

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **BILATERAL MILITARY CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE MERCOSUR COUNTRIES**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The military establishments of both South Africa and the Mercosur countries have played significant roles in the domestic political arena, particularly in the period following WW II. These roles ranged from attempting to defend citizens against foreign aggression to usurping the reigns of power or exercising undue influence over the political authorities. At different times, the military have, on both sides of the South Atlantic, both defended and violated the human rights of nationals in the name of national security or national interests.

This chapter firstly analyses the historical military interaction between South Africa and its trans-Atlantic neighbours up to 1994. Secondly, the nature and scope of post-1994 military relations are analysed according to military representation; high-profile visits by military personnel; military training; mutual defence agreements; and co-operation among defence-related industries. The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of the existing military capabilities of these countries with a view to highlighting potential areas for improving military co-operation.

#### **2. HISTORICAL MILITARY RELATIONS**

The roots of the interaction between the South African armed forces and those of the Mercosur countries date back to the colonial relationship between these countries and their colonisers. Furthermore, the role and nature of the dominant international system had a profound impact on such relations. In most cases the interaction between South African and South American armed forces was largely determined by the dominant balance-of-power relations among the powerful nations of the North. In this respect, countries from the South were used to satisfy or complement the military needs of the European colonisers, and served as extensions of the colonisers' foreign policy instruments. When the colonial era came to an end, which happened much earlier in South America than in Africa, internal struggles for

political control ensued. In most cases the military intervened as moderators or contestants for political power. This situation was aggravated by the superimposition of the Cold War, during which some of the states were used by the superpowers as proxies for their global political agenda. Consequently, the relationship between the countries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean — from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere — defined the international relations of South Atlantic countries on the basis of their alignment in a bipolar world. It is against this background that South Africa's interaction with individual countries now constituting Mercosur has historically been chequered and inconsistent.

## 2.1 ARGENTINA

The nature of military relations between South Africa and Argentina can hardly be described as ever hostile because both in the pre-1994 and post-1994 periods, military interaction continued unabated, *albeit* secretly in the pre-1994 period. The imposition of a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in terms of UN Security Council Resolution 418 of 1977, was seen as a bearable inconvenience. Faced with a real threat on its borders, in the form of Brazil, Argentina resolved to befriend any country that would help augment its military capacity and diplomatic relations, and South Africa presented itself in that light.

### 2.1.1 Pre-1994 Argentine-South Africa military relations

South Africa was first militarily linked to Argentina in 1806 just after the British had captured Cape Town. The British forces, under Sir Home Popham, launched an unauthorised attack on the Spanish colonies along the River Plate, using Cape Town as a base. At that stage, the Spanish Empire was on the verge of total collapse and therefore reluctant (or probably incapable) of defending all its colonial possessions. The attack was a total failure as the British had to abort the operation following fierce resistance from the Argentineans. However, this had a profound effect on the way the Argentineans perceived their coloniser — Spain. Some of the British forces occupied adjacent territory, which later became Uruguay. Subsequently, there was a general feeling that the Argentineans and the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries had proven beyond reasonable doubt that they were capable of defending themselves and therefore did not need Spain for protection. Thus, the seeds for liberation movements had been sown. It is highly unlikely that the attack on Argentina by

Britain in the early nineteenth century would have taken place without having the Cape Colony as a launching pad.<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly, both Argentina and South Africa realised their strategic value to the South Atlantic region. This realisation became more conspicuous as the traditional rivalry for hegemony and the quest for control of the River Plate intensified. Furthermore, Argentina was engaged in bilateral negotiations with Uruguay about fishing rights, which the latter wanted to exploit to the maximum. For Argentina, Uruguay represented an obstacle to the former's quest for hegemonic influence in the sub-region. For many years there had always been a rivalry between the ports of Buenos Aires and Montevideo where the former was regarded as the "door to the River Plate" and the latter as "the natural key to the coast".<sup>2</sup> Thus, based on global strategic considerations, parallel 35°S from Punta del Este (Uruguay) to the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) was regarded as the "new key to the global system of defence."<sup>3</sup> Besides, both Argentina and South Africa had had to deal with Britain on issues that had direct military implications. Britain had sought to establish a clear link between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans both for economic, political and military considerations. To this effect, following the Peace Convention in 1828, Britain secured a dominion over the River Plate and in 1833 Britain took over control of the Falklands/Malvinas island. In 1967 Britain ceded control of the Simon's Town naval base back to South Africa.

After becoming a Republic on 31 May 1961, South Africa began a campaign to establish diplomatic ties with like-minded countries. As was indicated in the previous chapter, there was a growing realisation that it was imperative for South Africa to cement ties with the South American states, under the pretext of solidarity against communism. Most of these countries, including Argentina, were under military rule and therefore facing political insecurity both internally and externally. Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Argentina were regarded as crucial by both countries, but particularly so for the former than the latter. South Africa extended its diplomatic relations with Argentina by creating an embassy with a military attaché in Argentina. On 15 March 1968 the first Navy Attaché, Commandant J.J.C. Rice, who had been the military attaché in Portugal, was appointed in Argentina.<sup>4</sup> While Argentina had a military representative in South Africa, it was loathe to establish similar representation in the whole of Southern Africa. For instance, it was announced on 8 January 1975 that Argentina and Rwanda were going to establish diplomatic ties at ambassadorial level, but that none of the two representatives would be resident in the

two countries.<sup>5</sup> By this time, South Africa was represented in Argentina by Commander P.A.H. Tomlinson until 15 February 1975 when he was replaced by Captain (SAN) J.C. Ferris as the Armed Forces Attaché.<sup>6</sup>

By the time the Falklands/Malvinas War broke out in 1982 between Britain and Argentina, the military relations between Argentina and South Africa were already at an advanced stage. In fact, for many years speculation has been rife that South Africa actually provided covert military support to Argentina during the Falklands/Malvinas War. There were even allegations that South Africa was supplying Argentina with missiles and spare parts for their aircraft. It was speculated that the assistance stemmed from South Africa's ten-year old military pact with Argentina, which also included Brazil, Paraguay, Israel and Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> However, not a shred of evidence has ever come to light to confirm the allegations.<sup>8</sup> It is likely that these allegations were based on the fact that there were Afrikaans-speaking people who participated during the Falklands/Malvinas War on the side of the Argentineans. Those people were actually the descendants of the Afrikaans-speaking refugees who settled in Argentina during the period 1902-1905, just after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Some of them settled in Chile.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, South Africa's records that document the Falklands conflict do not mention any active participation of the country in the war, unless such information was excised from the records or relevant records were destroyed.<sup>10</sup> Of course, military co-operation with countries such as Argentina, Iran, Israel, Uruguay, the United Kingdom (UK), and many other states was shrouded in secrecy. In fact, there was a standing policy within the South African defence establishment to destroy sensitive documents, especially the monthly military reports called ISUMS. South Africa's military attachés all over the world were under strict orders to destroy these documents and to submit 'destruction certificates' as proof that such documents had been destroyed.<sup>11</sup>

On 9 December 1983, South Africa promulgated a policy for mutual training with some South American countries. The primary aim of the policy was to ensure that there were continuous symbiotic exchanges between these countries and South Africa, especially in improving the latter's military skills. Furthermore, given the fact that South Africa was still subjected to sanctions, such mutual training ensured skills transfer and strengthened political relations among the countries involved. By the end of 1983, South Africa's military training exchange programme with Argentina was already fairly extensive (Table 10).

**Table 10: ARGENTINA’S MILITARY STUDENTS TRAINED IN SOUTH AFRICA (AS IN DECEMBER 1983)**

Nature of Course	Rank Group	No. of Students
Commando Training	Sergeant; Lieutenant and Captain	3
Training on board ship (ARA LIBERATAD)	Midshipman; Sub-Lieutenant	3
Intelligence Courses	Captain	3
Training on Ice-breaker	Lieutenant-Commander; Commander	2

**Source:** SANDF Archives (Documentation Centre), Group 2, Box 1, *File WA/M/103/7/1/Montevideo*, 9 December 1983.

South Africa accommodated Argentinean military students on a number of courses, namely, the SA Army Command and Staff course; the SA Air Force Staff course; the SA Naval Staff course and the Junior Joint Warfare course. The primary aim of the Command and Staff course was (and still is) to “qualify selected officers as Officers Commanding and Senior Staff officers for utilisation on formation level in the field.”<sup>12</sup> The Junior Joint Warfare course was designed to “qualify members to serve in a joint organisation” and to “train them to be able to serve in a Joint Operation Centre in Joint Planning Warfare”.<sup>13</sup> One of the distinguishing characteristics of former SADF forces was the emphasis on the training of junior leaders and their immediate superiors. Thus, Argentina sought South Africa’s expertise in the management and conduct of operations both at tactical and operational levels. This trend of military interaction persisted until the political landscape in both countries changed.

### 2.1.2 Post-1994 Argentine-South Africa military relations

The military relations between Argentina and South Africa after 1994 were characterised by a great deal of continuity and stability in many dimensions, including military representation; high-profile goodwill visits; and training exchange programmes.

2.1.2.1 *Military representation*

The advent of democracy in South Africa necessitated the revival of active and open consultations between the military establishments of South Africa and Argentina. As Table 11 indicates, extensive military representation of South Africa in Argentina started in earnest in 1986. The restructuring process of South Africa's world-wide diplomatic representation resulted in South Africa's representative in Argentina also being accredited to Paraguay and Uruguay.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 11: SADF AND, AFTER 1994, SANDF ATTACHÉS IN ARGENTINA**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Period</b>
Capt (SAN) L.N. Erleigh	December 1986 – December 1989
Capt (SAN) R.A.S. Hauter	December 1989 – December 1992
Capt (SAN) J.B. Rabe	December 1992 – December 1995
Capt (SAN) B.R. Donkin	December 1995 – December 1998
Capt (SAN) S.L. Pillay	December 1998 – to date*

Note: \* Denotes “as at the end of 2002”

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

The Argentine military office in Pretoria was re-opened in February 1993. Like South Africa, the Argentine military representative is responsible for all defence-related matters, that is for all arms of service (Army, Air Force and Navy). It is also notable that only naval officers have thus far represented the Argentine armed forces in South Africa (Table 12). This may be indicative of the nature of the interests Argentina has in South Africa or the type of military relations that have to be strengthened, that is, they should be guided by naval interests.

**Table 12: ARGENTINEAN MILITARY ATTACHÉS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Capacity/ Designation</b>	<b>Period</b>
Capt (N) J.I. Abelleira	Naval, Military and Air Attaché	February 1993 – February 1995
Capt (N) R.D. Lozano	Naval, Military and Air Attaché	February 1995 – February 1997
Capt (N) H.J. Santillan	Defence Attaché	January 1997 – February 1999
Capt (N) L.A. Collavino	Naval, Military and Air Attaché	February 1999 – January 2001
Capt (N) M.E. Fenley	Naval, Military and Air Attaché	January 2001 – to date*

Note: \* Denotes “as at the end of 2002”

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

#### 2.1.2.2 *Military visits*

One of the prominent tasks of political and military representatives in a country is to facilitate exposure of the host country's senior personnel to the countries from which such representatives originated. This implies proposing, encouraging, and co-ordinating high-profile visits to those countries. Thus, visits normally give a good indication of the eagerness to identify and understand mutual interests. With regard to Argentine-South Africa military relations, there have been limited exchange visits by high-profile military leaders (both uniformed and civilian).

On the civilian side, Juan Carlos Melián, an adviser to the Defence Commission of the Argentinian Parliament, visited the Unisa Centre for Latin American Studies (UCLAS) on 19 March 1996. He was accompanied by Germán Domínguez, Cultural Attaché, Embassy of the Argentine Republic in South Africa. According to Melián, one of the long-term goals of his visit to South Africa was to strengthen co-operation in the South Atlantic region. Being a member of the council of an association popularly known as the *Seguridad Estratégica Regional (SER or Regional Strategic Security)*, Melián stated

that he wanted to "promote debate on security and defence problems on national, regional and international levels." He further indicated that the SER was in the process of establishing a database for such purposes.<sup>15</sup>

On the military side, the South African Chief of Navy twice visited Argentina (October 1996 and October 1997). In September 1996, the Argentine Chief of Army, General Balza, visited the South African Army. The then South African Chief of Army, Lieutenant-General Otto, paid a goodwill visit to Argentina in February 1997. During the following year, in April 1998, the Argentine Chief of Army Staff paid a goodwill visit to the South African Army. The other significant visit by Argentine personnel was during the "Africa Aerospace and Defence 2000", a Defence and Aerospace Industry Exposition, and "SAAF 80", the SA Air Force' 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, all of which took place from 5-9 September 2000 at the Waterkloof Air Force Base. Making the 2000 visit even more special was the fact that Argentina was the only South American country attending the show that had sent two aircraft.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.1.2.3 *Military training*

Since the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, the Argentine armed forces have not sent a single military student to attend any of the SANDF military courses in South Africa by October 2001. It could be argued that because South Africa is still busy with the integration process, there are limited slots for foreign students. Conversely, South Africa has been able to secure training slots in the Argentine armed forces' training programmes. For instance, during 1995, the SA Navy sent a surface attachment to Argentina. In the same year and the following one a SA Navy officer attended the Naval Control of Shipping course. Similarly, in 1999 and 2000, a SA Navy officer attended the Ice Navigation course in each year.<sup>17</sup>

As already indicated, there is a clear preponderance of navy-related activities between the two countries. This could be ascribed to the existence of two agreements in this respect. Firstly, the Agreement on the Exchange of Information on Maritime Traffic which was signed on 30 August 1991. The second one was the Agreement of Peacetime Co-operation between Argentine-RSA Navies, which was signed in October 1997.<sup>18</sup> While the first agreement seems to be a logical bilateral arrangement between

two countries with large oceanic waters separating them, the second one seems to exclude periods of conflict and/or war. It should not be misconstrued as a bilateral mutual defence agreement which would guarantee mutual military assistance during times of war.

It is therefore evident that Argentine-South Africa military relations continued through the years of isolation for South Africa. Binding the two countries was their perceived common threat of communism that would engulf the South Atlantic states. The outbreak of the Falklands/Malvinas War or the South Atlantic War in 1982, might have increased South Africa's strategic value to Argentina. It is notable that most of the Argentine-South Africa military interaction was largely with regard to training. South Africa's training to the Argentineans was predominantly in the battle-handling arena, while the Argentineans provided some technical military training. With the democratisation of Argentina, active military interaction with South Africa was reduced when the former's military office in Pretoria was closed down. Even though there have been increased military activities between the two countries in the post-1994 era, there is still room for improvement in terms of quality of interaction beyond symbolism.

## 2.2 BRAZIL

The hegemonic rivalry in the region involving Brazil and Argentina, to a large extent affected the way both countries interacted with South Africa. Being a *pariah* state at the time, South Africa sought to exploit the situation to its advantage. Maintaining cordial relations with the two countries would support South Africa's position in international fora such the UN General Assembly. However, historical events prove that this was not always possible as both countries regularly reviewed their political stance towards South Africa, especially when they democratised during the early to mid-1980s.

### 2.2.1 Pre-1994 Brazil-South Africa military relations

Military relations between Brazil and South Africa vacillated from cordial to almost hostile. The cordiality of such relations was normally linked to the nature of the government and the political system in Brazil. During the period of military

governments in Brazil, relations could not be characterised as positive due to the international *pariah* status of South Africa. This limited cordiality during military rule in Brazil did not translate into full-fledged military diplomatic representation. There were interactions between the two military establishments, but most of it was shrouded in secrecy. Ironically, South African and Brazilian armed forces fought alongside each other during the WW II. In fact, during that war the South African 6<sup>th</sup> Division supplied the Brazilian army — *Força Expedicionária Brasileira (FEB)* — with winter uniforms, as “the Brazilian soldiers went to Italy unprepared for the Italian winter.”<sup>19</sup> This could partly explain the relations between the two military establishments, particularly in the light of the arms embargo imposed on South Africa, which Brazil supported but did not fully implement.

Being the target of UN-imposed sanctions, South Africa decided to devise strategies to attract support, or at least, sympathy from the South American countries in international fora. This stemmed from the so-called ‘special relationship’ that existed between South Africa’s military attachés in South America and the senior authorities in the countries of that region. South Africa, through the Defence Committee, therefore decided to design a Psychological Action Plan – code-named ‘Project Birch’ – with a view to creating a climate conducive to supporting national policy. To this effect, all the military attachés in South America were requested to provide information on their countries of accreditation and specifically also comment on Peru and Brazil. The military attachés were to provide crucial information on the following priority areas: agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, sub-economical housing or “any other civilian sector where [South Africa’s] defence force can possibly be of assistance.”<sup>20</sup> They also had to find out more about the extent and nature of formal and informal co-operation between the defence forces in the region with respect to training, joint exercises and social/cultural interaction.<sup>21</sup>

It is not clear what the impact of Project Birch was on the Brazil-South Africa military relations. The implementation of Project Birch coincided with the period during which the Brazilian government discouraged all forms of military interaction with South Africa. For instance, the government prevented EMBRAER, the state-run arms-

producing company, from competing for the order to supply training aircraft to the South African (SA) Air Force.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, the South African government found itself in a dilemma. On the one hand there was a possibility of using the military attaché in Montevideo to represent South Africa's military interests in Brazil. On the other hand, the sheer size and importance of Brazil in the South American sub-region was such that it required dedicated representation. Therefore, ignoring Brazil was not an option at all. During the mid-1980s the South African military establishment, in consultation with Department of Foreign Affairs officials, was contemplating placing an undercover military representative in Brazil. The significance of military representation in Brazil was further accentuated by the ever-increasing possibility of South Africa's military representation in other countries in the Southern Cone sub-region, being threatened. In the likely event that South Africa's military attachés in countries such as Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, were withdrawn (or would be forced to withdraw), it was argued that the military interests of South Africa would then be better served by having an undercover representative in Brazil. Another consoling factor for South Africa was the perception that Brazil was predominantly anti-leftist and anti-communist in its worldview. The Brazilian élite shared South Africa's concerns about the possible infiltration of communist elements in the South Atlantic region.<sup>23</sup> However, such shared threats or perception of threats did not translate into closer interaction between the two countries. It was only with the change of government in South Africa in 1994 that direct military interaction resumed in earnest.

## 2.2.2 Post-1994 Brazil-South Africa military relations

Military interaction between the two countries was largely in the area of diplomatic representation; goodwill visits and training exchange programmes.

### 2.2.2.1 *Military representation*

As already indicated, overt military relations between Brazil and South Africa only commenced in 1994 with the advent of democracy in the country. Therefore, there have only been three military attachés representing South Africa in Brazil since 1994 (Table

13). It is notable that the first black military attaché in South America was appointed in Brazil. It is also notable that being a Lieutenant-Colonel, he was the first relatively junior military representative for South Africa in such an important country.

**Table 13: SOUTH AFRICA'S MILITARY ATTACHÉS IN BRAZIL SINCE 1994**

Name	Capacity/Designation	Period
Col A.F. Prins	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1994 – December 1997
Col C.V. Geldenhuys	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1997 – December 2000
Lt Col K. Malloi	Armed Forces Attaché	December 2000 to date*

Note: \* Denotes “as at the end of 2002”

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

Unlike South Africa, Brazil has since 1994 always sent two military representatives to South Africa, one as military attaché (army and air force) and the other a naval attaché (Table 14). As is the case with Argentina, the navy is hardly ever coupled with any other arm of service, whereas the army is normally coupled with the air force. This demonstrates in no uncertain terms the seriousness with which the Brazilian armed forces regard South Africa from military, political and geo-strategic perspectives.

**Table 14: BRAZILIAN MILITARY ATTACHÉS IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994**

Name	Capacity/Designation	Period
Col J.E.C. Siquera	Military Attaché	February 1995 – February 1997
Capt (N) M.M. Torres	Naval Attaché	January 1995 – January 1997
Col R. Montechiari	Army & Air Attaché	February 1997 – February 1999
Capt (N) R. dos Santos	Naval Attaché	January 1997 – January 1999
Col M.F. Hennemann	Army & Air Attaché	February 1999 – January 2001
Capt (N) V.F. Japiassu	Naval Attaché	February 1999 – January

		2001
Capt (N) L. Zampronio	Defence and Naval Attaché	January 2001 to date*
Col M. Mandonca	Army & Air Attaché	January 2001 to date*

Note: \* Denotes “as at the end of 2002”

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

#### 2.2.2.2 *Military visits*

Given the high level of military representation of Brazilian interests in South Africa, it is only logical that there would be substantial interaction and high-profile visits between the two countries. The first official visit by a Brazilian naval vessel was in June 1995 when the hydrographic vessel — *SIRIUS* — conducted a routine visit to Cape Town. In 1996, three SANDF yachts participated in the Rio Yacht Race. During that visit, the Brazilian Navy provided essential support to the visiting members. During November of the same year, two SA Air Force members visited Brazil when they attended a fighter pilot symposium. The SA Special Forces paid an official visit to Brazil in 1997 and in the same year, the SA Chief of the Navy visited Brazil. Members of the SA Navy attended the South Atlantic Maritime Area Organisation meeting that was held in Brazil in March 1998. In April of the same year, the Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Army was hosted by the Chief of the SANDF. The SA Army Chaplain visited Brazil for the World Council of Churches (WCC) conference in May 1998. In October 1998, South African Rear-Admiral M.J.G. Soderlund and Commander Jamieson visited Brazil in order to finalise preparations for “ATLASUR 1999”. During 1999 the Chief of the SA Army paid a goodwill visit to Brazil and in April of the same year the Chief of the SANDF was requested by DENEL to accompany their delegation to attend the “LAD 99 Defence Exhibition” in Brazil.<sup>24</sup>

One of the highlights of Brazil-South Africa military relations was during the 500<sup>th</sup> celebrations of “Discovery of Brazil” which took place on 30 April 2000. For that occasion, the SA Navy sent the SAS Protea, which is a hydrographic ship, to represent the SANDF.<sup>25</sup> When the SA Navy celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Brazilian Navy reciprocated by sending three ships to South Africa. In the same year, the “Cape to Rio Yacht 2000” took place. The SANDF sent three yachts to participate in the race and the

Brazilian Navy once again provided essential support to the SANDF participants. During September 2000, the Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Navy paid a goodwill visit to South Africa, and members of the SA Defence Intelligence community visited Brazil for the Intelligence Exchange conference in November 2000. The Chief of SA Air Force attended the “LAD Defence Exhibition 2001” in April 2001 and in June 2001, the SA Chief of Army also paid a goodwill visit to Brazil.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.2.2.3 *Military training*

The SANDF has presented a few military courses to the Brazilian Armed Forces personnel, mostly naval courses (Table 15). It is also noteworthy that the Brazilians have been sending attachments to the SA Navy’s ships as part of their training and also skills transfer programme from which both navies benefited.

**Table 15: SANDF TRAINING PRESENTED TO THE BRAZILIAN ARMED FORCES SINCE 1994**

Nature of Course/Training	Year
A Navy officer attended the Naval Command and Staff course	1997
An attachment to SAS OUTENIQUA	1998
A submarine attachment to the RSA	1998
A Navy officer attended the Foreign Officers’ Orientation course	1998
An Army officer attended the SA Army Senior Command and Staff Duties	1999
Navy sent an MCM attachment	1999
A Navy officer attended the Naval Command and Staff course	1999

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

In accordance with the principle of reciprocity and complementarity, the SANDF has also sent its members to attend courses in Brazil. In addition to providing training on Naval Control of Shipping, the Brazilian Armed Forces have reserved slots for the SANDF to do Senior Staff courses and also to be able to send attachments to Brazilian ships, especially submarines (Table 16).

**Table 16: BRAZILIAN MILITARY TRAINING PRESENTED TO THE SANDF SINCE 1994**

Nature of Course	Year
SA Navy officer attended the Naval Control of Shipping course	1995
SA Navy officer attended the Naval Control of Shipping course	1996
SA Air Force officer attended the Brazilian Senior Air Force Staff course	1998
SA Army officer attended the Brazilian Army Senior Staff course	1998
SA Navy sent a submarine attachment to Brazil	1998
SA Navy sent an MCM attachment to Brazil	2000
SA Navy sent a submarine attachment to Brazil	2000

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

#### 2.2.2.4 *Military agreements*

Most of the post-1994 military interactions and exchanges between Brazil and South Africa have been facilitated by substantial goodwill among politicians. Despite the fact that there has been no formal military agreement binding the two military establishments, their interaction surpasses other bilateral exchanges, which are based on formal agreements. There were various military agreements that were being negotiated during 2001. These included those pertaining to the following areas: merchant shipping and related maritime matters; environmental co-operation; science and technology; and aeronautical and maritime search and rescue services.<sup>27</sup> There are increasing indications that these could all be consolidated into a single Agreement on Defence and Security Co-operation. This became necessary after the restructuring of the Brazilian Ministry of Defence. It was generally expected that this agreement would be finalised and signed by mid-2001, but this did not materialise.<sup>28</sup> The finalisation of this agreement would give impetus to the expansion and diversification of military interaction between the two armed forces.

#### 2.2.2.5 *Co-operation between the defence-related industries*

The co-operation of Brazil and South Africa in defence-related industries has an important sub-regional dimension. There has been increasing involvement of Brazil in the SADC sub-region, particularly in Namibia where the Brazilian Navy is assisting Namibia in creating a naval capacity. The Namibian Minister of Defence, Peter Mueshinghange, visited Brazil in the early 1990s with a view to soliciting assistance in establishing a military infrastructure such as a naval base for Namibia. In fact, Namibia had already ordered some patrol boats from Brazil. They also indicated interest in acquiring the Brazilian military trainer aircraft *Tucano* and the transport aircraft *Bandeirante* from EMBRAER. Thus, it would be necessary for Brazil to station some naval and air force personnel in Namibia in order to provide for the training and upgrading of Namibian defence force equipment.<sup>29</sup>

While the involvement of Brazil in Namibia should not be viewed as a threat to South Africa's security, it is important that both Brazil and Namibia should not harbour negative perceptions of South Africa, particularly in the military sphere. For many years, EMBRAER was prevented from providing weapons to South Africa due to sanctions imposed on the latter.<sup>30</sup> However, with the lifting of sanctions, co-operation between the two countries in the area of defence-related industries has not been as impressive as might have been expected. This is particularly due to the fact that South Africa is also a significant arms supplier (in Third World terms). For instance, in 1999 South Africa's DENEL was the only country listed in SIPRI's 100 largest arms-producing companies from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and developing countries.<sup>31</sup> There have been very modest orders of military equipment by Brazil. In 1997, Brazil ordered the so-called Sensitive Major Significant Equipment (SMSE) and Sensitive Significant Equipment (SSE) to the value of R19 000 and R2,6 million respectively from South Africa. According to the South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which is a statutory body responsible for designing and implementing South Africa's arms trade policy, the SMSE comprises "conventional implements of war that could cause heavy personnel casualties and/or major damage and destruction to material, structures, objects and facilities." The SSE refers to "all types of hand-held and portable weapons of a calibre smaller than 12,7 mm."<sup>32</sup>

It is speculated that DENEL and its subsidiaries will eventually be able to penetrate the Brazilian defence market either as sole providers or entering into joint partnership with Brazilian arms-producing companies. Areas of possible co-operation include, but are not limited to, artillery and maintenance or provision of aviation-related requirements.<sup>33</sup>

It is undeniably true that Brazil-South Africa relations in the military sphere are very much at an infancy stage. This is attributed to the strict adherence of Brazil to previous UN resolutions which effectively isolated South Africa. Both countries maintain mutual recognition and understanding of their significance in their respective regions. Furthermore, both countries have realised that in order for them to attain their global strategic objectives, they have to co-operate in dealing with issues of regional significance, particularly in the area of peace and security. Brazil's involvement in Southern Africa, largely in the previously Lusophone countries, is crucial in terms of peace-making in Angola and post-conflict peace-building activities in Mozambique. It could be speculated that if it were not for the involvement of countries such as Brazil, South Africa would arguably have had a much bigger problem in dealing with the security concerns of its neighbouring countries.

The future of Brazil-South Africa military relations will, to a great extent, be determined by the successful conclusion of relevant agreements, especially the proposed Agreement on Defence and Security Co-operation. This agreement is particularly important because it is reportedly aimed at consolidating all other bilateral agreements such as those pertaining to merchant shipping; environmental preservation; and search-and-rescue. Furthermore, it is in the area of defence industries where substantial co-operation could take place. However, being part of the developing world, both countries are likely to be caught up in competitive rather than co-operative roles as the arms market is increasingly shrinking owing to limited national investment in arms production, and also as a result of new entrants flooding the market with new products.

### 2.3 PARAGUAY

Unlike the case of Argentina and Brazil, Paraguay, as a small country, has been particularly vulnerable to external influences. This was further exacerbated by the role

played by the military establishment in the country. Paraguay could hardly resist temptations of flouting the international arms embargo regimes in its interactions with South Africa.

### 2.3.1 Pre-1994 Paraguay-South Africa military relations

While evidence abounds that commercial relations between South Africa and Paraguay were established at an early stage, military relations only developed during the mid-1970s. One of the most comprehensive visits by a South African delegation to Paraguay took place in January 1975, under the leadership of Brand Fourie, then Secretary of External Affairs.<sup>34</sup> The visiting delegation included highly influential business people and other government officials.<sup>35</sup>

South Africa's first Armed Forces Attaché to Paraguay, Colonel W.J. Piennaar took up his position in August 1975. Two days after his arrival in Asunción, the South Africa's Prime Minister B.J. Vorster paid a state visit to Paraguay.<sup>36</sup> Given the political situation and regional dynamics of hegemonic rivalry, particularly between Argentina and Brazil, it is not clear how South Africa managed to conduct defence diplomacy among hostile neighbours. However, it could nevertheless be argued that representation in countries such as Paraguay and Uruguay was symbolic and of no particular strategic significance. Even though Paraguay is a land-locked country, and therefore of limited strategic military value to South Africa, it appears as if South Africa's view of South America was that of a collection of states, which, as a group and under the leadership of Argentina and Brazil, had to be treated as a collective. Furthermore, South Africa's interest in Paraguay had to be seen against the background of growing co-operation between Paraguay and Argentina in the arms production arena. During the mid-1970s the president of *Fabricaciones Militares* of Argentina, General Horacio Anibal Rivera, and other high-ranking officers of the Argentine Army, signed an agreement with *Industrias Militares del Paraguay*. The Paraguayan government was represented by their Minister of Defence, General Marcial Samaniego. According to the agreement Paraguay would produce military explosives, while Argentina would provide raw materials, machinery, technical know-how and the training of Paraguayan personnel.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, Brazil's President Geisel interacted closely with Paraguayan President Stroessner on issues of mutual concern, including arms production issues. The two presidents exchanged visits on a regular basis. In fact, on 19 May 1975 Brazil donated more than seven T-6 training aircraft to the Paraguayan Air Force which was headed by Brigadier-General Vicente F. Quinonez. Additional fighting equipment such as three Douglas DC-6 aircraft was later donated to Paraguay. On the same day that donations from Brazil landed at Asunción, the Argentine and Paraguayan navies started joint exercises in the area of confluence of the rivers Paraná and Paraguay. The joint exercise was known as *Sirena I* which was essentially a joint air-naval exercise involving personnel from both countries.<sup>38</sup>

Co-operation between Paraguay and South Africa in the military sphere included training, arms transfers and arms production. Paraguay ordered South Africa-made weapons, particularly small-calibre weapons (9mm pistols, revolvers and shotguns), ammunition for pistols and shotguns, and parachutes. In some cases, Paraguayan officials exploited South Africa's status as a *pariah* state, by offering to order weapons for the latter from legitimate arms merchants from the West. It is not clear if South Africa ever made use of such offers.<sup>39</sup>

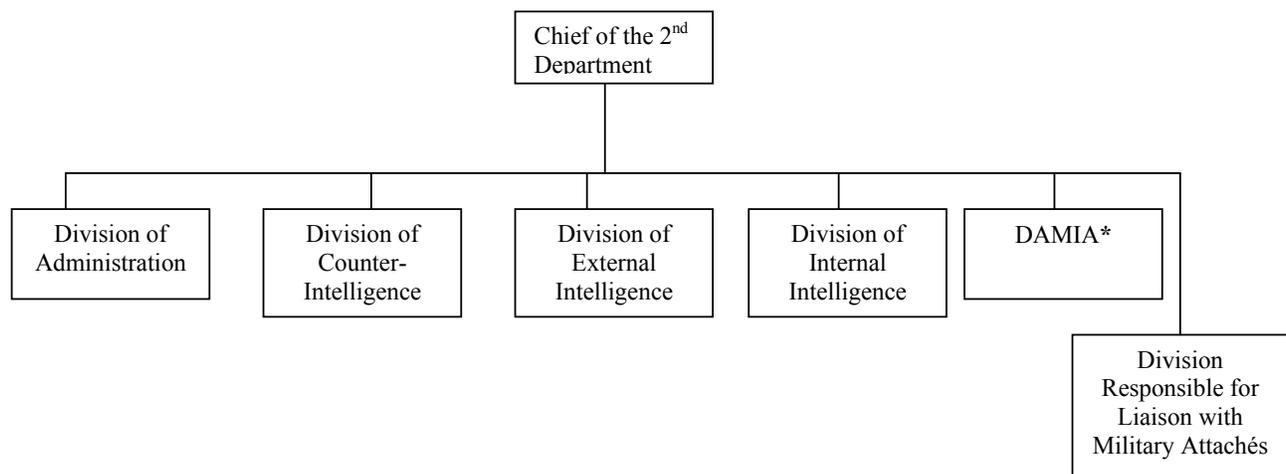
In the arms production arena, Paraguay faced a dual dilemma. On the one hand, Paraguay wanted to be a significant role-player in the regional context with regard to producing arms, but on the other hand, it did not possess the skills and capacity to do so. Following the discussions between the Chiefs of Staff Intelligence of South Africa and Chile in Pretoria in mid-1977, it transpired that Chile wanted to start a joint arms production venture with Paraguay. However, the latter did not have any arms production industry. Paraguay therefore approached South Africa to become a partner in the joint venture. The Paraguayan military representative discussed the matter with president General Stroessner who was favourably disposed towards the suggestion.<sup>40</sup> It is not clear if this joint venture ever came to fruition and whether or not South Africa's proposed co-operation with Paraguay in the arms-production enterprise was to be done overtly or covertly.

With regard to military training, as at December 1983, South Africa had already provided military training to Paraguayan officers in the form of a SA Army Command

and Staff course; a SA Air Force Staff course, training on Impala aircraft; exchange of naval officers; Infantry Battle handling; and a Combat Group Commanders course.<sup>41</sup> Further training was provided in 1985 in the form of the SA Army Command and Staff course and also the SA Air Force's Basic Pilots Training on Impala and Harvard for two Paraguayan officers.<sup>42</sup>

However, most of the military interaction between Paraguay and South Africa was conducted through their intelligence structures. South Africa's Military Intelligence Division (MID) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department (as the Military Intelligence body was known) of the Paraguayan Armed Forces, held regular bilateral (and sometimes multilateral) intelligence conferences with a view to dealing with topical issues of mutual concern. One such bilateral conference took place during August 1984.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 4: THE ORGANISATION OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> DEPARTMENT (MILITARY INTELLIGENCE) OF THE PARAGUAYAN ARMED FORCES AS AT AUGUST 1984**



\* *DAMIA*: This division was responsible for collection of military intelligence, regional security, feasibility studies and projects, military conferences and liaison with other defence forces in Latin America.

**Source:** SANDF Archives (Documentation Centre), Group 3, Box 1, *File AMI/514/3/5/1/1*, MLVA-Buenos Aires.

Both *Damia* and the division responsible for liaison with military attachés (Figure 4) were pivotal in South Africa-Paraguayan military interaction.<sup>44</sup> Some of the salient

issues under constant consideration between the intelligence organisations of the two countries included the following:

- The common intelligence problem of a communist threat;
- the exchange of syllabuses of intelligence and counter-intelligence courses by means of the military attachés as well as the attendance of applicable courses; and
- co-operation on the use or conduct of intelligence, especially using computers and crypto-analysis.<sup>45</sup>

Given the limited purchasing power, natural resource endowment and also the political system in Paraguay at the time, military relations with South Africa largely defined the nature and scope of the two country's interaction with each other. Most of the interaction was veiled in secrecy in order to avoid political embarrassment to Paraguay for associating with a *pariah* state. With the advent of democracy in South Africa and increased intolerance of undemocratic rule in South America, particularly among the Mercosur countries, relations between South Africa and Paraguay were bound to change.

### 2.3.2 Post-1994 Paraguay-South Africa military relations

The eminence enjoyed by the military establishment especially with regard to pursuing covert diplomatic relations, which could not be done in the overt political structures, waned and eventually came to an end when a new political dispensation was introduced in South Africa. Consequently, the office of South Africa's armed forces attaché in Paraguay was closed down. Since then, South Africa's armed forces attaché posted in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is also accredited to Paraguay as a non-resident attaché. Similarly, Paraguay no longer has any military representation in Pretoria.<sup>46</sup>

At end of 2001, there were still no military agreements between the two countries and none were being planned for the future either. Furthermore, only limited arms transfers, which are largely in the non-sensitive and non-lethal category, have taken place between the two countries since 1994.<sup>47</sup>

Despite political inexpediency and international condemnation, pre-1994 Paraguay-South Africa military relations were rooted in the inherent weakness of the political systems and the lack of industrial infrastructure in Paraguay. Paraguay had strong regional ambitions that could not be translated into action, owing simply to the fact that its neighbours were potential rivalries. Thus, South Africa presented an ideal opportunity to fulfil that ambition. However, it is noteworthy that it was not only the need for military industrial development, which prompted Paraguay to defy the international call for the isolation of South Africa, but also socio-economic factors. The strong bilateral military relations that existed prior to 1994 evaporated during the post-1994 restructuring and consolidation process of South Africa's foreign missions. The closing down of the South African embassy in Asunción demonstrated a change of direction by the post-1994 government of South Africa.

## 2.4 URUGUAY

Another country that had strong military relations with South Africa during the sanctions era was Uruguay. The general nature and scope of Uruguay's military relations with South Africa resembled, to a large extent, those between South Africa and Paraguay.

### 2.4.1 Pre-1994 Uruguay-South Africa military relations

Prior to 1994, the Uruguayan government maintained high-profile diplomatic-military relations with South Africa. There was general congruence in terms of their internal political policies as Uruguay was intermittently under military rule that was not very popular among the liberal democratic states. In South Africa the military establishment had excessive influence in the decision-making processes of government. Civil liberties were limited and some organisations were proscribed. Another aspect contributing to the unfavourable Western (particularly British) perception of Uruguay, stemmed from the latter's active support of Argentina's claim to the Falklands/Malvinas island. This was confirmed on 2 December 1974 when the Uruguayan delegate to the UN, J.L. Bruno, publicly expressed support for the Argentine aspiration to exercise sovereignty over the Falklands/Malvinas island, much to the dismay of Britain.<sup>48</sup>

South Africa's cordial relations with Uruguay, which were characterised by increased co-operation in the military sphere, were not being supported by most Uruguayans. This came to the fore when the Uruguayan military government closed one of the popular Protestant newspapers — *Mesajero Waldense* — which had published some information on the WCC. The Uruguayan protestant leader, Reverend Emilio Castro, believed that the government's hostility towards the WCC was mainly due to that organisation's opposition to South Africa's political system. Some prominent clerical members from South Africa such as Desmond Tutu and Alan Boesak were playing crucial roles in vilifying and criticising South Africa. The WCC members were barred from visiting South Africa and later Uruguay as well.<sup>49</sup>

South Africa's armed forces attachés enjoyed widespread acceptability and they normally paved way for non-military exchanges as well. For instance, in October 1976 a journal called *Latin America* reported that a group of industrialists and business people from South Africa came to visit Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. While the discussions with Argentina were attended by representatives from mining companies such as Anglovaal and Union Corporation, and financial houses such as the South African Financial Corporation, the Afrikaanders Ltd, and the Royal Insurance, the discussions with the Uruguayans centred largely around military issues. The Chiefs of the Navy and the Air Force of both countries reportedly explored the possibility of South Africa investing in ship-building, fishing, mineral exploration and the aeronautical industry.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, there were reportedly discussions about contingency plans for possible white refugees coming to Uruguay and other neighbouring countries in the event of a take-over of government by a Black majority in South Africa. Both Argentina and Chile had indicated that they would be positively disposed towards such an eventuality. According to the Uruguayan daily *El pais*, 10 000 Rhodesians had expressed interest in settling in Uruguay.<sup>51</sup> Bolivia was particularly enthusiastic about the prospects of hosting a large number of white immigrants from Namibia, Rhodesia and South Africa. This would be in reciprocation for a similar gesture by South Africa during the late 1970s when it attempted to secure financial assistance from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and private organisations to settle 150 000 White

immigrants from Bolivia in South Africa between 1978 and 1988. There was neither acknowledgement nor denial of the allegations contained in the report. As South Africa was still facing sanctions at that time, this was understandable.<sup>52</sup>

Ironically, the complex national security management system that was developed by South Africa during the late seventies and early eighties, seems to have been significantly influenced by its relations with Uruguay. This stems from the resemblance of that country's national security system to that of South Africa. The main area of considerable similarity was the psychological warfare or the 'hearts and minds' campaign that was waged inside and outside South Africa by the MID. The whole of the Uruguayan Armed Forces was responsible for specific civic action activities. Each ministry, government office and municipality had on its staff an armed forces officer, responsible to the Joint Staff. The Army was responsible for building roads, bridges, railways; providing transport in the outlying areas and also helping in the construction of schools and providing bathrooms and other facilities to such schools.<sup>53</sup> The Navy helped with oceanographic, hydrographical and meteorological services. These services included co-operating with the municipality of Montevideo in obtaining several oceanographical parameters for the final layout of the sewerage system of Montevideo, and the preservation and improvement of beaches. The Uruguayan Navy also helped in public schools with regard to repairing buildings and providing community aid to the islanders of the Uruguay River.<sup>54</sup>

The Uruguayan military establishment had tremendous influence in the political affairs of the country. This became even more evident after the Human Rights Conference held in Geneva during February and March 1977. During that conference Uruguay voted against South Africa and the latter's armed forces attaché expressed his disappointment over the situation. Uruguay's Director of *Servicio Inteligencia del Estado* (S.I.D.E) — their Military Intelligence — General Amauri Prantl, assured South Africa's armed forces attaché that the "military were taking steps to re-organise the Uruguayan Department of Foreign Affairs."<sup>55</sup> By that time, South Africa-Uruguay military relations were so cordial that Uruguay was also contemplating sending a military attaché to Pretoria. However, apart from possible international condemnation of such a move, there were prohibitive financial implications which the Uruguayan government was not in a position to bear.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the Uruguayan government,

and the military establishment in particular, were prepared to flout sanctions and the arms embargo imposed on South Africa. There were already talks about possible transfers of small arms from South Africa to Uruguay. Both the South African Ambassador and armed forces attaché to Uruguay were positively disposed towards this possibility.<sup>57</sup> A similar request was once again made by the Uruguayan Navy during the official visit by South Africa's military intelligence officers to that country. The Uruguayan Navy was also keen to purchase South Africa's fighting vessels.<sup>58</sup> It is not clear if such transactions eventually materialised or not, as these were shrouded in a veil of secrecy.

One of the main areas of co-operation between the militaries of South Africa and Uruguay was training. Military training was seen, especially by South Africa, as an important dimension of its efforts to acquire knowledge and strengthen political and cultural ties between the two countries. There was, however, growing unease about the level of openness that should govern such training to foreigners. Consequently, in early 1983, the SA Department of Defence decided that given the fact that the "SD (Staff Duties) course is now largely based on the Army strategy and other classified material, it is suggested that foreigners should only be allowed to attend a part of the SD course."<sup>59</sup> While this did not only indicate a relative lack of mutual trust, it also demonstrated that for South Africa these exchange programmes were essentially symbolic in nature.

The syllabus of the SD course in which the Uruguayans were particularly interested, comprised the following subjects: communication; management; organisation of the SADF; strategy; combat services; operations theory; intelligence theory; finance; logistics; personnel; specialist arms; formal training and finishing including the planning cycle at divisional level; counter-insurgency (COIN) and counter-revolutionary warfare; and joint warfare. The last three subjects were not available to foreigners. The other subjects from which foreigners were barred were: strategy (which included the utilisation of power bases); South African philosophy; infantry; armour; artillery; engineers and signals.<sup>60</sup> This shows that despite close military-diplomatic relations between the two countries, South Africa remained cautious as there was always an eternal fear that governments from the then friendly nations could change and the country's operational secrets would have been lost for ever. By December 1983,

South Africa had already provided military training to Uruguayan troops at the SA Naval Staff course and through secondment to the SA Navy.<sup>61</sup>

As already indicated, the MID spearheaded South Africa's diplomatic relations in South America. During their visit to Uruguay in August 1984, the MID had formal and informal discussions with their Uruguayan counterparts. The issues that dominated the discussions revolved around the following aspects:

- Establishing the office of the military attaché in Pretoria;
- exchange of photographs of East bloc fishing boats and military ships in the RSA's and Uruguay's territorial waters;
- exchange of intelligence with regard to methods to counter infiltration of Russian spies in the respective countries' armed forces;
- the possible visit by Uruguayan officers to South Africa in order to see the weapons confiscated from the liberation movement (presumably of Russian origin);
- the possibility of Uruguayan technical personnel visiting South Africa in order to help the latter in improving the SADF's electronic warfare capacity; and
- the SADF had to make the syllabuses of its intelligence and counter-intelligence courses available to Uruguay.<sup>62</sup>

These undertakings demonstrated the cordiality of military relations between South Africa and Uruguay. However, by mid-1986 there were increasing indications that South Africa's military representation in Uruguay was being threatened. This was communicated by the South African armed forces attaché during August 1986. There was going to be a United Nations sitting during which the question of Uruguay-South Africa relations would be discussed. It was against this background that the Uruguayan Police Chief called in the South African mission head to inform him that Uruguay would like to indicate to the UN that South Africa's military representation in Uruguay was no longer acceptable. The manner in which the matter was communicated to the South African officials indicated that Uruguay still valued their relations with South Africa. The South African government responded by informing its missions that it was

not prepared to be embarrassed by the dismissal of its military attaches from the South American countries. Therefore, it was decided, if the situation allowed, that the incumbent attaché should stay until December 1986. However, it was further decided that if the indications from the Uruguayan government were that they wanted to take action against South Africa's armed forces attaché, the latter would have to withdraw as soon as possible in order to keep the initiative. The South African armed forces attaché suggested to the South African Ambassador that there should be no further accreditation requested from the Uruguayan government, unless there were indications that such a request would be treated favourably. Furthermore, it was suggested that South Africa should not attempt to place an undercover military operative in that country.<sup>63</sup> Obviously, Uruguay, which was also democratising, wanted to comply with the international community's call for compliance with the UN resolutions regarding sanctions against South Africa.

#### 2.4.2 Post-1994 Uruguay-South Africa military relations

With the closure of South Africa's diplomatic and military representatives' offices in Uruguay, the relations remained strained but not hostile. When the new political dispensation was ushered in South Africa, no effort was made to re-open the offices. Instead, the South African defence attaché posted in Buenos Aires is also accredited to Uruguay as a non-resident attaché. Uruguay only closed its defence attaché's office in South Africa in December 1999.<sup>64</sup> It could be argued that the motivation for such a step was largely based on considerations other than dissatisfaction with South Africa's political system. These considerations could include financial issues and the fact that South Africa does not have a resident defence attaché in Uruguay, which could possibly be perceived by the latter as an indication of limited strategic or political value that the former attaches to Uruguay.

By the end of 2001, there were no military agreements existing between South Africa and Uruguay nor are there any being planned for the future. It is notable that, with the exception of Argentina and Brazil, South Africa seems to approach Paraguay and Uruguay on issues of common interest within the framework of Mercosur.

Since their inception, South Africa-Uruguayan military relations have always been biased in favour of South Africa. This was largely owing to the relatively higher level of economic and military development in South Africa and the corresponding dependence of Uruguay on South Africa with regard to certain technical military expertise. South Africa prudently exploited these weaknesses until the democratisation process started in Uruguay. It is notable that Uruguay's change in political approach to South Africa was in line with the actions of other South American countries.

## 2.5 BOLIVIA

For a long time, Bolivia had been confronted with a violent opposition to its political system, which was characterised by the preponderant role of the military. Civil liberties were limited and human rights not protected. Under such circumstances the security forces, especially the military establishment, play a crucial role both in propping up the incumbent government and in ensuring law and order, which normally gravitates towards quashing opposition. Political parties and labour unions were prohibited.<sup>65</sup>

By early 1975, the South African Armed Forces Attaché, Captain (SAN) J.C. Ferris, situated in Buenos Aires, reported to the Chief of Staff Intelligence in Pretoria that Bolivia had “curtailed press freedom to extreme levels.”<sup>66</sup> This followed the expulsion of two Catholic priests, both Belgian nationals and members of the Peace Commission, who had been arrested on 14 December 1974 for participating in the publication of a pamphlet — *The Valley Massacre* — which described the clashes between the military and peasants. The pamphlet claimed that over 100 people had died while the official figures stood at 13 killed and 16 injured.<sup>67</sup> The Bolivian government was facing a formidable challenge from the extreme leftist guerrilla movement known as the Union of Poor Peasants (UCAPO), particularly dominant in the province of Santa Cruz.<sup>68</sup>

The pre-1994 relations between South Africa and Bolivia should be seen against the background of serious internal political challenges to the two governments; the status of Bolivia as a land-locked country; and both countries having hostile relations with the neighbours in their respective sub-regions. As already indicated, the fact that the

political system of Bolivia was not acceptable to the international community and the subsequent suppression of civil liberties, made South Africa a natural ally.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Bolivian government adopted a foreign policy that was based on non-alignment. In this respect, the government argued that it would like to establish and maintain cordial diplomatic relations with all the countries of the world. For South Africa, this presented a window of opportunity for strengthening its case in the South American region.<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, being a land-locked country, Bolivia relied on co-operation from its immediate neighbours to assist in the transportation of its import and export commodities. Thus, Bolivia had to ensure friendly relations with Chile and Peru.<sup>70</sup> However, this was not going to be easy because both Chile and Peru were on numerous occasions on the brink of going to war against each other. In fact, at some stage the Centre of National Studies (CEN), whose members are graduates of the School of Higher Military Studies, published a document in which the need to arm in self-defence was stressed. This was in view of a possible war between Chile and Peru.<sup>71</sup> Bolivia succeeded in securing access to the port of Montevideo after Bolivian President Hugo Banzer paid an official three-day visit to Uruguay. In terms of the trade and economic agreements signed on 24 July 1975 Bolivia was ceded a free zone in the port of Montevideo.<sup>72</sup> Bolivia had lost access to sea during the Atlantic War of 1879-1883 involving Bolivia, Chile and Peru.<sup>73</sup> The relations between these countries remained lukewarm until August 1975 when Chile acceded to Bolivian President Banzer's proposal that an organisation of mineral-producing countries be established. In his Five-Point Plan, President Banzer proposed that Bolivia should have access to the sea. Venezuela's President Perez supported the idea quite strongly, while Chile, which was represented by Chief of Staff General Sergio Arellano, announced that it would be prepared to sign a non-aggression pact with both Bolivia and Peru.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, when South Africa started strengthening military relations with Bolivia in the early to mid-1970s, the latter was in the process of normalising diplomatic relations with her neighbours. Facilitating the realisation of good military relations with Bolivia was the fact that most of the neighbouring countries were already in good diplomatic standing with South Africa. It is not unlikely that South Africa exerted indirect pressure

through its South American allies to gain favour with Bolivia. This is against the background that, at that stage, there really was no immediate strategic value that South Africa attached to Bolivia. But it was argued that military relations would facilitate the process of negotiating agreements with other South American countries through Bolivia. In fact, South Africa's relations with Bolivia were much stronger in military than in political and diplomatic terms. During early 1983, in correspondence between the armed forces attaché in Montevideo and the Chief of the SADF, it was stated that the "SADF representation in Uruguay and Bolivia should not be seen in isolation but in a regional context ... Owing to the fact that South Africa's missions in Uruguay and Bolivia were understaffed, there was a slow flow of information into the country. Thus, the role of armed forces attachés in countries such as Bolivia and Uruguay should not restrict themselves to military issues."<sup>75</sup> This instruction enabled armed forces attachés in those countries to become involved in political and economic matters.

The SADF constantly received requests from Bolivia for military training. This was despite the fact that there was a wave of democratisation processes taking place within Bolivia. By early 1983, the diplomatic and political situation was not in favour of South Africa as the Bolivian Embassy in Pretoria had been 'temporarily closed'. Similarly, other countries' embassies in Pretoria followed suit. Thus, the SADF was always willing to help Bolivia with military training in order to maintain some kind of military representation in that country, regardless of who was in government. In fact, the SADF offered to carry the full financial burden of such training for Bolivia, which was contrary to the standing policy of reciprocity or *quid pro quo* approach.<sup>76</sup>

The period of cordial relations with Bolivia came to an end when Dr. H. Siles Zuazo won the elections in June 1982 thus becoming the Bolivian president. However, Siles's *Unidad Democrática Popular* (UDP) failed to obtain an absolute majority. Siles' victory was not in line with South Africa's hopes that General Banzer would win. General Banzer was admired by Pretoria because he was inclined towards the West in his political and economic outlook. The Bolivian mission in Pretoria and that of South Africa in La Paz were opened during his term and there were even talks of upgrading Bolivian representation in Pretoria to ambassadorial level. Until then, Bolivia's voting record in the UN on issues involving South Africa showed a moderate stance, except in the case of the South West Africa/Namibia question where Bolivia followed the Third

World position. However, relations with South Africa came to an abrupt end when the Siles government took over the reigns of power. In his first speech in the UN General Assembly, Siles launched a scathing attack on South Africa, demanding the tightening of UN sanctions against South Africa and the immediate independence of Namibia. Before the Siles government took over power, Bolivia was the only country among the Andean Pact countries that had diplomatic relations with South Africa. Consequently, South Africa withdrew quietly from the country without even attempting to revive military relations as had been the case during the previous dispensation.<sup>77</sup>

The Siles government did not last even a year as it was overthrown by a military *coup* (Bolivia's 200<sup>th</sup> *coup d'état* in 160 years) under the leadership of General Luis Garcia Meza. Despite protestations and threats of sanctions by the Andean Community and the Organisation of American States (OAS), countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and El Salvador recognised the military government.<sup>78</sup> Confusion reigned in Bolivian national politics until general elections were held in 1985.

In the tightly contested elections of 14 July 1985, where General Banzer, Siles Zuazo and Victor Paz Estenssoro were candidates, Estenssoro emerged victorious. Once again, victory by Estenssoro flew in the face of South Africa's desire to have General Banzer at the helm again. It was not the first time that Estenssoro became the president of Bolivia. He was the president in 1952-1956, and again in 1960-1964, but his last term was interrupted by a military *coup d'état*. However, the simmering tensions and instability in Bolivia gave South Africa some hope that its military assistance, of any kind, might once again be solicited. Tensions emanated from then dubious economic and monetary policies of the Bolivian government and there was serious disagreement even among cabinet members about them. Until September 1985, the local currency (Peso) was pegged against the US Dollar. But this resulted in precarious devaluations, thus plunging the country's economy into trouble. On 21 January 1986, the whole cabinet resigned, thus enabling President Estenssoro to form a new one. The diplomatic/military relations with South Africa never improved with the new administration.<sup>79</sup>

The advent of democracy in South Africa did not change the situation drastically in terms of diplomatic and military relations and the post-1994 South African government

did not open an embassy in La Paz. Thus South Africa does not have a resident military attaché in Bolivia, and nor does Bolivia have one in South Africa. By the end of 2001, there were no military agreements in existence or due for future consideration. However, the absence of direct diplomatic/military representation does not reflect any negative perceptions of one another but is largely based on other considerations, including financial constraints. With the possibility of Bolivia becoming a fully-fledged member of Mercosur, South Africa may have considered it more prudent to deal with that country within a collective framework. It is undeniably true that being a landlocked country and also having lukewarm to strained diplomatic relations with its immediate neighbours, Bolivia is bound to attempt to cast its diplomatic net much wider to include most countries in the Andean Community and beyond, including South Africa. However, this may not always be possible due to limited resources. It is not clear as to what the actual or perceived strategic value of Bolivia was to South Africa in the period prior to 1994. Nevertheless, Bolivia had a relationship of dependency with South Africa, which was optimally exploited by the latter for political purposes.

## 2.6 CHILE

One of the most enduring military relations that South Africa ever had with a South American country, was with Chile. As was the case with Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, South Africa's diplomatic relations with Chile were spearheaded by the military establishment. Through military intelligence structures both countries managed to achieve what they could not achieve through overt, non-military structures and processes.

### 2.6.1 Pre-1994 Chile-South Africa military relations

Barely a decade after South Africa had declared a Republic, an active campaign was launched to win support from the like-minded countries across the South Atlantic Ocean. As was the case with other South American countries, South Africa found a reliable and compatible ally in the form of Chile. At that stage Chile was under a military government with General Augusto Pinochet as the Supreme Head. On 17 December 1974, the military junta passed a decree in terms of which General Pinochet was declared President.<sup>80</sup>

The military relations between Chile and South Africa went from strength to strength as these were not clearly discernible from political activities. Of primary concern to Chile, as was the case with South Africa, was the isolation by the international community which impacted negatively not only on its socio-economic development but also on the military sphere. The latter aspect was particularly crucial as Chile still had unresolved conflicts with neighbouring Argentina over some islands on the Beagle Channel. Further aggravating the situation was the imposition of an arms embargo by the US against Chile, together with Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay in 1977. The US insisted that these Southern Cone countries should improve their human rights record before arms embargoes could be lifted.

South Africa was already subject to the UN-imposed arms embargo. However, the international political situation was such that the US could not afford to have the whole South Atlantic region falling under Soviet influence. The Cuban crisis of 1961 was still too fresh in the collective memory of the Americans. When Ronald Reagan became the US president in 1981, he wanted to review the prohibitions on arms transfers that had been introduced by the Carter administration. Consequently, the Reagan administration introduced legislation to repeal the ban on US arms transfers to Argentina and Chile. The Congress only agreed to the legislation with the proviso that a 'presidential certification' was provided as proof that such countries had made significant progress on human rights. However, these processes came to an end in March 1982 with the outbreak of the Falklands/Malvinas War. With the election of Raúl Alfonsín as a civilian president on 10 December 1983, Argentina certified that sufficient progress had been made in the human rights area. Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay followed Argentina. Thus, Chile (under General Pinochet) and Paraguay (under General Alfredo Stroessner) stood alone as military regimes, and continued to be subjected to the arms embargo.<sup>81</sup> It was against this background that political, but particularly, military relations with South Africa, were crucial for Chile.

The main areas of interest for Chile in South Africa largely concerned arms production and arms transfers, and also military training. As was the case with other South American countries, South Africa-Chile political and military relations were conducted with significant assistance of the MID. The military intelligence structures held regular

bilateral conferences during which threats to each other were analysed and individual requirements (such as training and arms transfers) were discussed. By 1983, the student exchange programme was already at an advanced stage (Table 17). Sixteen SADF members in the ranks varying from Midshipman to Commandant (now known as Lieutenant-Colonel) had already been trained in Chile.

In line with the standing policy of the SADF that military training had to be symbiotic and complementary, the SADF had specific training requirements which were not identical to those of the Chileans. The SADF seemed to be interested in specific areas of training, while the Chilean Armed Forces wanted to seize every opportunity for

**Table 17: CHILEAN MILITARY TRAINING PRESENTED TO SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS IN CHILE, (AS AT DECEMBER 1983)**

Nature of Course	Rank Group	No. of Students
Air Force Staff Course	Commandant; Major	2
Training on board ship	Midshipman; Lieutenant (SAN)	2
Mounted Training	Lieutenant; Captain	2
Attendance of naval exercise	Lieutenant-Commander	1
Attachment to Mirage Squadron	Major	1
Intelligence Courses	Sergeant; Captain; Major	6
Special Operations	Captain	1
Command and Staff Course	Lieutenant-Commander	1

**Source:** SANDF Archives (Documentation Centre), Group 2, Box 1, *File WA/M/103/7/1*, Montevideo, 9 December 1983.

training in every area of warfare. By December 1983, Chilean Armed Forces personnel had attended the following SADF courses<sup>82</sup>:

- SA Army Command and Staff course.
- Strikecraft training.
- Maintenance of Mirage III aircraft.
- Artillery courses.
- Infantry training.
- Sea training.

- Special forces training.
- Strikecraft gunnery course.
- Mirage operational training.

During the bilateral intelligence conference that was held in Chile in August 1984, both parties expressed satisfaction with the level of co-operation, particularly with regard to exchange of students. The SADF would also identify intelligence courses that were deemed suitable for Chilean students. There was a general feeling that more emphasis should be placed on technical co-operation between the two countries. To this effect, Chile wanted to second personnel to the SADF for electronic warfare training during the course of 1985.<sup>83</sup>

As military relations became stronger and mutual trust grew, the SADF increasingly became more eager to offer the Chileans an extended list of opportunities. During 1985, the SADF offered the following training courses to Chile:

- SA Army Command and Staff course.
- Gun Position Officer/Troop Leaders course (SA Artillery – Field Ordnance Position Commander Art 8534).
- Troop commanders course (SA Ordnance Artillery Troop Commander Art 8515).
- Battle group commanders course.
- Unit commanders (DTKS 8501 and 8502).
- Radar section commanders course (Radar Troop Commander), presented by the SA Army.
- Section commander meteorology, presented by the SA Army.
- Senior image interpretation course, presented by the SA Air Force.
- Operational training for Operations Room personnel, presented by the SA Air Force.
- Interrogation course, presented by Military Intelligence Division.
- An advanced intelligence course, also presented by Military Intelligence Division.<sup>84</sup>

From the list of courses presented, it is evident that military training tended to cover almost the whole spectrum of warfare, namely, ranging from information gathering and interpretation to operational effectiveness and command and control.

With the ascendance to power of F.W. de Klerk as President of South Africa, the political landscape of the country was irreversibly changed. For many years the military establishment in South Africa was highly influential in the political decision-making processes. One of the significant changes that President De Klerk made immediately after he took over the reigns of power was to confine the military establishment to military issues and to conduct a massive ‘clean-up’ in the administration. This had a far-reaching impact, as the country’s foreign policy was no longer going to be largely determined or influenced by military imperatives alone. Thus, under these circumstances, Chile’s political and military relations with South Africa waned. South Africa was increasingly being accepted into the international fold, and could therefore not afford being associated with Chile in the same manner as was the case before the democratisation process commenced.

#### 2.6.2 Post-1994 Chile-South Africa military relations

Military relations between Chile and South Africa can be viewed along various dimensions, including military-diplomatic representation; visits by military personnel from each country; military training; and co-operation or interaction regarding defence-related industries.

##### 2.6.2.1 *Military representation*

Despite the drastic change in the political situation in South Africa which prompted the revisiting of military relations with Chile, military interaction between the two countries continued even after 1994, *albeit* scaled down in intensity. South Africa’s military representation in Chile continued until December 2000 when the armed forces attaché’s office in Santiago was closed down (Table 18). While the closing down of that office coincided with the Department of Foreign Affairs’ world-wide restructuring of diplomatic missions due

**Table 18: SOUTH AFRICA’S MILITARY ATTACHÉS IN CHILE**

Name	Capacity/Designation	Period
Col C.J. Saaiman	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1984 – December 1988
Col A. de S Hendriks	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1988 – December 1992
Cdr J.J. Viljoen	Naval Attaché	December 1990 – December 1992
Col P.J. Swart	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1992 – December 1994
Col J.J. van Heerden	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1994 – December 1997
Capt (SAN) A.H. de Vries	Armed Forces Attaché	December 1997 – December 2000
Closing Defence Office		December 2000

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

to financial constraints and other strategic considerations, it could be argued that the mere fact that Chile and South Africa used to have secret agreements on how to deal with their political adversaries, could have caused the decision to be taken with relative ease.

Ironically, contrary to South Africa’s decision to close down the armed forces attaché’s office in Santiago, Chile’s military representation in South Africa has appreciably intensified. While South Africa used to have only one military representative for all arms of service, Chile’s military representation has since 1995 been quite significant (Table 19). Unlike Argentina and Brazil, Chile’s air attaché is always independent, whereas the Army is always coupled with the Navy.

**Table 19: CHILEAN MILITARY ATTACHÉS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Name	Capacity/Designation	Period
Brig J.L. Pacheco	Army and Naval Attaché	January 1994 – July 1995
Col Bodadilla	Air Attaché	January 1994 – January 1995
Brig V.A Rojas Martinez	Army and Naval Attaché	January 1995 – January 1997
Col M. Bascuñan	Air Attaché	January 1995 – January 1997
Col P.V. Cartoni	Military and Naval Attaché	January 1997 – January 1998
Col P.V.C. Viale	Army and Air Attaché	January 1997 – July 1998
Col J. Anabalón	Air Attaché	January 1997 – January 1998
Col C.M.E. Solar	Military and Naval Attaché	July 1998 – January 2000
Col F. Gonzales	Air Attaché	January 1999 – December 2000

Col J.O. Valenzuela	Military and Naval Attaché	February 2000 – July 2001*
Col J. Cancino	Air Attaché	January 2001 – to date*
Col R. Toro	Military and Naval Attaché	July 2001 – to date*

Note: \* Denotes “as at the end of 2002”

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

#### 2.6.2.2 *Military visits*

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, there have been quite a number of high-profile visits by South African military personnel to Chile. In 1997, the SA Naval personnel were invited to Chile to help them develop their 76/62mm OTO MELARA gun-overhauling course. It is possible that the invitation stemmed from the interaction between the two countries prior to 1994. As already indicated, during the mid-1980s South Africa used to provide, among others, artillery training to Chilean armed forces. In October 1997, two SA Air Force members visited Chilean Naval facilities and later attended the Digital Battlefield symposium. The SA Chief of the Air Force paid a goodwill visit to Santiago over the period 23-29 March 1998. The visit was reportedly a great success. During October 1999, some members of the Policy and Planning division of the Defence Secretariat attended a Defence Seminar that was held in Chile and the Chief of SA Air Force, together with some members from Armscor and DENEL, attended the “FIDAE 2000” in Chile during March 2000. In April of the same year, the Chief of Joint Operations attended the Naval Control of Shipping Critique conference and in October, SA Naval personnel attended the CHRIS (hydrographic) meeting. In December 2000, the Chief of the SA Navy attended the EXPONAVAL.<sup>85</sup>

While there seems to have been a number of high-profile visits by SANDF personnel to Chile, this does not seem to have been reciprocated. In fact, by the end of 2001 the only visit by a prominent member of the Chilean Armed Forces was the one which took place in March 2000 when the Chief of the SA Navy hosted the Chief of Chilean Navy Procurement, Admiral O. Torres, on behalf of African Defence Systems (ADS), which is one of South Africa’s companies in the defence-related industry.<sup>86</sup>

2.6.2.3 *Military training*

It is in the area of military training where most of the interaction has taken place. During mid-2001 military training to Chilean students was presented by the SA Air Force. This reflected a drastic departure from the pre-1994 student exchanges, which were largely hosted

**Table 20: SANDF TRAINING PRESENTED TO CHILEAN ARMED FORCES AFTER 1994**

Type of Training	Period	Arm of Service	Number of Students
Cheetah D Simulator	15 January – 15 February 1996	Air Force	5
Cheetah D Simulator	3-28 January 1997	Air Force	6
Cheetah D Simulator	29 May – 24 June 1998	Air Force	6
Cheetah D Simulator	6 July – 1 August 1998	Air Force	6
Cheetah D Simulator	30 April – 28 May 1999	Air Force	5
Cheetah D Simulator	4 June – 2 July 1999	Air Force	5

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

by the SA Army. From 1994 to mid-2001, the SANDF had already trained at least 33 Chileans in Cheetah D Simulator course (Table 20). This could be an indication of the confidence in the SANDF simulator training or an interest which could later result in the purchase of the Cheetah or its related components.

In line with the principle of reciprocity and complementarity, the military courses offered by the Chilean Armed Forces to the SANDF were largely in the area of naval co-operation (Table 21). It is undeniably true that there has been a reduction in the number and frequency of students and courses that are being exchanged between the two countries. Furthermore, with the closure of South Africa's defence attaché's office in Chile, it can only be expected that there would be a corresponding reduction in the intensity and frequency of training opportunities.

**Table 21: CHILEAN MILITARY TRAINING PRESENTED TO THE SANDF PERSONNEL AFTER 1994**

Type of Training	Year	Arm of Service
Surface Attachment	1995	Chilean Navy
Surface Attachment on <i>BE ESMERALDA</i>	1996	Chilean Navy
OTO Malara Gun Overhauling course	1997	Chilean Army
Helicopter Mountain Flying course	1999	Chilean Air Force

**Source:** Information provided by the South African Department of Defence Headquarters, Directorate Foreign Relations, Corporate Staff Division, Pretoria, 2 October 2001.

#### 2.6.2.4 *Mutual agreements and defence industry co-operation*

The nature and scope of political support and political congruity normally guide much of the formal interaction between states. However, in the case of Chile-South Africa relations, it is noticeable that all the military training provided to each other's military organisations, was never preceded by a formal bilateral agreement between the two countries. This situation demonstrates without doubt the cordiality of relations between the two countries. There is a strong possibility that a defence co-operation agreement could be signed in the near future which would result in increased exchanges and more formal interaction.<sup>87</sup> It is not envisaged that the South African defence attaché's office in Santiago will be re-opened soon.

However, the signing of a defence co-operation agreement may have considerable impact on the defence-related industries. Most of the beneficiaries from the South African perspective would largely be in DENEL's Aviation wing. Aircraft components and flying training, including simulators, may be in demand in Chile. Chile's status as a significant potential export market for South Africa did not change after 1994. In 1997 alone, Chile imported R16,2 million worth of so-called SMSE and R805,000 worth of Non-Sensitive Equipment (NSE).<sup>88</sup> NSE includes "all support equipment usually utilised in the direct support of combat operations, and that has no inherent capability to kill or destroy. This could not be regarded as an indication of a reduced strategic value of South Africa by Chile, but the reality that there is increased fluidity in the arms export market. The new tendency includes counter-trade and skills-transfer clauses in the contracts for arms transfers which are such that only stronger and well-established arms suppliers are likely to survive. Strictly military effectiveness of weapon systems is no longer sufficient to secure military contracts. A cursory look at the inventories of most South American countries shows a strong presence of military hardware that

originates from high-profile global players in the arms production industry. Given all these factors, it remains to be seen if military relations between South Africa and the Mercosur countries can still be improved beyond the current levels of interaction to include aspects such as intelligence training, and technology transfer, especially in the area of ship-building.

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that military relations between South Africa and Chile remained relatively vibrant almost throughout the period when the former was still under UN sanctions. Main areas of interaction were military training and high-profile visits. The military intelligence communities from both countries facilitated most of the bilateral activities, including economic and political activities. While the use of military intelligence in diplomatic matters was not anomalous and unique to the Chile-South Africa relations alone, it could be argued that it has not helped the situation in re-normalising bilateral relations in the post-1994 era. The closure of the South African defence attaché's office in Santiago was a serious set-back to both countries' military relations. It is an irrefutable fact that with the ascendance of socio-economic issues, the military have assumed a low profile. This is particularly true in South Africa's relations with countries across the South Atlantic. However, it can be assumed that the level of interaction will, to a large extent, depend on the attractiveness of defence capabilities that each country in the Southern Cone possesses relative to South Africa, and *vice versa*.

### **3. THE NATURE OF MILITARY CAPABILITIES OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE MERCOSUR COUNTRIES**

It remains important to determine whether the current level of military interaction between South Africa and the Mercosur countries is commensurate with the military capacity of individual countries. The main relevant indicators in this respect would be the military expenditure over the last few years and the size of their armed forces.

Consistent with the global trend, there has been a steady decline in the level of military expenditure among South American countries since the end of the Cold War. The Mercosur countries have managed to keep military expenditure below the accepted norm of two per cent of GDP. The associate members, namely, Bolivia and Chile, have not always succeeded in staying within the traditional norm. Unlike Bolivia whose military expenditure increased in 1997 and 1998, Chile has consistently maintained expenditure exceeding three per cent

(Table 22). South Africa on the other hand has since 1996, like other Mercosur countries, maintained the traditional norm of not exceeding two per cent.

**Table 22: MILITARY EXPENDITURE OF MERCOSUR COUNTRIES AND SOUTH AFRICA (US\$M) – 1995-2000, AND AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP**

Country	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<i>Argentina</i>	4 450 (1.7%)	4 210 (1.5%)	4 067 (1.4%)	3 964 (1.3%)	4 196 (1.5%)	4 524 (n/a)
<i>Bolivia</i>	144 (1.9%)	141 (1.8%)	168 (2.1%)	205 (2.4%)	154 (1.8%)	n/a (n/a)
<i>Brazil</i>	11 011 (1.5%)	9 499 (1.3%)	11 648 (1.5%)	10 976 (1.4%)	10 132 (1.3%)	14 866 (n/a)
<i>Chile</i>	2 091 (3.1%)	2 216 (3.2%)	2 244 (3.1%)	2 564 (3.5%)	2 259 (3.1%)	[1 747] (n/a)
<i>Paraguay</i>	[115] (1.4%)*	[116] (1.3%)*	113 (1.3%)	104 (1.2%)	88.7 (1.1%)	85.6 (n/a)
<i>Uruguay</i>	296 (1.5%)	282 (1.4%)	279 (1.3%)	272 (1.2%)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)
<i>South Africa</i>	2 691 (2.2%)	2 337 (1.8%)	2 151 (1.6%)	1 921 (1.4%)	1 833 (1.3%)	2 127 (1.1%)

Notes:

- All figures at constant 1998 prices and exchange rates
- “N/a” denotes “not available”
- [] and \* denote “SIPRI estimate”

**Source:** Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). 2001. *SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Stockholm: Oxford University Press.

The general downward trend in budgetary allocations for defence forces world-wide, and in South America in particular, has had a tremendous impact on the force levels, force designs and force structures of many countries. While in South Africa there is tremendous pressure to downsize or ‘rightsize’, as it is popularly called, there is correspondingly high pressure to restructure and transform the armed forces in order to reflect the integration forces that are now part of the SANDF. As can be seen in Table 23, the Mercosur countries have a substantial portion of their populations under arms.<sup>89</sup> Brazil’s military personnel has, in some

arms of service, more than the total number of people under arms for all Mercosur countries and South Africa combined. It could be argued that the size of Brazil's armed forces are commensurate with its economic capacity and geographical size, but it is not clear whether this is proportionate with the requirements for dealing with threats to national security. It is not inconceivable that the instability that exists in neighbouring Colombia has the potential to spill over into the bordering countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. It is against this background that these countries have stepped up their military presence on their common border with Colombia. For Brazil, one of the concerns pertains to the proper protection of the Amazon region. The Amazon region constitutes about 42 per cent of Brazil's land mass and is reputed to have vast mineral deposits and other valuable resources.

Consistent with the analyses of past and present geopoliticians, the Amazon is viewed as a key to achieving the country's destiny of *grandeza* (national greatness). Thus, the call for the internationalisation of the Amazon sparks negative reaction from the Brazilian population, especially the military establishment. Furthermore, the US's military activities in the neighbouring countries such as radar installations and military exercises are perceived as a 'military belt' that is designed not only to combat the narcotics trade but also to monitor the activities of Brazil in the Amazon.<sup>90</sup>

There is also a perennial fear that the Colombian rebels could use the Amazon region as sanctuary, or for drug-trafficking and the illicit transfer of weapons. Thus, Brazil has started a US\$1.4 billion project, called SIVAM (*Sistema de Vigilancia de Amazonia* — Amazon Region Surveillance System) which seeks to monitor the Amazon basin by using radar, early-warning aircraft and ground sensors. However, still more than 70 per cent of Brazil's total military budget goes to salaries and pensions. Since Argentina and Brazil do not perceive each other as rivalries or potential enemies in the region anymore, both countries consult regularly on defence matters within the Mercosur framework. Brazil has embarked on a US\$3.5 billion programme that includes acquisition of new aircraft and helicopters and the upgrading of existing aircraft. Brazil's fleet of river patrol boats are to be upgraded to be able to carry helicopters. These would all be used to protect the Amazon region.<sup>91</sup>

Based on the data provided in Table 23, it is evident that Brazil probably will still continue to host a number of South African military students, simply because it has the resources and capacity to do so. The rationale for downsizing and/or closing the military attachés' offices in

some of the countries seems conspicuously self-evident. Some of the military services such as the air force or navy in some countries are largely symbolic and do not pose any threat to neighbouring countries. With the formation of Mercosur, there has been a significant increase in the trend where states depend on their neighbours or sub-regional structures to deter any attack against them. It could therefore be surmised that South Africa can expect increased military interaction on substantive issues mainly with Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

**Table 23: UNIFORMED MILITARY PERSONNEL IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE MERCOSUR COUNTRIES, 2000/2001 (Excluding Civilians and Reserves)**

	<b>Army</b>	<b>Navy</b>	<b>Air Force</b>	<b>Paramilitary</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	41 400	17 200	12 500	31 240	<b>102 340</b>
<b>Bolivia</b>	25 000	3 500	3 000	37 100	<b>68 600</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	189 000	48 600	50 000	385 600	<b>673 200</b>
<b>Chile</b>	51 000	24 000	12 000	29 500	<b>116 500</b>
<b>Paraguay</b>	14 900	3 600	1 700	14 800	<b>35 000</b>
<b>Uruguay</b>	15 200	5 500	3 000	920	<b>24 620</b>
<b>South Africa</b>	42 490	5 190	9 640	5 290**	<b>62 610</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>378 990</b>	<b>107 590</b>	<b>91 840</b>	<b>504 450</b>	<b>1 082 870</b>

Note: \*\* South Africa does not have paramilitary forces, but has the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) as a fourth service (in addition to the Army, Air Force and the Navy).

**Source:** International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). 2000. *The Military Balance, 2000/2001*. London: Oxford University Press.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The military relations between South Africa and the Mercosur countries have been determined by the nature of political systems in place. Both South Africa and most of the Mercosur countries have been under direct control or influence of their respective military establishments. During the Botha administration, the SADF had an undue influence in the political decision-making processes of the country and in some South American countries the military took over the reigns of power. When South Africa experienced UN-imposed sanctions, the countries now constituting Mercosur were being condemned by the international community due to their praetorian governments. Consequently, this provided an ideal environment for South Africa to find credible allies. However, prevalent praetorianism

in South America was not the only binding factor with South Africa, but their shared aversion towards communism was even more crucial. As will be discussed in the next chapter, it was this anti-communist stance on which future regional military co-operation in the South Atlantic was to be based.

The nature of pre-1994 military relations was largely in the areas of exchange programmes for training, diplomatic military representation, and arms transfers. Given the fact that South Africa was still subject to UN sanctions, transfers of weapons and related technologies were shrouded in secrecy. It is also noticeable that the countries which abrogated arms embargoes against South Africa were not necessarily those in South America alone, because South Africa had significant military relations with countries such as Israel, Republic of China (Taiwan) and the UK. Consequently, military training and military representation enjoyed priority. Even though the countries which later formed Mercosur provided limited military training to South Africa, it was the latter that played the role of a significant provider of military training on a larger scale than any of the relevant Southern Cone countries combined. Reputed for its operational effectiveness, South Africa provided combat and operational intelligence training to most of these countries. It is difficult to explain the asymmetries in the exchange and training programmes that South Africa had with the South American countries, despite the former's standing policy that military training would be provided on a the basis of reciprocity or a *quid pro quo* basis. However, it could be argued that South Africa stood to benefit more from being selectively generous in providing for the military needs of some countries.

Countries like Argentina and Brazil withdrew their official interaction with South Africa during the mid-1980s when the latter was already on the verge of transforming. With the advent of democracy in South Africa and the Mercosur countries, normal military relations were reinstated. When the South African Department of Foreign Affairs started a world-wide restructuring process of South Africa's diplomatic missions, it affected the country's military representation in some countries. Paraguay and Uruguay are being militarily represented by a defence attaché in Buenos Aires. Concerning training, most countries (such as Argentina) have not been sending many of their personnel to South Africa for training. It could be argued that there has been a realisation among most South American countries that South Africa is still grappling with contentious issues of integration, demobilisation and transformation. The SANDF itself has a massive backlog with regard to training due to the integration process.

As was the case with the previous chapters, this chapter has demonstrated the nature of bilateral interaction between South Africa and the countries that later formed Mercosur. While the previous chapters also identified various forms of multilateral co-operation in the security arena, this chapter has shown that co-operative regional security is best effected through genuine bilateral arrangements which are based on mutual or shared goals or threats. However, such arrangements should be sustainable in the long-term. The democratisation of South Africa and all the Mercosur countries brought about drastic changes in the strategic perception and the nature of bilateral and multilateral relations. This has resulted in the closing down of South Africa's diplomatic and military offices in countries such as Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay — notably the countries which were staunch allies of South Africa during the sanctions era.

Having discussed the various dimensions of potential and actual bilateral military co-operation between South Africa and the Mercosur countries, the next chapter analyses the military interaction of these countries within a regional framework. Its point of departure is that co-operative and collective security in the South Atlantic region is based on the understanding that the littoral countries of that region face virtually common threats in the form of sea piracy, drug-trafficking and potential environmental disasters. In order to counter these threats and to enhance confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) it is imperative that these countries learn to interact at operational level.

Thus, the next chapter identifies and discusses the historical forms of regional security co-operation that the countries on both sides of the South Atlantic Ocean have engaged in. These regional efforts include the attempts to establish the Southern Hemisphere Security Alliance, followed by the South Atlantic Treaty Organisation; the Zone of Peace and Co-operation in the South Atlantic; and the possibility of establishing the South Atlantic Ocean Rim. It will also discuss the various joint military exercises in which the South Atlantic regional countries are involved. Throughout the discussion it will be emphasised that the participation of these countries in such joint military exercises are not necessarily by virtue of their membership to Mercosur. Furthermore, the significance of South Africa's participation in these exercises and the necessity for South Africa to engage these countries within the Mercosur framework, will also be accentuated. In addition, the role of extra-regional powers such as the US, the UK and

Russia will be discussed with a view to highlighting the complexity and nature of the strategic value of the South Atlantic region. The strategic value of the region will be viewed in political, economic and military terms.

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