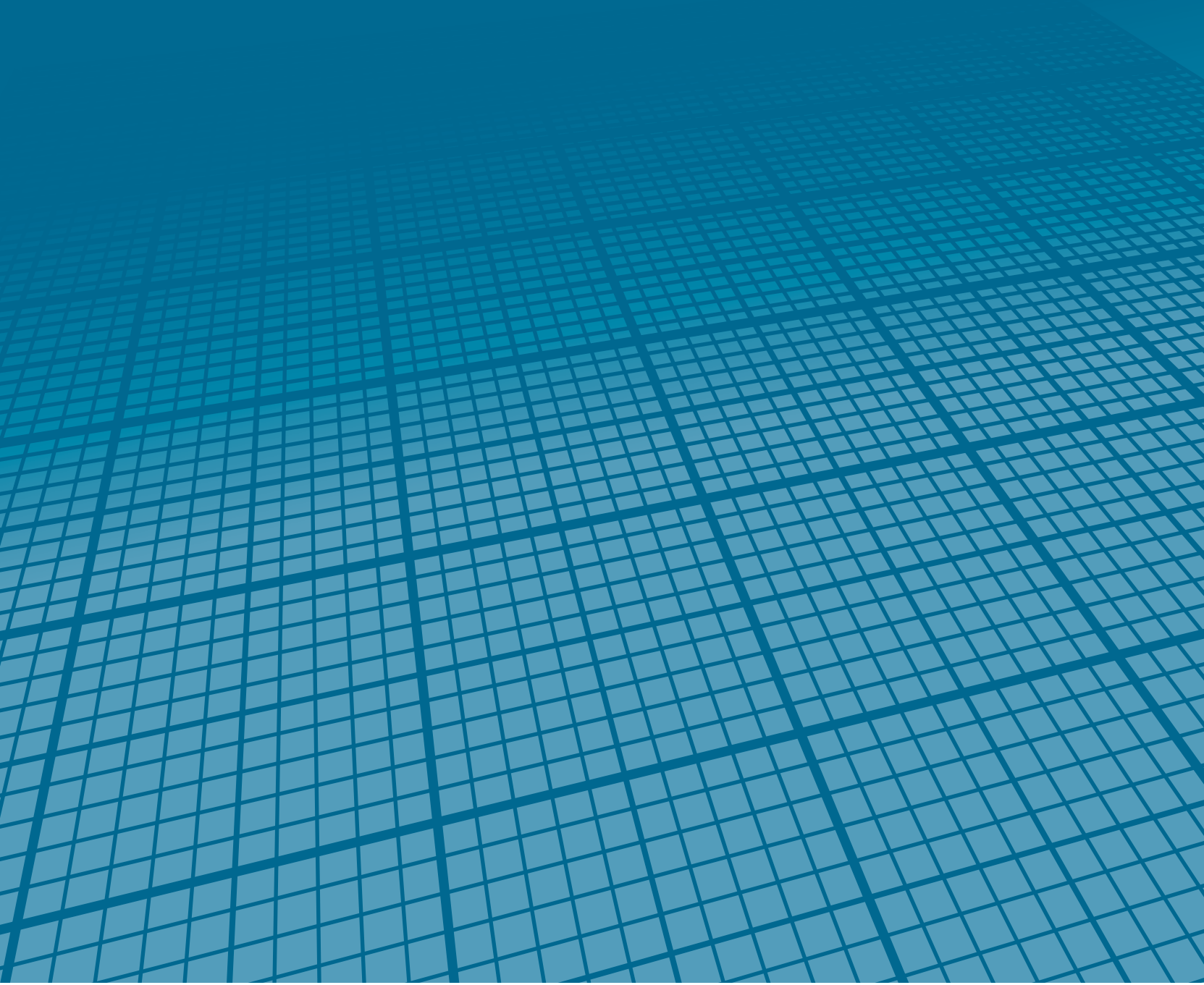


Chapter 7:

The Armed Forces





Armed Forces Strength 2012

Army			Navy			Air Force			TOTAL
Argentina									
42,803			19,064			12,757			TOTAL 74,624
6,064 Officers	22,332 Non-commissioned officers	14,407 Enlisted soldiers	2,460 Officers	14,455 Non-commissioned officers	2,149 Enlisted soldiers	2,507 Officers	8,624 Non-commissioned officers	1,626 Enlisted soldiers	
Bolivia¹									
28,780			5,578			5,972			TOTAL 40,330
3,034 Officers	4,528 Non-commissioned officers	21,218 Enlisted soldiers	1,087 Officers	1,621 Non-commissioned officers	2,870 Enlisted soldiers	987 Officers	1,947 Non-commissioned officers	3,038 Enlisted soldiers	
Brazil									
204,744			65,528			69,093			TOTAL 339,365
23,445 Officers	45,584 Non-commissioned officers	135,715 Enlisted soldiers	8,669 Officers	25,514 Non-commissioned officers	31,345 Enlisted soldiers	9,708 Officers	25,209 Non-commissioned officers	34,176 Enlisted soldiers	
Chile²									
25,819			17,785			7,321			TOTAL 50,925
3,813 Officers	17,879 Non-commissioned officers	4,127 Enlisted soldiers	2,194 Officers	15,248 Non-commissioned officers	343 Enlisted soldiers	1,219 Officers	6,102 Non-commissioned officers	0 Enlisted soldiers	
Colombia									
223,721			35,086			15,436			TOTAL 274,543 ³
Dominican Republic									
25,716			10,042			10,789			TOTAL 46,547
8,737 Officers	16,979 Enlisted soldiers		2,938 Officers	7,104 Enlisted soldiers		4,680 Officers	6,109 Enlisted soldiers		
Ecuador⁴									
23,704			8,357			6,203			TOTAL 38,264
2,944 Officers	20,760 Enlisted soldiers		1,127 Officers	7,230 Enlisted soldiers		865 Officers	5,338 Enlisted soldiers		
El Salvador									
12,740			1,520			1,510			TOTAL 15,770
Guatemala									
13,669			996			915			TOTAL 15,580
2,061 Officers	3,405 Non-commissioned officers	8,203 Enlisted soldiers	169 Officers	345 Non-commissioned officers	482 Enlisted soldiers	124 Officers	294 Non-commissioned officers	497 Enlisted soldiers	
Honduras⁴									
7,200			1,100			2,250			TOTAL 10,550
958 Officers	210 Non-commissioned officers	6,032 Enlisted soldiers	156 Officers	358 Non-commissioned officers	586 Enlisted soldiers	372 Officers	865 Non-commissioned officers	1,013 Enlisted soldiers	
Mexico									
Army / Air Force			Navy						TOTAL 261,930
207,716			54,214						
37,970 Officers			169,746 Non-Commissioned officers and troops						

1 For troop strength, the latest figures available as of 2010 have been considered.
2 Professional troops are taken into account.

3 Totals include Command.
4 Information as of 2011.

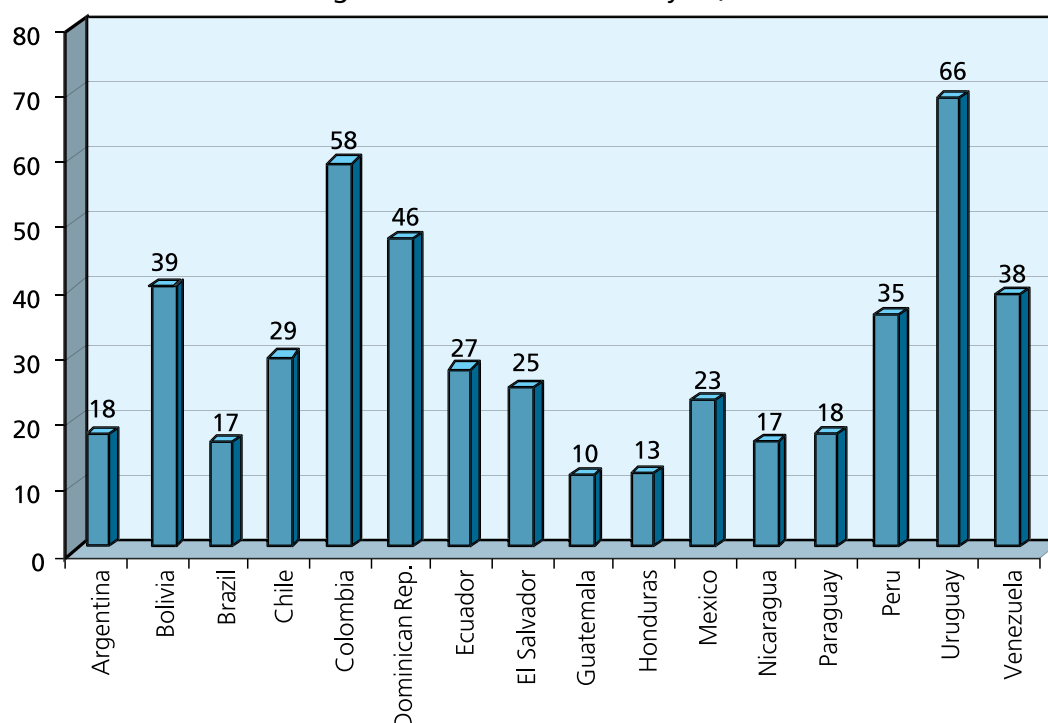
Army			Navy			Air Force			TOTAL
Nicaragua									
10,404									TOTAL
1,595 Officers			302 Non-commissioned officers			8,507 Enlisted soldiers			10,404
Paraguay									
4,553			1,813			1,522			TOTAL
1,040 Officers	2,466 Non-commissioned officers	1,047 Enlisted soldiers	275 Officers	1,229 Non-commissioned officers	309 Enlisted soldiers	293 Officers	1,044 Non-commissioned officers	185 Enlisted soldiers	12,221 ⁵
Peru⁶									
106,034									TOTAL
11,015 Officers			37,111 Non-commissioned officers			57,908 Enlisted soldiers			106,034
Uruguay									
15,436			4,253			2,683			TOTAL
1,579 Officers	13,857 Non-commissioned officers		657 Officers	3,596 Non-commissioned officers		433 Officers	2,250 Non-commissioned officers		22,372
Venezuela⁷									
113,558									TOTAL
									113,558
Total Strength: 1,433,017									

⁵ The total number includes members of the Military Forces Command, the Commander in Chief and Logistics Command.

⁶ Information as of 2009.

⁷ Includes the National Guard.

Number of Regular Force Members every 10,000 inhabitants

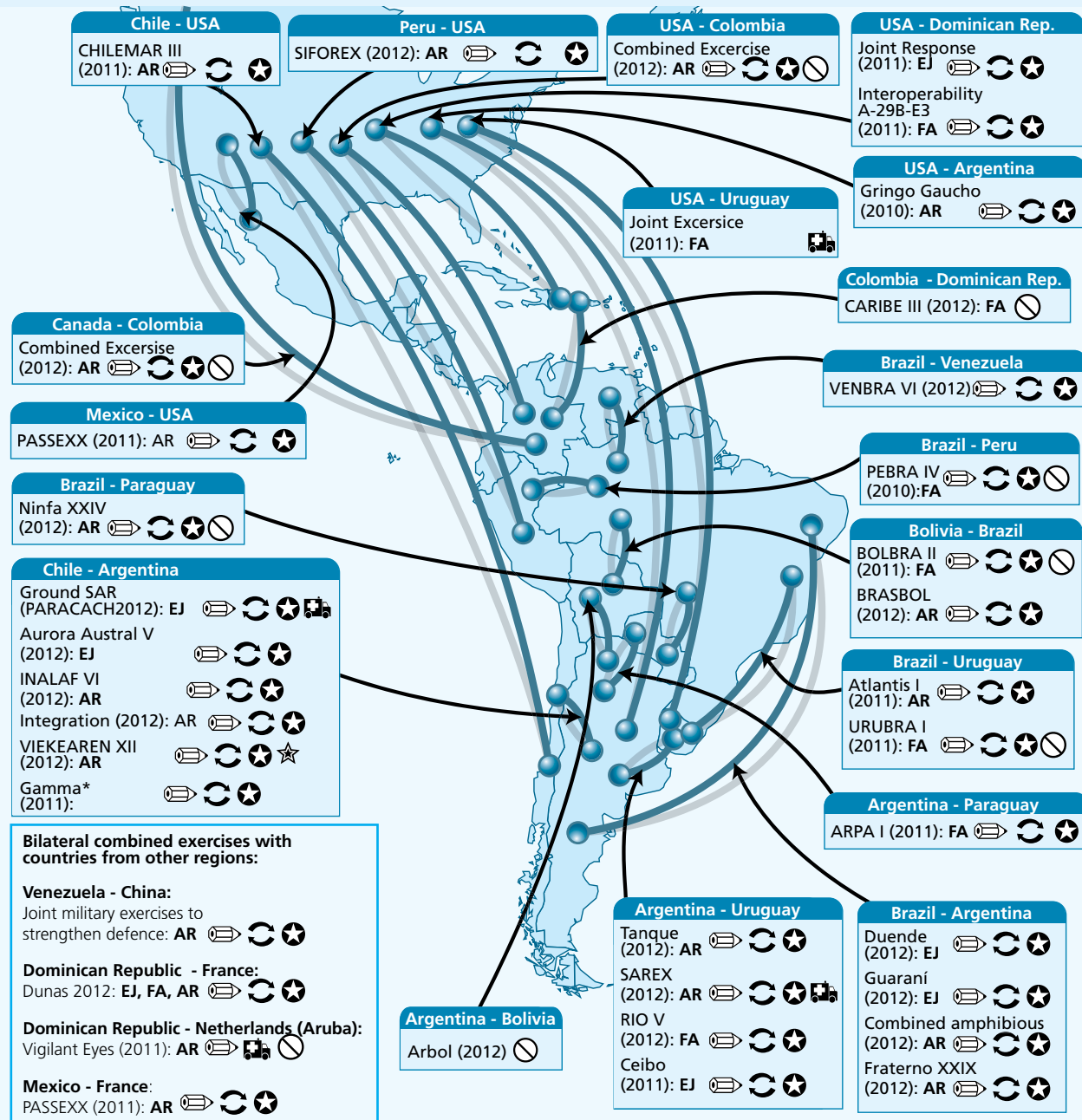


Source: Agencies and official documents specified in section "The countries" of this publication. Information on population provided by the Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2011, ECLAC (Population projection 2012).



Military Cooperation

Military cooperation in the region is reflected in the ongoing and regular conduct of combined exercises, both of a bilateral and multilateral nature, where the goal is to enhance greater interoperability among forces while contributing to the strengthening of confidence-building between nations. Such exercises in many instances include, in addition to military training, the conduct of natural disaster response drills, multidimensional scenarios under UN mandate, search and rescue situations, and combat of illicit trafficking, among others.



References

EJ: Army	☞: Training	★: Simulation	☛: PKO
AR: Navy	↻: Information and procedure exchange	⊘: Illicit Trafficking	🚑: Search and Rescue
FA: Air Force	★: Force Deployment	☄: Natural Disasters	

*Focus on logistics aspects for the "Cruz del Sur" Combined Peace Force.

Source: Information provided by institutional reports, web sites of the Legislative branches, the Ministries of Defence and the Armed Forces of participating countries.

Multilateral Exercises

Excercise	Type of Exercise	Force	Participants
ATLASUR VIII (2010)		Navy	Argentina, Brazil, South Africa and Uruguay.
Cooperation I (2010)		Air Force	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
Cruzex V (2011)		Air Force	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France, United States. Uruguay and Venezuela.
"Vigiar Atlántico" (2011)		Navy	Brazil, United Kingdom and United States.
ACRUX V (2011)		Navy	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.
IBSAMAR II (2011)		Navy	Brazil, India and South Africa.
Angel Thunder (2011)		Air Force	Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain, Singapore and United Kingdom.
Teamwork South (2011)		Navy	Australia, Chile, Colombia, France, United Kingdom and United States.
UNITAS LII (2011)		Navy	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Panama and United States (Atlantic and Pacific phases).
Marara (2011)		Army, Navy, Air Force	Australia, Chile, France, French Polynesia and New Zealand.
Peacekeeping operations UNASUR 1 (2011)		Army	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.
Integration (2011)		Army and Navy	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Peru.
ASPIRANTEX (2012)		Navy	Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.
BRACOLPER (2012)		Navy	Brazil, Colombia and Peru.
PANAMAX (2012)		Navy and Army	Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and United States.
Southern Partnership Station (2012)		Navy, Coast Guard	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, United States and Uruguay.
Command Forces (2012)		Army	Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States and Uruguay
Salitre III (2012)		Air Force	Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Mexico, Peru, United States and Uruguay.
Peacekeeping Operations Americas (2012)		Army	Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Perú, and Uruguay.
South Exchange (2012)		Navy	Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, United States and Uruguay.
RED FLAG (July 2012)		Air Force	Colombia, United Arab Emirates and United States.
Huemul (2011)		Army	Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, United States and Uruguay.
RIMPAC (Rim to the Pacific) (2012)		Navy	Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Holland, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Tonga, United Kingdom, and United States.

Chile and Ecuador set up a Combined Chilean-Ecuadorian Horizontal Construction Engineer Company, which has been in operation since 2009, and is currently carrying out infrastructure construction activities in Haiti under the MINUSTAH mission, and has created bonds with institutions with scarce resources in Haiti, providing humanitarian assistance within the civil-military cooperation framework. It is made up of 87 Chilean and 66 Ecuadorian troops.

In October 2008, the Ministers of Defence of the Republic of Peru and the Republic of Argentina agreed on the creation of the Binational "Libertador Don José de San Martín" Company of Engineers, intended for the joint construction of infrastructure work needed by the Haitian people within the framework of the MINUSTAH. In April 2012, a working meeting was held to set up this force, with representatives from the Armed Forces of each country.

Argentina-Chile "CRUZ DEL SUR" Combined Joint Peace Force (FPC)

In December 2005, the Ministers of Defence of the Republic of Argentina and the Republic of Chile signed a bilateral agreement for the purpose of setting up the Argentine-Chilean Combined Peace Force "CRUZ DEL SUR." This project comprised the creation of a rapid deployment force under the UNSAS (United Nations Stand By Arrangement System)- with the capability to deploy within a 30/90 day period from the time the UN Security Council Resolution is passed until the deployment of a generic peacekeeping and stabilization mission; and with a self-sustaining capacity in the area for 90 days

In 2011, the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the countries and the UN was signed with the purpose of determining the organization and employment of the FPC, establishing that in order for the FPC to be deployed, an official request under the UN Security Council is a previous and indispensable requirement. The parties may also offer its use in a designated mission, following the official mechanism mentioned above.

The Cruz del Sur FPC is created with one single command and common doctrine brigade, including the following elements: ground, air, naval components, combined engineer company, a level II combined hospital and fast deployment combined medical unit and modular combined units.

The FPC has followed a progressive training schedule. In October 2011, a combined joint exercise was held, using a simulation computer system for employment of forces in a fictitious scenario in Africa. In August 2012, the first working meeting for the organization of the "Cruz del Sur I" combined exercise was held. The exercise is expected to be conducted by the end of 2012.

Sources: *Libro Blanco de Brazil* (2012), *Quinto Informe de Labores SEMAR* (2011), *Memoria del Ejército* (Army Report) of Chile (2011), web sites of the Ministry of Defence of Argentina, National Defence Staff of Chile, Argentine Army and UNASUR, and web sites of Legislative branches, Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces of participating countries. MOU on "Cruz del Sur" combined peace force (June 2011). See more exercises in Chapter 5 and section on Caribbean.



Women's Admission to the Armed Forces (year)

Country	Officers						Non-commissioned officers					
	Professional Corps			Command Corps			Professional Corps			Command Corps		
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force
Argentina	1982	1981	1982	1997	2002	2001	1981	1980	2006	1996	1980	1998
Bolivia	1982	2010	2007	1979-1985/2003	2010	2007	1950	2010	2004	2008	2010	2004
Brazil	1992	1980	1982	2012/17(1)	2012(1)	1996	2001	1980	1982	2012/ 17(1)	2012	2002
Chile	1974	2003	1952	1995	2007	2000	1974	1937	1974	1998	2009	2009
Colombia	1976	1984	1979	2008	1997	1997	1983	1997	1992	1983	(2)	1997
Dominican Rep.	1981	1981	1981	2001	2001	2001	1961	1961	1961	2001	2001	2001
Ecuador	1956	1977	2000	1999	2001	2007	1958	1953	2008	n/a	1965	2008
El Salvador	1985			2000			(2)					
Guatemala	1967	2001	2000	1997			1967	2000	2002	1997	1997	1997
Honduras	1970	1975	1964	1998	1999	1996	2004	1999	1997	2004	1999	1997
Mexico	1938	1972	1937	2007	2010	2007	1938	1972	1938	2007	1995	2007
Nicaragua	1979			1993			1979			1994		
Paraguay	1932	1970	1970	2003			(2)					
Peru	1997	1997	1997	1997	1999	1998	1997	1997	1997	1998	1998	1998
Uruguay	1973	No professionals enlisted	1997	1998	2000	1997	1973	1992	1990	1973	1992	1997
Venezuela	1980	1979	1980	2001	1978	1978	(3)			2001	1975	1975

(1) In August 2012, the laws establishing admission requirements for officer courses at the Army and Navy were amended, and women were admitted (N° 12.705 – 2012/08/09 and N° 12.704 – 2012/08/09). In the case of the Army, a five-year term is established to make available the means necessary for their accommodation.
 (2) In El Salvador and Paraguay, women cannot enter the services as NCO's. In Colombia, only in the Naval Force.
 (3) Under the *Ley orgánica de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana* (GO Extraordinaria N° 6.020 – 2011/03/21), the senior professional non-commissioned officers were promoted to technical officers. Students who graduate from the Bolivarian Military Technical Academy are in the same category. Career sergeants fall under the professional troop category.

Note: The Command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their professional careers. The Professional corps refers to those who develop a career in the civilian sphere and are then incorporated to the Armed Forces.

Admission of Women into Military Training Specialties (Officers, command corps)

Country	Admission level sorted by corps and specialty		
	Army	Navy	Air Force
1.Argentina	Total	Total	Total
2.Bolivia	Total	Total	Total
3.Brazil	Partial	Partial	Partial
4.Chile	Partial	Partial	Total
5.Colombia	Total	Total	Total
6.Cuba	Partial	Partial	Partial
7.Dominican Republic	Partial	Partial	Partial
8.Ecuador	Partial	Partial	Partial
9.El Salvador	Partial	Partial	Partial
10.Guatemala	Partial	Total	Total
11.Honduras	Partial	Total	Total
12.Mexico	Partial	Total	Partial
13.Nicaragua	Total	Total	Total
14.Paraguay	Partial	Partial	Partial
15.Peru	Partial	Partial	Partial
16.Uruguay	Total	Total	Total
17.Venezuela	Total	Total	Total

- 3. At the Air Force, they are not admitted in the Infantry or first-class "Taifeiro".
- 4. Not admitted in the infantry or armoured cavalry at the Army; not allowed into the marine corps or material specialties, tactical diving, rescue diving and beaconing, naval executive or engineers of the Naval Force.
- 7. Not admitted to combat branches.
- 8. They are not admitted in the infantry, armoured cavalry or aviation at the Army; not allowed as submarine officers or Naval Force aviation members. Nor are they allowed in the air force infantry, as helicopter pilots, special ops, air combat control or liaison officers at the Air Force.
- 9. Not admitted into the Army or Air Force in branches related to combat at the Army and Air Force.
- 10. Not admitted in artillery, engineering or cavalry of the Army.
- 11. Not admitted in artillery, infantry or cavalry of the Army.
- 12. Not admitted in branches related to combat of the Army or Air Force.
- 14. Not admitted in artillery, infantry or cavalry of the Army. Submarines, infantry, special ops and diving and rescue in the Naval Force. Not allowed as fighter pilot, air defence or special ops of the Air Force.
- 15. Not admitted in artillery, infantry and cavalry as well as religious services in the Army; not allowed as submarine officers, intelligence and special ops forces in the Naval Force; or fighter pilot or intelligence in the Air Force.

Sources: Army and Ministry of Defence (Argentina). Web sites of the Armed Forces (Brazil). Army and web sites of the Armed Forces (Chile). Ministry of Defence and National Navy (Colombia). Ministry of Defence and Military Academy (El Salvador). Army and Polytechnic School (Guatemala). General Command of the Air Force, General Command of the Naval Force and Joint Staff of the Armed Forces (Honduras). Secretariat of National Defence and Secretariat of the Navy (Mexico). J III of the General Staff of the Army; Public Affairs Directorate of the Uruguayan Air Force and the Peace-keeping Operations School of the Army (Uruguay). Ministry of Popular Power for Defence (Venezuela). RESDAL project on Gender and Peace Operations.

Defence Attaché's Offices from Latin American countries, in the region

CS \ CR	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Cuba	Dominican Republic	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico	Nicaragua	Paraguay	Peru	Uruguay	Venezuela
Argentina	●	●	●	●	●			●				●		●	●	●	●
Bolivia	●	●	●					●						●	●		●
Brazil	●		●	●	●		●	●		●		●		●	●	●	●
Chile	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●
Colombia	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●			●		●
Cuba		●			●	●						●	●				●
Dominican Republic							●		●								●
Ecuador	●		●	●				●				●			●		●
El Salvador				●					●		●		●				
Guatemala									●	●	●						
Honduras									●		●		●				
Mexico	●		●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Nicaragua						●			●	●	●	●	●				●
Paraguay	●		●	●	●									●		●	●
Peru	●	●	●	●	●			●				●			●		●
Uruguay	●		●	●								●		●		●	●
Venezuela	●	●	●	●			●	●					●		●	●	●

CS: Country sending attaché / CR: Country receiving attaché

Attaché's offices from countries outside outside the region:

Mexico
Attaché's offices from Canada, China, France, Germany, Spain, Russia, and United States.

Guatemala
Attaché's offices from Taiwan, and United States.

El Salvador
Attaché's offices from Taiwan and United States.

Colombia
Attaché's offices from Canada, China, France, Germany, Israel, Russia, Spain, United Kingdom and United States.

Ecuador
Attaché's offices from Iran, Germany, Russia, and United States.

Peru
Attaché's offices from China, Germany, Russia and United States.

Bolivia
Attaché's offices from China, Russia, and United States

Chile
Attaché's offices from Canada, China, Israel, France, Germany, Spain, Russia, United Kingdom and United States.

Cuba
Attaché's offices from China, Spain, South Africa, Russia and United Kingdom.

Dominican Republic
Attaché's offices from France, Taiwan and United States.

Honduras
Attaché's offices from, Taiwan and United States.

Nicaragua
Attaché's offices from, Russia, Taiwan and United States.

Venezuela
Attaché's offices from, China, France, Germany, Iran and Russia.

Brazil
Attaché's offices from Canada, China, France, Germany, Israel, Spain, South Africa, Russia, United Kingdom and United States.

Paraguay
Attaché's offices from Spain, Taiwan and United States

Uruguay
Attaché's offices from China, Russia, and United States.

Argentina
Attaché's offices from Canada, China, France, Germany, Spain, South Africa, Russia, United Kingdom and United States.

Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Ministry of Defence, Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Honduras, the Accountability Report (Informe de rendición de cuentas) issued by the Ministry of Defence of El Salvador, Annual Report of the Army of Nicaragua 2011, web sites of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Honduras, Israel, Mexico, Paraguay, Russia, Uruguay, the Ministry of Popular Power for Defence of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Army of Chile, Embassies of Germany, Canada, China, United States, France, Great Britain, Israel, South Africa, Russia, Taiwan in the Latin American countries mentioned above.



Military Service

Voluntary	Argentina 2 years	Mandatory
	Bolivia 2 years	
	Brasil 1 year	
	Chile Up to 2 years	
	Colombia 1 to 2 years	
	Cuba 2 years	
	Dominican Republic Up to 4 years	
	Ecuador 1 year	
	El Salvador 18 months	
	Guatemala Up to 18 months	
	Honduras 2 years	
	Mexico 1 year	
	Nicaragua 1 year	
	Paraguay 1 year	
	Peru 2 years	
Uruguay 2 years		
Venezuela 1 year		

In countries where military service is mandatory, men always have to serve while women may do so voluntarily in times of peace and are drafted in the event of war or emergency.

Geographical Distribution of the Recruited Persons

In the Uruguayan Navy, the admission to the military service is for 100 candidates annually.

	Uruguay - Army					
	2011			2012 (as of August)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Montevideo	439	101	540	2,232	150	2,382
Western Region	57	16	73	207	26	233
Northern Region	75	3	78	137	7	144
Eastern Region	112	8	120	227	17	244
Total	683	128	811	2,803	200	3,003

Military service entry process

According to the Constitution of Ecuador, the military service is voluntary and entry requires three steps: registration, qualification and enlistment (3 annual calls).

		Conscripts Army	Conscripts Navy	Conscripts Air Force
		Total	Total	Total
Class 1992	Organic	18,150	1,800	750
	Total enlisted	15,328	1,473	664
Class 1993	Organic	10,877	1,079	449
	Total enlisted	10,048	1,093	439

Reserve

Mexico and Cuba are the only cases with a reserve corps system in place. In Mexico, recruitment in the Army and Air Forces is done in two ways: voluntarily or through conscription (NMS).

National Military Service (S.M.N.) – Secretariat of the Navy - Mexico

2011		2012	
Men	Women	Men	Women
4,256	32	4,419	21

Women in the Military Service

All the countries of the region with a voluntary military service regime allow both men and women to be candidates. Below is an example of the Secretariat of National Defence of Mexico:

	Men	Women	Total
2011	10,887	1,245	12,132
2012	6,781	1,568	8,349
Total	17,668	2,813	20,481

Voluntary–conscription system relationship

According to the Guatemalan Civil Service Act, all citizens of Guatemala have the right and duty to provide service to their country. During the first stage, participation shall be voluntary. If the expected numbers are not reached, the general practice is to conduct a draw. The call up prior to the mandatory call may equal or exceed the available vacancies

Guatemala	
Recruited (troops)	
2011	2012
5,555	5,895

In Venezuela, the military service is a duty for all citizens, though forced recruitment is prohibited. Those citizens eligible due to their military age have the obligation to register at the Military Registry.

Source: Compilation based on the laws governing military service in the various countries. Data: Ministry of Defence (Guatemala). Ministry of Defence (Ecuador). Secretariat of Defence and the Fifth and Sixth Work Report (Mexico). Ministry of Defence (Paraguay). Army and Navy (Uruguay).

Analysis:

From Rules to Practice: a Gender Perspective in Peacekeeping Operations

Pablo Castillo Díaz

Protection Analyst, Peace and Security - UN WOMEN

In the last few years, the United Nations peacekeeping operations have placed special emphasis on introducing a gender perspective in the planning, execution and evaluation of each mission. For any citizen -or even for most of the blue helmets- the practical meaning of this concept mainly refers to the gradual inclusion of women into the armed forces and, thus, to peacekeeping operations. However, the practical application of this concept, not always well understood, encompasses much more than that.

Firstly, the gender perspective implies a special attention to abuses and violence especially suffered by women and girls, an issue highlighted in the last two decades because of the publicity given to the use of sexual violence as a weapon in wars and the scandals of sexual exploitation committed by peacekeepers.

In practice, this involves changes in patrolling routes and guidelines of the military and police components of missions, which must be adapted to the places and hours in which women and girls are most-frequently attacked. For instance, the African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur devotes at least a third of its patrols to keeping women safe when collecting water and firewood for household chores. Military, police and civilian components of peacekeeping mis-

sions must be given specific training and instructions on the protocols to be followed for cases of sexual violence or perceived signs of such risk.

Generally, it mainly requires taking into account, at all times and during every activity, the needs and concerns of both genders, as well as the consequences of each action by men and women involved in the mission. This is partly why it is required to have a greater presence of women at missions, to honour the principle of gender equality to which the Charter of the United Nations is abided by, and to be able to put certain operations into practice more effectively.

For instance, missions cooperate with the programs of combatant disarmament and demobilization; likewise, the missions' mandates, operating guidelines and legal framework require them not to ignore the large proportion of women and girls who are part of the armed groups and provide them proper attention and care. This involves the ability to know and communicate the messages of the programme both to men and women in armed groups, preparing re-integration packages adjusted to the needs of each gender, and taking this into account in the planning and surveillance of cantonment and processing areas. This should be done as a rule. However, it is simpler



and more effective for a section commander if he has male personnel trained and sympathetic but, most importantly, female personnel to directly interact with demobilized women in sensitive matters.

Something similar occurs with intelligence and monitoring tasks and risk assessments. If the people responsible for carrying out these tasks only talk to the men leaders of the communities within their area of operations, the mission does not profit from the specific knowledge of women on certain patterns of assault and rape affecting them, as well as social tensions which are usually the origin of conflicts, on the movement and storage of light weapons, the increasing extremist character of speeches by community or religious leaders, or the benefits or disadvantages of a certain intervention or response.

It is essential for the mission to do this so as to have a broader perspective of the risks and vulnerabilities in the area, but it is particularly complicated if there are not enough women in the military component -as combatants or observers- or among the civilian or police personnel in the mission. It is also difficult to find enough women translators among the local population, and when there are women present, they are not used for certain missions for reasons related to security, facilities or accommodation. As an example, less than one third of the mixed protection teams in the UN mission in Congo currently have at least one woman and this is the vehicle through which the mission sends personnel to an area to gather information, perform immediate protection tasks and make recommendations to address serious threats. Hardly 10 percent of the liaison assistants communicating with the community are women.

And there is a lot more. Introducing a gender perspective consists in dividing the information gathered or transmitted according to gender; informing the Security Council of sexual violence incidents as well as the security situation of women and girls in general, or their participation in the state and government reform -especially security and justice sectors - and the economy recovery after the conflict. It also consists in anticipating and answering to the threats against women candidates or voters at elections in countries with a United Nations presence; providing the mission with sufficient number of specialists in these issues (not only in current gender departments which

are frequently isolated from the other sections); preventing and unequivocally responding to any allegation of improper conduct, abuse or sexual exploitation from peacekeepers; ensuring access of women and girls to humanitarian assistance and developing quick-impact projects to benefit them; and permanently consulting civil society women organizations of the relevant country on all these issues.

The gender perspective must provide information not only on decisions on leadership and makeup of the mission, but also on the design and building of refugee and displaced persons camps, the distribution of efficient energy ovens or the investments made in the country's economic recovery, such as rural routes and markets, access to drinking water, employment programs, building of schools, hospitals, courts or police stations.

The peacekeeping missions are currently trying to keep up with the mandate that grants them authority; however, they are still far from that desired level. Latin-American countries, among which there are important troop contributors to United Nations operations, are ideal candidates to be exemplary leaders. Excluding Northern Europe, Latin America is the region with the highest percentage of female representation in parliament in the world, and its two largest countries, Brazil and Argentina, are currently led by women presidents. Besides, many countries have initiatives and good practices showing what the integration of the gender perspective means, in the practical sense, from the reform of the national defence sector and the inclusion of women in police and armed forces, to the participation of women in peace negotiations or early adoption of innovations regarding access of women to post-conflict justice.

Improving the condition of women in countries under conflict or under recovery, and eradicating discriminatory and male chauvinist attitudes and gender inequality are objectives which cannot be solved only within reach of a troop contributing country or a United Nation mission. However, the components, training and diligence of the deployed personnel vary from country to country, as well as the level of responsibility demanded to their leaders. Within the framework of the multilateral cooperation and the promotion of gender equality, this is a challenge Latin America can certainly respond to.