Armed Forces; and b) the effective subordination of the military to the governmental authorities. If we do compare this differentiation to the one developed by Jorge Battaglini, it is clear that the subordination to the governmental authorities constitutes what this last author defines as "military politics", while the exercise of the political-institutional administration refers to the "defense policy" itself (see Chart 1).

Up to this point, the ideas of both authors converge. Our formulation of the "political administration of the defense" aims to condensate in one sole concept parts of the theoretical approaches of these academicians, considering – complementarily – the normative and strategic-military changes experienced in Argentina between 2003 and 2013.

Furthermore, the aforementioned notion of "civil-military dualism" formulated by Sain turns out to be useful. This concept recognizes two subcategories: "the autonomous military complacency" and the "deficient civil complacency" (Sain 2010, 48). The first refers to the autonomous political

⁸ See Alfonsín 2009, and Sain 2002/2003.

intervention of the military, i.e., the disposition of the Armed Forces to question the political authority of civilians. On the other hand, the “deficient civil complacency” lies on the problem’s counterpart: to focus the attention on the civilians’ debility to exert their responsibilities to control (Sain 2010, 48).

Chart 1: Comparison between Battaglini (2011) and Sain (2010)

Battaglini (2011)	Sain (2010)
Military Politics (civil control)	Civil-Democratic Administration
Defense Policy (strategic guidelines)	Civil-Military Dualism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous military complacency • Deficient civil complacency

That said, it is possible to present the second premise of this research. Thus, we understand that if new conditions concerning the exercise of the political administration of defense were developed in the period between 2003 and 2013, many deficiencies that blurred the civil performance were also evident. Different from previous decades, however, these deficiencies were not related to a tendency to the “autonomous military complacency”, but to the categories of control deployed by the very civil administration.

3. “Military politics” and “defense policy” in the *Kirchnerista* decade

This article is based on the premise that, until the first years of this century, the defense agenda was maintained focused on the issuing of measures of military politics. This search for limiting the political behavior of the Armed Forces was materialized both in the orders designed in the very ministerial ambit and in the policies adopted by other areas of the state. However, these decisions – that deliberately or collaterally impacted the “military politics”⁹ – were not

⁹ Among the decisions that deliberately impacted the military politics, it is worth to mention the limitation of the Armed Forces’ participation in operations of internal security. In respect to the decisions that collaterally affected the military politics, the dismantling of the military industrial complex; the foreign policy decisions related to the deactivation of antique hypothesis of conflict; and the increasing participation of Argentine military in Peacekeeping Missions of the UN.

accompanied by an integral modernization of the strategic guidelines that regulate the functioning of the sector.

It means that in spite of the fact that the military regarded their capability to impose corporative pressure as debilitated during the pre-*kirchnerista* period, the criteria for the composition of forces – yet with budgetary restrictions – remained largely unaltered. The military retained the capability to “self define”, which resulted in outdated armed institutions’ procedures (Montenegro 2012). Consequently, the Armed Forces preserved an internal organization unattached from the doctrinarian agreements achieved in the political level.

Nonetheless, despite the mentioned difficulties in terms of strategic guidelines, it is relevant to highlight that the military policy implemented since 1983 allowed specifying the boundaries of military power operation. Thus, the strict normative and doctrinarian delimitation would end up having a decisive impact after 2003 in the strategic modernization of the sector. In other words, the “maximization of the subordination and the civil control” (Battaglini 2013, 268) – which resulted in the consolidation of the juridical bases of national defense – constituted a key element when facing the military strategic guidelines.

In the following sections, the ministerial administrations of the 2003-2013 period are presented. If our analysis is focused on the matter of the strategic-military question, the conceptual framework presented in the foreseen paragraphs forces us to tangentially get into the military policy exercised throughout these years.

3.1. The tenure of José Pampuro (2003-2005)

The arrival of Pampuro at the Ministry of Defense was publicly announced on May 20, 2003, a few days before Néstor Kirchner took office. The military ambit was not unknown for him and for that his nomination did not generate big surprises. During his tenure as secretary-general of the Eduardo Duhalde administration, Pampuro had worked as an interlocutor to the then-Minister of Defense, Horacio Jaunarena, and with the Armed Forces themselves.

Pampuro's proximity to the military made a predictable horizon with respect to the Armed Forces possible. The first task Kirchner demanded of the

new minister destroyed those expectations, however. One day before his oath, the presidential decision to integrally dismiss the military high command was known¹⁰. The change in the command surprised the military because – a few days before – Pampuro had guaranteed the continuity of a large part of the Armed Forces. If the military "discomfort" was firstly noticed on the shape of non-official announcements, the subject gained more attention in the dismissal ceremony of the Army Chief, Lieutenant General Ricardo Brinzoni. In the occasion, the official manifested that his retirement was due to "unexplained circumstances" and adverted that "the political intrigue about the barracks [seemed] to move backwards after 20 years" (Veiras 2003a, our translation).

The presidential response did not take much time. In a speech made at the Military School due to the anniversary of the Armed Forces, Kirchner affirmed that "nobody can be surprised [...] or qualify a situation as unexplained when constitutional and legally binded faculties were exercised" (Kirchner 2003, our translation).

Brinzoni's declarations marked the beginning of a series of disjointed manifestations among the Armed Forces' ranks and the political power. These disagreements were fundamentally related to the expectations generated by the progressive advance of the juridical processes related to human rights violations during the last military dictatorship among the military (Canelo 2006, 14). In this context, the Supreme Court's imminent definition on the unconstitutionality of the Acts No. 23.521, of *Obediencia Debida*, and No. 23.492, of *Punto Final*, , as well as the federal government's decision of responding the international claims for the extradition of Argentine officials¹¹, conducted the "military question" to the center of the agenda once again.

The will to advance in terms of human rights was directly communicated by Kirchner to the military in the traditional Annual Dinner of Comradeship (*Cena Anual de Camaradería*, in Spanish). During the occasion, the president affirmed – with reference to the “revision of the past – that the reunion of the Argentine people “cannot come from silence or complicity” (La

¹⁰ The dismissal encompassed the retirement of 75% of the generals, and 50% of the Admirals and Brigadiers. See Veiras 2003b.

¹¹ Argentina had systematically refused the international requirements until then, the decision was made official through the Act 1581/2001.

Nación 2003). In this context, the resumption of the judicial causes presumably conducted the reactivation of the debates on the civil control of military institutions.

However, this apparent “comeback” of debates on military autonomy took place in a distinct context when compared to the 1980s and 1990s. Different from what happened then, the military questionings were not able to go unnoticed by civil authorities at any moment. In effect, these manifestations could hardly be interpreted as signs of a potential “offensive autonomy” (Pion Berlin 1996, 16). On the contrary, it was about a type of autonomous-reactive tendency of the Armed Forces, presented after the suppression of old prerogatives¹².

This diagnostic about the disagreements with the Armed Forces was quickly noticed by Kirchner. For this reason, parallel to the incentives towards decisions concerning the “military politics”, the government proposed to guide the military concerns about specific professional subjects. In this context, minister Pampuro announced the project to convoke a committee formed by defense experts, both civil academics and military professionals. The initiative was called “The National Defense in the Democratic Agenda” (*La Defensa Nacional en la Agenda Democrática*, in Spanish) and was announced at the Casa Rosada by President Kirchner himself. According to Actg 545/2003, the objective was to “generate consensus on the approach to the main axes of the National Defense policies”. Also, it aimed at “advancing in diagnostics and proposals that could be a base for the elaboration of a Strategic Plan of National Defense”.

The round of discussions lasted for more than a month and the conclusions drawn constitute an early sign of the modernization process of the next years. The main aspects included in the final results were related to the necessity to strengthen the managing capability of the Ministry of Defense, fundamentally concerning the functional dimension of the jurisdiction’s responsibilities. Likewise, it was pointed out that a reconsideration of the role of the Joint Staff in order to obtain a bigger military efficacy, since this organism should “[assist and advise] the Ministry of Defense in terms of military strategy

¹² For more details on the military resistance during this period, see Braslavsky 2009.

and [understand] the elaboration of the Joint Military Planning, according to the guidelines established by the President of the Republic” (Ministerio de Defensa 2003, 39. Our translation).

Regarding the interpretation of the international scenario, the conclusions referred to the “uncertain character of the present threats” and to in what extent this uncertainty could affect the strategic dimension of the defense:

Due to the existence of a strategic uncertainty, there is a necessity, with or without evident threats, to rely on a military instrument adequate enough to capably defend the human and material patrimony of the country, counting on a power-projection capability for the defense of national interests. The Armed Forces definitely do not justify themselves solely by threats, but also by the existence of State and the need for its defense. The aforementioned uncertainty determines the necessity to rely on warning, immediate reaction and quick deployment capabilities, as well as on a certain level of polyvalence. (Ministerio de Defensa 2003, 24. Our translation)

The previous conclusions mentioned the necessity of adapting the Armed Forces’ design to the uncertain character of the international scenario. Furthermore, it was affirmed that the defense continued to be an inalienable function of the state. For that reason, it was necessary to count on military capabilities that guaranteed the national defense in the present strategic context, then weighing the Armed Forces’ surveillance and control, and quick deployment functions¹³. In this sense, the reflexion on the strategic aspects would be complementary to the impetus granted to the reaffirmation of civil control during the first years of the *kirchnerista* decade.

It allows us to postulate that, though significant advances in terms of military-strategic planning – since this responsibility continued in great terms on the hands of the military (Verbitsky 2003) –, Kirchner’s decision to keep up with the advances registered in the ambit of civil control since the beginning of

¹³ Some points registered on the project’s conclusions had been noted in the 1998 Restructuring of the Armed Forces Law (no. 24.948).

debates on the professionalization of the sector laid the foundations for the start of a new era regarding the handling of strategic affairs.

In a word, the tenure of José Pampuro was characterized by a series of measures that rectified the civilians' capability to control the Armed Forces. Thus, the beginning of this "military politics" provoked an autonomous-reactive military behavior. In a mark that could be labeled "unfavorable"¹⁴, the "defense policy" occupied a place clearly subordinated in the sector's agenda. In this sense, the political elite's performance was similar to a "deficient civil complacency" (Sain 2010, 48), since the strategic aspects were assessed only in an embryonic way. This deficiency in military strategic planning would be reverted during the next ministerial term.

3.2. The tenure of Nilda Garré (2005-2010)

Different from the "easiness" found in the barracks after the arrival of Pampuro in the Ministry of Defense, its swap for Garré was not only unexpected, but also generated uncertainty in the military. With militant origins in the Peronist Youth (*Juventud Peronista*, in Spanish), the political-ideological profile of Garré's was miles away from the leadership's prototype desired by the martial ranks.

The first actions of the new minister were combined into a two-front advance. On the one hand, the deepening of the "revision of the past" policy firmly put in practice since the beginning of the Kirchner administration; on the other hand, the will to keep up with this aspect of the "military politics" with the boost of the specifically professional dimension of military activity.

Furthermore, and complementarily to the "human rights agenda", the new minister advanced in terms of the materialization of the challenges that affected the sector's strategic management. In this context, the Ministry of Defense ordered the elaboration of a situational diagnostic that would allow laying the required foundations for a gradual modernization process, oriented towards the adaptation of the military apparatus' design to new necessities of

¹⁴ We used this expression in a sense similar to the one used by Jorge Battaglini in order to characterize the management of the defense ambit during the Raúl Alfonsín years. However, the limitations experienced by civilians were substantially more severe during the first years of the newly-recovered democracy. See Battaglini 2010.

national defense. As a consequence of this advance, on November 2006 the National Defense Council (CODENA, initials in Spanish) was convoked for the first time since its creation, with the objective to elaborate the Comprehensive Assessment on the National Strategic Situation¹⁵. As a result of this call, the Directive on the Organization and Functioning of the Armed Forces (Act 1691/2006) was approved, establishing the agenda for the patterns, deployments and selections of equipments for the military apparatus. The approval of this directive and the regimentation of the National Defense Law (Act 727/2006) – in this case, ending a 18 years-old debt – have brought a foundational breakthrough in the defense policy.

The Act 1691/2006 established the bases for the Armed Forces' modernization. It indicated that the main guiding principle of the design of forces would be the “main mission”¹⁶ and that subsidiary missions should not affect “the required capabilities for the fulfillment of that main and essential mission”¹⁷. The need to articulate the design of forces with national and regional strategic assessment, as well as with the objectives of cooperation at the South American level, was also remembered.

Finally, the directive established that the design of forces would be accomplished in function of the planning method based on the military capabilities level, instead of the anachronistic method of conflict hypothesis. This way, and for the first time since the return of democracy, the political conduction rectified its will to materialize national defense positions in the areas linked to the military strategic planning.

In this context, the “Cycle of National Defense Planning” (*Ciclo de Planeamiento de la Defensa Nacional*, CPDN, in Spanish) was approved through the Act 1729. This presidential directive laid the foundations for the planning of defense in short, medium and long terms, responding to the need for adapting

¹⁵ CODENA was created in 1988 with the approval of National Defense Act 23.554.

¹⁶ The main mission of the military apparatus is “to ward and to repel external military state aggressions”, definition that excludes as a deployment hypothesis the so-called “New Threats” (Act 727/2006).

¹⁷ The Armed Forces may be part of four subsidiary missions: 1) multilateral operations of the United Nations; 2) internal security operations in cases provided by the Homeland Security Law no. 24.059; 3) operations in support of national community of allied countries; and 4) contribution to the build of a Sub-regional Defense System.

the policies to variations occurred in the strategic scenario. The directive established that each cycle should begin with the writing of a new Directive for National Defense Policy (*Directiva de Política de Defensa Nacional*, DPDN, in Spanish), created by the Executive. After the advent of this directive, the Joint Staff, based on its character of organization of technical-military advising and under ministerial supervision, would elaborate the related Military Strategic Plan¹⁸.

According to the normative, the defense planning must be developed sequentially, starting – and ending – at the national strategic level, besides passing through every actor of the jurisdiction. This sequence must privilege the systemic coherence between both national strategic and military strategic planning, and the convenient joint design of forces.

As aforementioned, CPDN inaugurated the military capabilities-based planning. In a context of strong uncertainty – product of both international and regional scenarios derived from the Cold War’s end –, the absence of clear enemies and the reduction of interstate conflicts put the traditional methods of planning, which stipulated the deployment of Armed Forces based on previously known threats, in an inexorable crisis¹⁹. Hence, and before the impossibility of precisely defining where threats can be found – although it is understood that it should be an external state military threat –, the design of forces conforms the development of military equipment of probable deployment, based on the defense of vital interests identified by the National Strategic Level, in the mark of a defensive strategic attitude that stops the offensive projection of power resources.

This decision meant the continuity of the path elaborated by the military distension measures that made Argentina deactivate the hypotheses of

¹⁸ The Military Strategic Plan is composed of the following documents: the Directive for Elaboration of the Military Strategic Plan; the Military Strategic Assessment and Resolution; the Military Strategic Directive; the Military Plans of Short, Medium and Long Terms; and the Military Capabilities Project. See Act 1729/2007.

¹⁹ South America detains an extraordinary record in terms of interstate peace. This reality makes us label as “anachronistic” the claims on which the methods of planning centered on hypotheses of conflict with neighbor states are based and, as such, to dismiss the existence of supposed arms races. For more information, see Battaglino 2008. For a different point of view, see Calle 2007.

conflict with neighbor states since the 1980s²⁰, with a consequent boost for regional integration²¹. In this sense, we could affirm that the adoption of this planning methodology was not a result of a conjunctural option, but it was strongly conditioned by the historical failure of the decisions adopted between 1983 and 2003. Thus, it was the result of a process in which the restitution of civil control over the Armed Forces and the measures adopted in terms of foreign policy played an important role, and not a military-strategic option of methodological nature without any historical constraints.

In sum, Garré's tenure was characterized by the deepening of an agenda of "military politics" that formalized a number of mechanisms for the civil control of the Armed Forces. In contrast to the "deficient civil complacency", which characterized the tenure of José Pampuro in an unfavorable context, the Ministry of Defense had been keeping up with these "military politics" since the end of 2005, with progressive advances in the strategic modernization of the jurisdiction. Indeed, the aspects related to the military strategic planning provoked an unprecedented attention, which was translated into the instauration of a planning cycle entirely supervised by civilians. In this sense, the necessary steps for the exercise of an effective "political administration" of the sector were taken for the first time since the return to democracy.

3.3. The tenure of Arturo Puricelli (2010-2013)

On December 14, 2010, Puricelli was indicated as the new Minister of Defense. After his nomination, military sectors expressed their "hope" for a change in the administrative style of Garré, which was regarded as a "confrontational" stand (De Vedia 2010)²². Nonetheless, the new minister ratified the continuity

²⁰ Some inescapable examples are the détente measures adopted by Argentina and Brazil in 1979 after the Corpus-Itaipú Treaty and by Argentina and Chile in 1984 with the Peace and Friendship Treaty. These initial agreements opened way for future approaches. Among these, one might remember the signature of the "Iguazú Declaration" in 1985 by the presidents of Argentina and Brazil, and the Argentine-Chilean agreements over the *Hielos Continentales* in 1998. See Escudé and Cisneros 2000.

²¹ The most recent evidence of this environment of confidence was the creation of the Union of South American Nations (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*, UNASUR, in Spanish), organization that came to solidify almost three decades of interstate cooperation and trust. In the plainly military ambit, the regional cooperation was translated into the creation of the South American Defense Council (CDS) in 2009.

²² This characterization may be interpreted as a result of the fears within military ranks caused by the intervention of the Ministry of Defense in issues that, until Garré's tenure, had remained under the

of the most part of the employees that had accompanied Garré, as well as of the Joint Chief of Staff and the chiefs of the three Armed Forces.

Puricelli's tenure implied ruptures and continuities regarding "military politics". With respect strictly to the "revision of the past", the Ministry of Defense continued to collaborate with the provision of information related to the crimes against humanity committed during the last military dictatorship (1976-1983) to the Justice.

However, a couple of incidents took place after 2011, reflecting the weaknesses of the exercise of the political administration of the defense. Differently from the difficulties detected during Pampuro's tenure, these problems were not associated to a civil "advance" over the once military prerogatives - like what happened between 2003 and 2005 - nor to the construction of new mechanisms directed towards conducting tasks previously "delegated" to the military. On the contrary, the new weaknesses paradoxically had to do more with the performance of political authorities than with any military projection on the themes now under civil responsibility.

The most well-known episode was the embargo on *Fragata Libertad*', that was upheld during the traditional cruise of instruction made by Navy cadets. The instruction boat was retained on October 03, 2012 in the Tema Port, Republic of Ghana, shortly after a Ghanaian court ruled in favor of a group of foreign bondholders. After hearing the news, the Argentine government denounced the illegal character of the measure, which violated the diplomatic immunity established in the Vienna Convention. Without analyzing this controversy - whose technical-juridical aspects exceed our study object - in detail, it is relevant to stress that, in parallel to international claims made by Argentina – finally accepted by the International Sea Court –, the retention of

determining orbit of the Armed Forces. In this sense, the creation of ministerial structures with capability to overlook strategic-military affairs, to establish reforms in military training, to establish criteria for planning and allocating budget, and to deepen "review of the past" policies, among other factors, implied on the end of old military "prerogatives" Military (Stepan 1988). In this regard, see Braslavsky 2009.

the vessel evidenced huge deficiencies in the capability to oversee the military activities²³.

Shortly after, a new conflict in the ministerial tenure took place, when the content of a course organized for civil employees by American experts was made public. The question was developed in the wake of the themes approached: the experts of the Civil-Military Center of the Postgraduate Naval College of the U.S. exposed the planning of "national security" and the so-called "new threats", a hypothesis not encompassed by the normative guidelines of the Argentine Armed Forces (Verbitsky 2012a).

Other episodes that controversially affected the Puricelli's tenure were the shipwreck of the Santísima Trinidad ship, as well as the impossibility of matching the dates established for the development of the Antarctic Campaign (*Campaña Antártica*, in Spanish). This set of incidents made some analysts forecast autonomous tendencies within the Armed Forces (Verbitsky 2013).

The military strategic planning was also characterized by a series of deficiencies during the Puricelli administration. With reference to these weaknesses, it is worth highlighting that the cabinet shuffle happened in the context of a Planning Cycle on course. The Act 1729/2007 had predicted that the first experience of CPDN – initiated in 2007 – was developed in an extraordinary fashion for five years. As a consequence, its finalization was planned for the end of 2011, with the formal presentation of the Plan of Military Capacities (*Plan de Capacidades Militares* – PLANCAMIL – initials in Spanish). Since then, the elaboration tasks for a new Directive for National Defense Policy, whose approval was scheduled for September 2012, should be started.

Hence, the Project for Military Capacities (PROCAMIL, in Spanish) was in the middle of its process of creation – by the Joint Staff – when Puricelli

²³ According to the ministerial documentation that became public after this controversy, the inclusion of the Ghanian port in the itinerary of the Libertad was ordered by the then Director of Organization and Doctrine of the Navy, Commodore Alfredo Blanco, who subsequently informed the Ministry of Defense. In this regard, it is noteworthy that if the retention of the frigate was interpreted by some analysts as a reflection of a "reautonomization" of the Armed Forces (Verbitsky 2012b; 2012c), from our perspective this incident was the result of a weakening in the exercise of civil conduction, and not an advance of the military over the ministerial powers and faculties.

arrived in the Ministry of Defense. This document brings to the political level the “desirable” model of military instruments, with the aim of integrally responding to the missions assigned for the Armed Forces by the National Strategic Level.

The following step consisted on the analysis and supervision of PROCAMIL by the Ministry of Defense in order to begin the tasks related to the creation of PLANCAMIL, a fundamental tool to a new cycle’s start, as soon as possible. Nevertheless, PLANCAMIL did not obtain the official approval by the minister through a resolution even after the documents were completed in the agreed time and structure, the reason why the first CPDN was not formally finalized.

In synthesis, if Puricelli’s tenure presented relative continuities to the “military politics”, in particular regarding the military strategic planning, some deficiencies were present, that prevented the effective consolidation of the process that had been initiated by the previous mandatory. In this sense, the role of civilians was similar to the “deficient civil complacency” (Sain 2010, 48) that characterized the political conduction of this sector during Pampuro’s tenure. However, differently from what happened between 2003 and 2005, the deficient civil complacency developed into a “favorable” context, that is to say, a context that lacked the military autonomous-reactive tendencies experienced in the beginning of the *Kirchnerista* administration.

4. Conclusion

Until now, we have studied the performance of civil tenures in charge of the Ministry of Defense during the period 2003-2013. The analysis focused on conduction of the strategic dimension of the sector, emphasizing the exercise of the responsibilities pertaining to military strategic planning. Bearing these factors in mind, we assessed the ministerial agendas of José Pampuro (2003-2005); Nilda Garré (2005-2010); and Arturo Puricelli (2010-2013).

In order to do this, it is necessary to stress one particular issue: the article considers that in the last ten years the administrations of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández formulated and implemented – in the defense ambit – a set of unprecedented measures, which resulted in an expansion of the

civilian responsible over the sector. Indeed, the progresses made in these years – which completed regulatory achievements of previous decades – laid the institutional foundations of what we have labeled the "political administration of national defense".

However, as it is clear from the foregoing words, the formalization of institutional mechanisms and the approval of normative tools are necessary, yet not sufficient. Throughout the three analyzed tenures, the process of civil empowerment coexisted with ambiguities and setbacks that demonstrated limits on the progress achieved.

In Pampuro's case, we have stated that significant achievements in military-strategic planning were not achieved, except for some incipient efforts. In an "unfavorable" context, product of reactive-autonomous trends that resulted from the advance of "military politics", strategic aspects (defense policy) occupied a marginal place. Thus, these responsibilities largely continued in the hands of the military. However, the launch of "The National Defense in the Democratic Agenda" cycle allowed laying some groundwork for the start of a new phase of strategic administration of military affairs.

During Garré's tenure, the most significant progresses were registered in terms of effective conducting defense policy. From 2006 onwards, a qualitative leap forward in the strategic aspects of the sector was produced, and numerous initiatives to reverse the "deficient civil complacency" (Sain 2010, 48) were deployed. The most significant measures were the enactment of Act 1729/2007, which established a Planning Cycle – based on the method centered on military capabilities instead of hypothesis of conflict –, entirely led and supervised by the political level. For its part, Act 1714/2009, which approved the Directive for National Defense Policy, established strategic assessments of Argentina over global and regional scenarios, besides instructing the Ministry of Defense, the Armed Forces and their dependents, to adapt its structure, operation and provisions under the necessary requirements.

The two years of management Puricelli exhibited in relation to the achievements of the previous step, some continuities and significant setbacks in the performance of civil management. Regarding the first point, there is the commitment to solving the crimes against humanity committed during the military dictatorship. Meanwhile, setbacks were linked to the dimension that is

the focus of this article, ie, with defense policy and, more specifically-to the effective conduct of military strategic planning.

Chart 2: The military strategic planning during the *Kirchnerista* decade

José Pampuro (2003-2005)	Deficient Civil Complacency in an “unfavorable context”
Nilda Garré (2005-2010)	Political Administration of the Defense
Arturo Puricelli (2010-2013)	Deficient Civil Complacency in a “favorable context”

To recapitulate, the foregoing findings do not neglect the fact that the agenda of the defense showed remarkable achievements in political leadership of the sector between 2003 and 2013. However, the consolidation of these advances – and the overcoming of the experienced setbacks – requires the dedication of efforts more linked to the conduction of strategic-military aspects. It is precisely from the exercise of these responsibilities that it will be possible to characterize the state of the real situation of the defense budget, to define the operational distribution required to meet current requirements and to strategically plan eventual increases of the jurisdiction’s expenditure. Without clear political definitions and precise strategic assessments, budget considerations will fall inevitably in partial and arbitrary assessments.

REFERENCES

- Alfonsín, Raúl. 2004. *Memoria Política. Transición a la Democracia y Derechos Humanos*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Battaglino, Jorge. 2008. “Palabras mortales. ¿Rearme y carrera armamentista en América del Sur?” *Revista Nueva Sociedad* 215: 23-34.
- Battaglino, Jorge. 2010. “La política militar de Alfonsín: la implementación del control civil en un contexto desfavorable.” In *Discutir Alfonsín*, organized by Roberto Gargarella, María Victoria Murillo, and Mario Pecheny, 161-184. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
- Battaglino, Jorge. 2011. “Política de defensa y política militar durante el kirchnerismo.” In *La política en tiempos del kirchnerismo*, organized by Miguel de Luca and Andrés Malamud. Buenos Aires: Eudeba.
- Battaglino, Jorge. 2013. “La Argentina desde 1983: un caso de desmilitarización del sistema político.” *Revista SAAP*, 7(2): 265-273.
- Braslavsky, Guido. 2009. *Enemigos íntimos*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
- Canelo, Paula. 2006. “El futuro atado al pasado. Políticos y militares frente al nuevo rol de las Fuerzas Armadas argentinas (1995-2002).” MA diss., FLACSO. Mimeo.
- Calle, Fabián. 2007. “Rambo, versión sudamericana. El impacto regional del rearme de Venezuela y Chile.” *Revista Nueva Sociedad* 211: 13-21.
- Diamint, Rut, ed. 1999. *Control civil y Fuerzas Armadas en las nuevas democracias latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano.
- Escudé, Carlos, y Andrés Cisneros. 2000. *Historia de las Relaciones Exteriores Argentinas*. Buenos Aires: Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales (CARI).
- Fontana, Andrés. 1984. *Fuerzas Armadas, partidos políticos y transición a la democracia*. Buenos Aires: CEDES.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1957. *The Soldier and the State: the theory and politics of civil-military relations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Janowitz, Morris. 1967. *El soldado profesional. Retrato político y social*. Buenos Aires: Omeba.
- Kirchner, Néstor. 2003. “Discurso en el Acto de Conmemoración del 193° Aniversario del día del Ejército.”. *Archivo de la Presidencia de la*

- Nación*. Buenos Aires, May 29. Accessed January 28, 2014. <http://www.presidencia.gob.ar/discursos-2007/24365>.
- López, Ernesto. 1987. *Seguridad nacional y sedición militar*. Buenos Aires: Legasa.
- López, Ernesto. 1994. *Ni la ceniza ni la gloria. Actores, sistema político y cuestión militar en los años de Alfonsín*. Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.
- López, Ernesto, ed. 2007. *Control civil sobre los militares y política de defensa en Argentina, Brasil, Chile y Uruguay*. Buenos Aires: Altamira.
- López, Ernesto, and David Pion-Berlin. 1996. *Democracia y cuestión militar*. Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.
- Ministerio de Defensa de la República Argentina. 2003. *La Defensa Nacional en la Agenda Democrática. Informe de la Primera Ronda de Discusiones*. Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Defensa. Accessed January 22, 2014. <http://www.mindef.gov.ar/publicaciones/pdf/Libro-La-defensa-nacional-en-la-agenda-democratica.pdf>.
- Moneta, Carlos, Ernesto López, and Aníbal Romero. 1985. *La reforma militar*. Buenos Aires: Legasa.
- Montenegro, Germán. 2012. “El marco doctrinario”. In *La defensa en el siglo XXI. Argentina y la seguridad global*, edited by Khatchik Derghougassian, Valeria Larocca, Federico Merke, Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, and Germán Montenegro. Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual.
- O’Donnell, Guillermo. 1972. “Modernización y golpes militares. Teoría, comparación y el caso argentino”. *Desarrollo Económico* 12(47): 519-566.
- O’Donnell, Guillermo, and Phillippe Schmitter. 1986. *Transiciones desde un gobierno autoritario*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Pion-Berlin, David. 1996. “Autonomía militar y democracias emergentes en América del Sur”. In *Democracia y cuestión militar*, organized by Ernesto López and David Pion-Berlin, 11-50. Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.
- Sain, Marcelo. 1994. *Los levantamientos carapintada 1987-1991*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina.

- Sain, Marcelo. 1999. "Alfonsín, Menem y las relaciones cívico-militares. La construcción del control civil sobre las Fuerzas Armadas en la Argentina democrática (1983-1995)". PhD Thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas.
- Sain, Marcelo. 2002/2003. "Las Fuerzas Armadas en Argentina. Los dilemas de la reforma militar en una situación de crisis." *Security and Defense Studies Review* 2: 217-245.
- Sain, Marcelo. 2010. *Los votos y las botas*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros.
- Scheetz, Thomas. 1993. "El marco teórico, político y económico para una reforma militar en la Argentina". *Documentos de Trabajo 50*. Buenos Aires: EURAL.
- Scheetz, Thomas, and Gustavo Cáceres. 1995. *Defensa no provocativa. Una propuesta de reforma militar para la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Editora Buenos Aires.
- Stepan, Alfred. 1988. *Rethinking military politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tibiletti, Luis. 1995. "Parlamento y relaciones cívico-militares en la transición y consolidación democrática en la Argentina (1983-1985)". *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 3: 175-211.

Regulatory Documents

- Decreto N° 545/2003 Aprobación del Proyecto "La Defensa Nacional en la Agenda Democrática."
- Decreto N° 727/2006 de Reglamentación de la Ley de Defensa Nacional.
- Decreto N° 1691/2006 Directiva sobre Organización y Funcionamiento de las Fuerzas Armadas.
- Decreto N° 1729/2007 de Ciclo de Planeamiento de la Defensa Nacional.
- Decreto N° 1714/2009 Directiva de Política de Defensa Nacional.
- Ley N° 23.554 de Defensa Nacional.
- Ley N° 24.059 de Seguridad Interior.
- Ley N° 25.520 de Inteligencia Nacional.
- Ley N° 24.948 de Reestructuración de las Fuerzas Armadas.

Journalistic Sources

- La Nación*. 2003. “El discurso presidencial, Las palabras de Néstor Kirchner durante la comida central de camaradería de las Fuerzas Armadas”. July 08.
- De Vedia, Mariano. 2010. “Estamos frente a la oportunidad de ser un país más igualitario”. *La Nación*, December 15.
- Veiras, Nora. 2003a. “La casa se reserva el derecho de admisión”. *Página 12*, March 25.
- Veiras, Nora. 2003b. “Con la espada en el último discurso”. *Página 12*, May 29.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. 2003. “Nuevas Amenazas”. *Página 12*, September 21.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. 2012a. “Welcome back, boys”. *Página 12*, September 09.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. 2012b. “No se Ghana para sustos”. *Página 12*, October 14.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. 2012c. “Hundidos”. *Página 12*, October 16.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. 2013. “Santísima Trinidad”. *Página 12*, January 27.

ABSTRACT

This paper studies the performances of the Ministry of Defense demarches during 2003-2013. The analysis focuses on the conduction of the strategic dimension of the sector; in particular, on the relative responsibilities of the military strategic planning. In this framework, the demarches of ministers José Pampuro (2003-05), Nilda Garré (2005-10) and Arturo Puricelli (2010-13) are analyzed.

The time framework defined for the study of our object assumes that a set of unprecedented measures were implemented. For the first time since the return of democracy, for example, an effective debate on the conduction of the strategic dimension of the defense policy was addressed. Nevertheless, for reasons that are object of analysis during this article, the empowerment process of the political conduction survived along with ambiguities and setbacks that, during the same period, made the absence of a solid consensus regarding the results of the sectorial agenda evident.

KEYWORDS

Military Policy; Defense Policy; Military Strategic Planning; Argentina; Kirchner

*Received on January 30, 2014.
Approved on September 29, 2014.*

Translated by Pedro Alt