8 Argentina: Will the Armed Forces Be Finally 'De-Malvinized'?

In March of 1993, Argentine President Carlos Menem delivered what was perhaps the final insult to Argentina's Armed Forces in the eleven years since its defeat in the 1982 Malvinas War, by naming Oscar Camilión to be the new defense minister. The former diplomat and foreign minister is a member of the Inter-American Dialogue, the Anglo-American policymaking think-tank based in Washington, D.C., which, since its founding in 1982, has led the charge to demilitarize Ibero-America.

Argentina's military institution is undergoing the worst crisis of its history. Newspapers issue daily warnings that the Army will be "shut down," that the Air Force will be "paralyzed" for lack of funds and fuel for planes. Throughout March and April of 1993, the new minister met in emergency session with the Chiefs of Staff of the Navy, Air Force, and Army. He spoke of the high rate of desertions and poor morale. At least half of the Armed Forces' personnel must work at two jobs because military wage levels are too low to support a family. Yet, he explained, there will be no wage increase forthcoming. Moreover, he added, the "Argentine people" will have to decide what kind of Armed Forces they want, or if they want them at all.

Some have mistakenly called Camilión a "friend of the Armed Forces" because of the posts he held in the 1976-1983 military junta. But his job as defense minister has only one purpose: to use this profound economic crisis to complete

the final "restructuring" of the Armed Forces which began in earnest right after the Malvinas War, under the direction of the Washington-based Project Democracy apparatus. Nor does he hide his commitment to a policy goal of redefining the Armed Forces' mission away from defending national sovereignty, to serving as an appendage of supranational forces.

In an interview published in an April 1993 edition of *Somos* magazine, he explained that "today when you think of the Armed Forces, you don't only think of traditional defense. You think of participation in peacekeeping operations, in anti-drug operations, in dealing with natural disasters. . . ."

In another interview published in the March 12, 1993 *La Nación*, the minister bluntly stated: "I think we have a very serious problem, and that is the reorganization of the Armed Forces . . . there is very specific military discontent which has to do with their functioning and their current role in national life and abroad." The Armed Forces, he said, "must be the instrument of a diplomacy which deals with both regional as well as global themes. The latter are something new and point to precisely the role which a country like Argentina must play in the new tasks which the United Nations has decided to undertake."

Malvinas 'Never Again'

Camilión's naming to the ministry is intended, above all, to complete the "demalvinization" of Argentina's Armed Forces.

When the Argentine junta decided to retake the Malvinas Islands on April 2, 1982, it acted in defense of national sovereignty to reclaim what the British had usurped in 1832. It rallied almost all of Ibero-America to its cause, and unleashed a nationalistic ferment continent-wide which shook Washington and London to their very foundations. That bold action not only brought down on Argentina the wrath of NATO under the direction of Britain's colonialist madwoman Margaret Thatcher; the Anglo-American establishment vowed then that it would punish Argentina—or in Henry Kissinger's words, make a "horrible example" of it—for having had the audacity to challenge it in the first place.

To ensure that the Argentine Armed Forces would never again act in defense of national interests, the Anglo-Americans and their Argentine allies had to do two things: first, root out that nationalism whose commitment to national sovereignty and economic development was perceived as dangerous, not only because of its influence in Argentina, but in the rest of Ibero-America as well; and carry out a vicious form of brainwashing and psychological warfare in order to transform the military institution *into an instrument of its historical British enemy—to be used to implement the very Anglo-American policy* against which they fought in 1982.

The success of this operation was evidenced by the fact that nine years after April 2, 1982, in February of 1991, the Argentine Armed Forces deployed *with the British and NATO*—taking orders from British commanders—as part of the international task force which waged genocidal warfare against another developing nation, Iraq. Argentina was the *only* Ibero-American nation to participate in what was a virtual repeat of the Malvinas War, this time with a different victim. As in 1982 with Argentina, the Anglo-Americans were determined to punish Iraq for its "uppityness."

Argentina's participation in the task force, President Carlos Menem boasted at the time, showed that it was qualified to join the "First World." Today, according to Army Chief of Staff General Martín Balza, Argentina's Armed Forces have effectively become the "Armed Forces of the New World Order." The Army, he said in December of 1992, is "the military arm of the nation's foreign policy." As nationalist Army Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín put it, Argentina's foreign ministry today is nothing other than "a branch of the U.S. State Department," and the mission of the Armed Forces has changed dramatically.

'Changing the Cultural Guidelines'

How was this transformation brought about?

What General Balza refers to as a change in "the cultural guidelines" of the Armed Forces is a euphemism for the assault which, beginning in 1985, was directed particularly against the Army's nationalist faction whose visible leader is Colonel

Seineldín, hero of the Malvinas War. The proponents of demilitarization have reserved particular vitriol for the Colonel, whom they brand a "messianic fundamentalist," "Catholic fanatic," and "fascist."

What actually enrages them about Seineldín, however, is that he represents what they most want to destroy within the military institution: a positive nation-building tendency committed to the defense of national sovereignty, economic independence, and scientific advancement. As Colonel Seineldín said before the Buenos Aires Federal Court on Aug. 7, 1991, during his trial for the Dec. 3, 1990 military uprising: "I owe obedience and subordination to the permanent values of the Nation." The institution of the Armed Forces, he emphasized, "is the military arm of the Fatherland and its mission is to safeguard the highest interests of the Nation." This is rather different from General Balza's "Armed Forces of the New World Order."

The authors of the "Bush Manual" (*The Military and Democracy: The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America;* see Chapter 2), explicitly address the danger which Colonel Seineldín's nationalism, or what they characterize as the doctrine of "national security," poses for them. They complain that certain military factions, especially those of the Southern Cone, think their national mission is to defend the values of "the Christian West . . . loyalty, honor, respect and duty [and] *to safeguard and guarantee the process of development.*" (Emphasis added.) In the chapter discussing the problems posed by the Southern Cone armies, the Bush Manual includes a footnote on Colonel Seineldín's 1986-1988 mission to Panama, citing this as an example of how these armies have disseminated their perception of a subversive threat throughout the subcontinent through "technical missions."

For the authors, the precondition for Argentina's Armed Forces abandoning such "obsolete" conceptions as national sovereignty is the rooting out of this "dangerous" doctrine which they describe as "messianic," "ethical-religious," and "authoritarian," and replacing it with something more "pragmatic"—a new "democratic-liberal doctrine . . . of national stability." The "elitist" or "Prussian" nature of the Armed

Forces—their sense of a special mission on behalf of the rest of society—must be altered, these "reformers" demand.

The military institution's spiritual identification with the principle of nationhood or fatherland must be eliminated, and military personnel "integrated" into the rest of society by eliminating specialized education or the "praetorian" practice of conscription. Military personnel must be degraded to the status of an ordinary civil servant. Otherwise, the demilitarizers argue, like the *junta* which retook the Malvinas in 1982, they might do something unpredictable. Steps have already been taken to eliminate from the curriculum of Argentina's Military Academy all humanistic, historical, or philosophical studies and replace them with more "practical" subjects such as business administration. The rationale for such action is that officers have no need of moral or nationalist principles, but only "technical" training which will make them efficient administrators in their new global tasks.

Punished for Patriotism

The September 1985 trial of the military *junta* was the opening salvo in the campaign to "reform" the Armed Forces out of existence, through specific policies as well as psychological warfare. Orchestrated by the Alfonsín government and the international human rights lobby, especially that lodged within the Carter administration in the United States, the trial was set as a repeat of the post-World War II Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals—right down to the slogan, "Never Again."

It might be argued that some among Argentina's military leadership deserved to be tried for fighting badly—or for not fighting at all—during the South Atlantic conflict with the British. That might have been justified. But the members of the military *junta,* and by extension the *entire military institution,* were tried above all *for having dared to take on the British,* and second, for fighting a war against communist subversion—the so-called "dirty war." These were the crimes for which they were sent to prison, and the message was loudly communicated to the rest of the Armed Forces as well as to the Argentine people.

As Colonel Seineldín documented in his August 1991 statement before the Federal Court, during the rest of Alfonsín's term in office and continuing into the administration of Carlos Menem, government policy toward the Armed Forces consisted of one provocation after another: harassment and mistreatment of nationalist officers, deep budget cuts and forced retirements of personnel, low wages, selling off or gutting the institution's technological capabilities, and constant promises—never kept—of plans to redress military grievances and improve the institution's situation.

Colonel Seineldín explained that Alfonsín's policy above all was aimed at destroying the Armed Forces' mission as "the military arm of the nation," eliminating the concept of "hypothesis of conflict" and then finally, the institution's role as protector of "the highest interests of the nation." In his words, this produced "the deterioration of the Armed Forces' materiel and personnel and, above all, demoralization." The end result? "An action produces a reaction," he explained: the rebellions of Easter Week, Monte Caseros, Villa Martelli, and then Dec. 3, 1990—followed by trials and jailings which removed the most important nationalist leaders from the scene. Colonel Seineldín sits in the Magdalene Prison today with the equivalent of a life sentence, as do many of his comrades who participated in the December 1990 action.

Under conditions of economic penury, dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), many of the best people have left the Armed Forces or sought retirement. The government's increasing policy commitment to supranationalism and the United Nations' global agenda, especially under Carlos Menem and his Anglophile Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella, have provided the framework in which Argentina's military and civilian leadership could boast that the military institution was well on its way to becoming "the Armed Forces of the New World Order."

Of Which Reality Are We Speaking?

The public justification for military reform in Argentina, is that the Armed Forces must reflect the country's new reality,

politically and economically. The Cold War is ended, the argument goes; there is no internal subversive threat, and resources are scarce. Large defense budgets or large bureaucracies or defense industries are unnecessary. "Lean and mean, professional, highly technified and mobile" are the adjectives attached to the "modern" Armed Forces. Restructuring "puts quality before quantity," General Balza explains.

The state of the Armed Forces today reveals little of quality.

In an article published in the Feb. 25, 1993 edition of *La Nación*, General Balza reported that in 1980, the Army budget for expenditures and investment was $1.6 billion; in 1982 and 1983, it was $1 billion; and in 1992, the operating budget was approximately $120 million. According to the Arturo Illia Foundation's 1985 report *Outline for Military Reform* which served as the basis for Alfonsín's military reform, the defense budget fell by 35 percent between 1983 and 1984, constituting in the latter year 3.88 percent of GNP. Nonetheless, the report complained that "this percentage is unsatisfactory in a developing country such as ours with such a heavy burden of foreign debt. . . ." Any defense budget that represented more than 2 percent of GNP was unacceptable, the report said.

Of a total defense budget of $4 billion, which is a little more than 1 percent of GNP, 75 percent is allocated for wages and expenses of both the military and civilian personnel. The remaining 25 percent, according to the March 8, 1993 *La Nación*, "allocated for purchase of equipment, spare parts, operating and training expenses, is absolutely insufficient to maintain the operating capabilities of military units."

In the Army, the wages of a lieutenant colonel and lower ranks cannot cover the cost of the monthly market-basket of approximately $1,350. A second lieutenant earns $581 monthly; a corporal $467. Fifty percent of Army officers and non-commissioned officers hold a second job.

According to the daily *Clarín* of March 15, 1993, between 1990 and 1992, the exodus from the Armed Forces increased dramatically, because of low wages. In the Army, 669 officers and 1,759 non-commissioned officers asked to resign or retire. Thus, the "modernization" of the Army which began in 1984

has caused a 50 percent reduction in manpower—from more than 100,000 in 1983 to 50,000 currently.

Clarín also reported that in the Navy, between 1984 and 1992, there was a 16 percent drop in the number of trained professionals. In the Air Force, while the decline in personnel has been less dramatic, it is the case that 80 percent are forced to seek a second job. In total, according to *La Nación*, over the last ten years, 30 percent of the officers and non-commissioned officers under the age of 35 have voluntarily left the Armed Forces and "the percentage increases for those with higher levels of training. This is a luxury which no institution can afford."

These austerity conditions have given the Argentine Congress the pretext for eliminating obligatory military service altogether, to move toward a volunteer army. The 1985 report *Outline for Military Reform* issued by the Arturo Illia Foundation for Peace and Democracy, stated that conscription is "anachronistic and incompatible with democratic ethics," and must be "suppressed and replaced." Thus, military service is no longer a duty to country. A bill introduced in September 1992 reduces obligatory service for 18-year-olds to seven months and makes it possible for citizens between 18 and 21 years of age to perform voluntary military service.

To complete the Armed Forces' physical decline, both Menem and his Finance Minister Domingo Cavallo not only refuse to grant any wage increase, but insist that a 10 percent budget cut, ordered by the IMF, be implemented as well. A private report on the situation in the Army prepared for Oscar Camilión warned that this budget cut would leave the force with only enough funds for four months of operations in 1993.

Trampling on 'the Highest Interests of the Nation'

That this military "restructuring" is the implementation of Anglo-American *geopolitical* strategy, is underscored not just by its gutting of the Armed Forces' physical infrastructure, manpower, and operational capabilities, as already described. It has singled out for deliberate destruction those positive

achievements in the areas of science and technology, the "military-industrial complex," which best reflect the commitment among a nationalist faction of the Armed Forces to nation-building and economic and scientific independence.

Moreover, gutting these capabilities has *continental* as well as national implications. Together with Brazil, Argentina's scientific infrastructure—the nuclear energy industry, aerospace and rocketry, and basic research and development—is crucial to the implementation of any economic recovery program for Ibero-America. These capabilities, advanced through cooperation with the United States and Russia in the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), for example, could serve as the "science driver" or motor for a continent-wide economic boom. Thus, for the malthusians in the advanced sector, they must be eliminated.

The proponents of Adam Smith's free market have sought to dismantle the achievements of patriots such as Gen. Enrique Mosconi, Gen. Manuel Savio, and many others, who built defense and nuclear energy, as well as basic industries, as the basis for autonomous national industrial development. The military industries firm Fabricaciones Militares, the state-run oil firm Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF), the giant steel company Somisa, Altos Hornos Zapla, Tamse, the General Mosconi and Bahía Blanca petrochemical complexes, the National Atomic Energy Commission (CNEA) and a host of others have been put on the auction block to be bought up for a song by international usurers because they are not profitable or "efficient."

Savio was not wrong to compare the creation of Somisa and other basic industries in the mid-1940s under the supervision of a dirigist state to "our political independence in 1816." Yet his urging that economic and industrial planning always be guided by "the highest interests of the nation" has been trampled on, to be replaced by a slavish obedience to the dictates of those same foreign economic cartels which have historically undermined the country's economic independence.

In an article in the Dec. 20, 1991 *El Informador Público*, Oscar Montoya, a researcher at the Latin American Institute

for Technological Cooperation and Foreign Affairs (ILCTRI) accurately described Carlos Menem's mania to privatize Argentina's most important military-related scientific and defense achievements, including the nuclear industry, as the "global transnationalization of the economy . . . these measures seek to paralyze the advances achieved in nuclear energy, as the first stage of its definitive disintegration as part of our national patrimony. . . . The entry into the First World ('delirium tremens') cannot occur without independent scientific and technological development. . . . On the other hand we are witnessing the political, economic and technological capitulation of the most submissive banana republics. What Menem calls our entry into the First World is nothing other than our subordinate and dependent integration into the U.S. economy, with the adjustment constituting Argentina's transnationalized restructuring."

Destroy the Condor

The Menem government's abject submission to Washington, London, and Tel Aviv on the issue of the Air Force's Condor II missile is the clearest example of this "political, economic and technological capitulation."

Using the pretext of preventing the spread of "weapons of mass destruction" or preventing "untrustworthy" Third World nations from wreaking havoc, the Anglo-American Establishment has imposed a policy of "technological apartheid" to prevent developing-sector nations from acquiring or developing advanced technologies which could free them from the IMF's malthusian grip. Aside from the immediate implications for Argentina's own technological advancement, the fact that the intermediate-range Condor II missile was being developed in collaboration with Egypt and Iraq made it absolutely unacceptable.

Foreign Minister Di Tella spoke for the Anglo-American side in statements reported in the Jan. 21, 1992 edition of *El Cronista*. "I have absolutely no problem with international supervision [of the Condor;] what I want to add is that the Condor II wasn't just a bad project, it was a terrible project.

Argentina offered itself as a Third or Fourth World nation so its territory could be used for German missile projects that couldn't be built in Europe. . . . By carrying out a strategically sensitive experiment with sensitive countries, Argentina became a dangerous and unreliable country. [The Condor's] physical destruction is a necessity if we want to integrate ourselves into the advanced sector."

Di Tella's tortured logic is that of the Bush Manual: Only by abandoning a commitment to sovereign economic development can a nation become reliable. And the Menem government did everything possible to become trustworthy in U.S. eyes, right down to inviting U.S. congressmen, Pentagon, NASA, and State Department officials to traipse around the Condor II missile factory at Falda del Carmen, Córdoba, to verify that it had been dismantled. It took control of the project out of Air Force hands and set up the National Space Activities Commission (CONAE) under the direct control of the presidency. It joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and, in early 1993, signed the Tlatelolco Treaty.

When then-Defense Secretary Richard Cheney visited Buenos Aires in February of 1992, he stated, "The United States views positively the Argentine government's decision not to continue with the Condor project." He added that "it was, however, Argentina's sovereign decision . . . a very solid and coherent one."

Nonetheless, when in early 1993 it was revealed that the Condor's guidance system had not been sent to Spain and destroyed as previously reported, Anglo-American media shrieked that Menem had failed to completely subdue the Air Force as promised. "United States officials are concerned about the difficulty faced by the Menem government in taking full control of the Condor II," the *New York Times* reported on March 7, 1993. Public opposition to the missile project's dismantling "led some in the Menem government to look for ways of handing over the project without seeming to kowtow to the United States," the *Times* noted. "For example, claiming it was sending the missiles to Spain for use in peaceful space projects. But the plan all along was for the United States to supervise their destruction."

The Supranational Agenda

The Menem government's active role both in Ibero-America and internationally on behalf of supranationalism is the other component in its program to dismantle the Armed Forces. The essence of this role has been to redefine the mission of the Armed Forces away from a defense of national sovereignty to deployment in international peacekeeping adventures which limit, if not completely eliminate, other nations' sovereignty.

Throughout 1992, when civil-military forces in several countries openly challenged the IMF's corrupt "democratic" rule, notably in Venezuela and Peru, the Argentine and Venezuelan governments were the ones that demanded that hemispheric mechanisms be created to smash any force or government which dared to take such action.

Over the past two years, together with Venezuela's Carlos Andrés Pérez, the Menem government has been Washington's point man in the attempt to reform the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) to permit the deployment of multinational troops against any nation which had abandoned IMF-run "democracy." Speaking before the Rio Group of foreign ministers in March of 1992, Menem demanded that "the OAS have a Security Council, like the U.N. to intervene in the prevention or condemnation of military coups in the region." Foreign Minister Di Tella repeated a month later that "our diagnosis is that if the OAS is only able to exhort, it will be weak. That's why we're interested in giving the OAS a menu of alternatives, with different levels of powers of intervention. . . ."

In May of 1992, with visitors such as Gen. Bernard Loeffke, president of the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), Menem and Di Tella discussed how to place the IADB under OAS control. "It should have more responsibilities than its current ones," Loeffke said. In a press conference that same month, Menem defended "the creation of continental forces to guarantee the stability of democracy." Di Tella insisted that the OAS must create "peacekeeping forces, like the U.N."

Argentina's groveling request to become a member of

NATO further reflects its anti-military policy. A Jan. 28, 1993 article in the *Washington Post,* which appeared under the headline "Coup Prone Argentine Army Finds Calling with U.N.," quotes former foreign ministry adviser Carlos Escudé, who suggested that it would make sense for NATO to include Argentina in some fashion, as it did with Spain. "Spain's joining NATO redefined a restive, fascist military's mission automatically," he said. "It would be contrary to stability" to dismantle the Armed Forces, Escudé said, "but on the other hand, what do you do with them?" The answer for Menem, the *Washington Post* said, "appears to be to find a new mission for them, preferably far away."

In his Oct. 18, 1992 speech in Brussels, Belgium before NATO ambassadors, Guido Di Tella explained why his country was qualified to become a member of NATO. It was Argentina's 1982 defeat in the South Atlantic, he said, "and the failure of the economic system of the past 40 years" which had accelerated the country's transformation to the point where it felt it should join the alliance.

Condemning his nation's "exotic" technology-transfer agreements with countries like Iraq, he promised that "beginning in March of next year, Argentina hopes to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)." And, he added, despite budgetary difficulties, Argentina is also "introducing reforms in its military structure in order to be better prepared to regularly participate in [the United Nations'] peacekeeping operations." He promised that Argentina would sign the Tlatelolco Treaty, after having signed a series of agreements with Brazil promising not to build an atomic bomb or chemical or bacteriological weapons. Moreover, he concluded, by joining NATO, Argentina would show unequivocally that it had only "peaceful intentions" toward the Malvinas.

A South Atlantic NATO?

When then-Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Colin Powell visited several Ibero-American countries in early November 1992, military leaders and politicians less willing than Argentina to crawl before the Anglo-American Establish-

ment, coldly received his proposals for involving the Armed Forces in fighting drugs or redefining their mission. He was badly snubbed in Brazil and Chile. But the Menem government and its military leaders welcomed him with open arms to hear him enthusiastically back Argentina's bid to join NATO, and emphasize that that body should be broadened to include Third World countries and embark on "new tasks," for "humanitarian" purposes, for example. Also in Buenos Aires, Powell felt comfortable enough to propose the creation of a continental military force, to be deployed in the Americas should "conflicts occur."

The "broadened" role for NATO which Powell discussed with the Argentines, was also elaborated in a document prepared by NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner and handed to Carlos Menem when the latter visited Germany in the fall of 1992. According to Argentine press reports, the document stated that "military presence outside the borders of NATO's founding members may be diminished with greater participation by the Armed Forces of the Third World in international zones of conflict."

Ambito Financiero reported on Oct. 7, 1992 that "NATO's greatest concern is to strengthen a U.N.-style peacekeeping force, but one that would be faster and more effective. In order for it to work, partners are needed which would allow that force to operate in areas outside the European continent. What justifies the creation of that intercontinental force are 'Yugoslavian-style regional' conflicts."

The Menem government has already deployed troops to participate in U.N. peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia, Angola, and Somalia, and offered to participate in maintaining the U.N. blockade against Iraq. But it was Di Tella's assertion in his Brussels speech that Argentina "is interested in strengthening ties with that organization to consolidate the objectives shared throughout the world, including, of course, the South Atlantic" which also points to how it might deploy in Ibero-America as a NATO adjunct.

In its March 1990 report entitled *Latin America at the Crossroads: the Challenge to the Trilateral Countries,* the Trilateral Commission recommended that NATO play a role in Ibe-

ro-America as part of a reorganized "regional security organization." Similarly, Di Tella emphasized that no effort should be spared to advance "the Argentine project" of creating "a military cooperation organization in the South Atlantic in order to preserve peace in the region." On Oct. 20, 1992 *La Prensa* reported that "at the Defense Ministry there is talk of establishing 'organic relations' with the Armed Forces of NATO's 16 member-nations and of formalizing naval cooperation in the South Atlantic which, aside from Argentina and South Africa, would also involve Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay."

Another reflection of the same plan was the November 1992 explanation given by Adm. Jorge Ferrer, then-Navy Chief of Staff, that Argentina sought to broaden the South Atlantic Maritime Area (AMAS), currently including Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay, "transforming it into an intercontinental mechanism for ecological protection, enforcement of maritime laws, and peacekeeping." Asked about the relationship between this proposal and Argentine attempts to join NATO, Ferrer replied, "Argentina has put into motion a vector oriented toward the NATO of the future. This is not a technical discussion about joining the current NATO, but a historical and dynamic perception of new problems of world security."

What's the Payback?

In February of 1992, then-Defense Minister Antonio Erman González explained the government's decision to scrap the Condor II by saying that "we're entering into a new world scenario in which there are agreements among parties. You give up something to obtain other benefits." Whatever advantages a depression-wracked First World might bestow on Argentina today, however, are illusory at best. And for those military leaders who swallowed the reform and modernization fairy tale, and tolerated the destruction of the military institution in hopes that their own skins might be saved, reality is now asserting itself with a vengeance, in two ways.

First, the "lean and mean" military is a lie. Argentina couldn't send Navy ships off a second time to participate in

the blockade of Iraq because there were no funds available. In the middle of 1992, the Navy had to place its personnel on leave for two weeks due to lack of funds. Finance Minister Domingo Cavallo refused to finance military participation in other U.N. peacekeeping missions. According to a private report prepared on the state of the Army today, it lacks the most elementary equipment, and what it does have dates to the 1960s and 1970s. It has no backpacks, uniforms, anti-aircraft weaponry, technology to protect against chemical, biological, or radiation warfare, not to mention gas masks or protective clothing. Second lieutenants and corporals are now forced to purchase their uniforms—which were provided free of charge until 1991—in five installments of $160 each, deducted from their already low wages.

But, if anyone thinks the U.N. is a better employer, note the report in the March 15, 1993 *Clarín* that "wages of half the members of the Argentine Army Battalion I, deployed to Croatia from March to October of last year, still haven't been paid." And, it added, "The situation is the same for the members of another battalion which will be in the Balkans until the end of this month [of March 1993]."

As for bonuses such as the Skyhawk jets which Argentina was supposed to receive from the United States, their delivery has been delayed by the Pentagon until it receives proof of the Condor II's complete destruction. In any case, one expert noted, the Skyhawks are "scrap iron" which the U.S. wants to get rid of. "They are the oldest and most expensive in the world," he emphasized.

Secondly, in what is the lawful end result of the government's and the military leadership's capitulation to the Anglo-American demilitarizers, supranational entities and the human rights lobby are pointing to "new evidence" to prove that Argentina's Armed Forces, as well as those of other Southern Cone countries, violated human rights during the 1970s war against subversion.

In 1987 the Alfonsín government passed legislation which put a halt to prosecution of military officers on such charges—the "due obedience" and "end point" laws. In 1989 and 1990, Menem also pardoned a number of top military officers, in-

cluding the former *junta* members. But in May of 1993, Anglo-American propaganda was shrieking that Ibero-America's Armed Forces are as bad as, or worse than, the World War II Nazis or the Serbians today, to justify a whole new round of prosecutions which will make Alfonsín's 1985 trial of the military *junta* look like a picnic.

This offensive is *institutional.* Individuals who benefitted from amnesties in their countries, or who cooperated in the process of "military reform," thinking this would protect them, are just as much targets as those who didn't enjoy the benefit of any amnesty. Moreover, action won't be limited to trials. Human rights groups in Colombia and Peru are already issuing hitlists of military and police officers for assassination by narco-terrorist groups, charging them with human rights abuses.

The context for new *international* trials is being prepared by the demand of such supranational bodies as the OAS Commission on Human Rights that amnesties granted to military and police personnel in Argentina, Uruguay, and more recently in El Salvador, be abrogated because they are "incompatible" with human rights accords signed by those governments. Human rights activists are also using the December 1992 discovery in Paraguay of the "Horror Files," showing coordination among Southern Cone militaries in fighting the region's leftist guerrillas in the late 1970s, to demand that old cases be reopened or new trials initiated at the Inter-American Court in San José, Costa Rica against officers who fought subversion.

The January 1993 publication of the book *Secret Dossier: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the 'Dirty War'*, by Martin Edwin Andersen is a contributing factor in building the environment for trials. Andersen is a former director of the U.S. Democratic Party's National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), an entity deeply involved in the demilitarizing effort since its founding in 1983. Andersen's thesis is that the Argentine Armed Forces are institutionally Nazis, and should be destroyed. His book is circulating widely in the Southern Cone.

Citing "international law," U.S. Secretary of State Warren

Christopher has indicated that the Clinton administration may use El Salvador as a test case for thwarting that government's amnesty, and trying Salvadoran army officers in U.S. courts for alleged war crimes. And in preparatory meetings for the World Conference on Human Rights held on June 14-25, 1993 in Vienna, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) proposed the creation of an "international criminal court" to judge "war crimes and serious human rights violations."

The March 1993 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that Argentine citizen José Siderman, now a U.S. resident, could seek indemnization in U.S. courts from the Argentine government on the basis of his claim that he was tortured by the military during the 1976-1983 regime, sets a precedent for supranational action against Argentina. The Supreme Court ruled that Argentina could not be protected from prosecution by the Law of Foreign Sovereign Immunity and that Siderman could proceed to seek damages in the amount of $2.7 million.