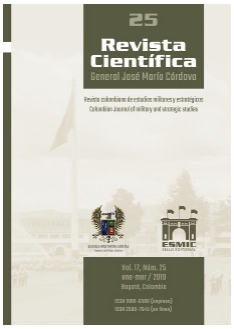

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Between discourse and effective action: the contradictions of Macri's defense policy

Entre el discurso y la acción efectiva: las contradicciones de la política de defensa de Macri

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Abstract. A militarizing discourse of public security has characterized the first half of Mauricio Macri's government (2015-2017). However, the "basic consensus on security and defense" has not been altered substantively. A detailed analysis of specific policies of his administration shows a contradiction between what is posited on the rhetorical level and the concrete measures adopted. After evaluating the correlation between the high-level political discourse and the legislative and executive initiatives to combat "new threats," it was found that the absence of essential measures to merge said discourse with concrete policies has an explanation that is more financial than military-strategic. During the period of study, a relative "demilitarization" was observed in the fight against drug trafficking, a consequence of the fiscal adjustment that guides the economic policy. Likewise, this result exists.

Keywords: Argentina; demilitarization; militarization; new threats; public security

Resumen. La primera mitad del gobierno de Mauricio Macri (2015-2017) se ha caracterizado por un discurso militarizante de la seguridad pública. Sin embargo, el "consenso básico en materia de seguridad y defensa" no se ha visto alterado en lo sustantivo. Un análisis detallado de las políticas de su administración exhibe una contradicción entre el plano retórico y las medidas concretas adoptadas. Tras la evaluación de la correlación entre el discurso de alto nivel político con las iniciativas legislativas y ejecutivas de lucha contra las "nuevas amenazas", se encontró que la ausencia de medidas imprescindibles para empalmar dicho discurso militarizante con las políticas específicas tiene una explicación más financiera que estratégico-militar. Se ha observado, durante el periodo en estudio, una relativa "desmilitarización" en materia de lucha contra el narcotráfico, consecuencia del ajuste fiscal que orienta la política económica. Asimismo, existen elementos de orden político que contribuyen a este resultado.

Palabras clave: Argentina; desmilitarización; militarización; nuevas amenazas; seguridad pública.

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Introduction

Since the beginning of his presidency, in 2015, Mauricio Macri's defense policy has been characterized by a "securitizing" discourse, dominated by militarizing rhetoric of public security. However, if the specific national defense policies of his administration are analyzed, there is a contradiction between what is posited in the discourse and the effective measures adopted.

Although the militarizing doctrine of public security has resulted in some specific measures, between 2015 and 2017, the government has yet to produce the necessary strategic tools to irrefutably address the agenda of "new threats" declared by the ideological sectors that constitute its electoral base (Bartolomé, 2017; Pagni, 2016).

One of the government's duties is the formulation of the strategic assessment of global and regional scenarios. National regulations afford the Argentine government a set of tools to define its sectoral policy of strategic defense. The National Defense Policy Directive (DPDN in Spanish)[1] issued by the president, frames the strategic military planning under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense. Through this presidential decree, the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces instructs his military instrument on the procedures to comply with the missions established by the law. This document is fundamental because it identifies the main threats to be dissuaded or managed by the State's military capabilities.

The government also has the legal powers to promote the regulatory reforms it deems appropriate, such as promoting a legal reform establishing the separation of responsibilities between military bodies and public security. A legitimate attribution of governments is to determine State security threats and find the means to confront them. In Argentina, there is still an in-depth discussion about the consequences of the military de-professionalization resulting from the Doctrine of National Security (Anzelini, 2017; Comisión de Análisis y Evaluación de las Responsabilidades Políticas y Estratégico Militares en el Conflicto del Atlántico Sur, 2012), which involved the police-ization[2] of the military profession.

1 The DPDN details the central guidelines of military and defense policy in three chapters: i) diagnosis and assessment of the global and regional defense and security scenario, ii) the national defense design and positioning and the central guides of the national defense policy, and iii) the establishment or updating of the criteria that drive the Armed Forces' structure, functional organic development, doctrine, training, strategic planning, deployment, personnel training, and planning. On that basis, the joint chiefs of staff, as techno-military advisors and under the supervision of the ministries, must create the contributing Military Strategic Planning which is made up of the Directive for Strategic Military Planning Preparation (DEPEM, in Spanish), the Military Strategy Assessment and Resolution (AREMIL), the Strategic Military Directive (DEMIL, in Spanish), the short, medium, and long-term Military Plans, and the Military Capacity Project (PROCAMIL, in Spanish) (See Decree 1729/2007).

2 The term "police-ization" is not employed in the sense used by Marcelo Sain referring to the direction, management, and control of public security issues by police institutions (Sain, 2005) but to account the assumption

According to statements issued within the highest political levels, drug trafficking and terrorism are among the main threats to national integrity. Successive expressions by the president and defense ministers have consigned the Armed Forces a preponderant role in facing such criminal issues. In 2016, during the celebration of Army Day, President Macri stated, "We need the Armed Forces to adapt to the demands and requirements of the 21st century […] we need [to work] together against the threats of terrorism" (Día del Ejército: Macri pidió que "las FFAA se adapten a las demandas del siglo XXI, 2016). Months later, the president indicated that the military must assume a "preponderant role" in "reaching zero poverty, defeating drug trafficking, and uniting the Argentines" (Macri: Las Fuerzas Armadas jugarán un rol preponderante, 2016).

These statements by the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, as well as those of his main collaborators', who have also stated that the incorporation of "new threats" or "multifaceted security challenges" in the design of the sectoral policy is a military matter, reveal the common perception (Organización de Estados Américanos [OEA], 2003; Departamento de Defensa de los Estados Unidos, 2012),[3] which contravenes the fundamental regulations of the Argentine State. An apparent contradiction emerges between these expressions, at the political level, and what is prescribed by the normative plexus given the laws in force and the doctrine of national defense that arise from it.

The legislation establishes a clear separation of responsibilities between issues of external defense and internal security (National Defense Law No. 23,554, Internal Security Law No. 24,059, National Intelligence Law No. 25,520, and Regulatory Decree of the National Defense Law No. 727/2006). This legal scaffolding was sanctioned by four governments of different political colors and at different times of the recovered democracy (1983-2018). Its foundations constitute the backbone of a "state policy," which implied the abandonment of the National Security Doctrine and the return to the Doctrine of National Defense (López, 2010 p. 254).

This manner of "basic consensus on defense and security" (Sain, 2001 p. 2) occasions the involvement of different military and public security organizations in specific responsibilities and areas of action. Thus, for Argentine legislation, terrorism and drug

of typically police responsibilities by the Armed Forces, with implications that are not only operative but also political, social, and human rights-related (Salazar, 2009).

3 In the Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement, the Pentagon lays the foundation of its regional policy, based on two premises a) the existence of a "broad consensus" between the countries in the region concerning the "nature of threats" that the hemisphere must face, and b) that these threats or "multifaceted challenges" to security are fundamentally police or criminal phenomena, whose undertaking depends on military or security forces. The appreciation of "drug trafficking," "gangs," and "terrorism" as the main security threats to the American hemisphere differ little from the doctrine of "new threats." This doctrine promoted by the United States since the mid-1990s was embodied in the Declaration on Security in the Americas of the Organization of American States (OAS) of 2003.

trafficking –the threats envisaged by the Macri administration– are problems that must be prevented, confronted, and investigated by police and public security agencies.

Given the insistence of the highest political levels to assign the Armed Forces responsibilities in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism, it could be assumed, *a priori*, that the main efforts would be focused on this matter during the period 2015-2017. Especially, considering the well-oiled work that –in terms of parliamentary agreements– would be necessary to reach a majority that would allow the government to undertake a regulatory reform of this caliber.

However, to date, the national government has failed to prompt a fundamental change in the current regulations. The laws and decrees of strategic content sanctioned by the previous governments remain unchanged (among others, the regulations of the Law of National Defense, DPDN, and the Armed Forces' Directive of Organization and Functioning). The passivity in the normative field is not difficult to explain; its modification would have depended exclusively on the political initiative of the executive branch. Here lies the true Gordian knot of this essay: why has the government not taken the necessary measures to merge its militarizing rhetoric of public security with concrete policies? The explanation has more to do with economic policy than with the defense policy itself.

Although some decisions have been made on public security –with a militarizing bias– some of which have conflicted with specific prescriptions of the National Defense, Homeland Security, and National Intelligence laws, no progress has been made, conclusively, towards an assumption by the military of new missions and functions in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism. This requisition would imply more significant resources and budgetary items, which have not been drawn on the Defense portfolio.

The priority of the fiscal objectives has relegated strategic considerations to the background. Simply put, assigning new responsibilities and police missions to the armed forces would have required a larger budget. Because of inefficiency or weakness vis-à-vis other government assignments –mainly the Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Security–, the ministers of defense have systematically "lost" in inter-ministerial bids.[4]

This work will thoroughly review the main explanatory factors of this limitation to materialize into effective policies what is postulated in the speeches. The central proposition is that, specifically and contrastingly to the militarizing discourse, a relative "demilitarization" of the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism is detectable.

4 It should not be overlooked that the defense ministers of the Macri government, Julio Martínez (2015-2017) and Oscar Aguad (2017-present), belong to the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), one of the parties of the Alianza Cambiemos, with limited impact on the strategic decision making of the national government. Even Ernesto Sanz –one of the radical leaders closest to President Macri– has had little influence in recent years (see Obarrio, 2018).

The salient aspects of the regulations that structure the defense system are described in the following section. The decrees available to the executive branch to establish the strategic guidelines for the Armed Forces are listed among these norms. Subsequently, the main measures –or announcements of measures– with strategic and doctrinal implications for national defense presented by the national government in the 2015-2017 biennium are identified. In this framework, we will observe whether this set of initiatives has been adjusted to the prescriptions established by the legislation on the matter or if there are contradictions with the fundamental regulations of the sector.

Lastly, the level of correlation between the discourse at the highest political level –presidential and ministerial– is evaluated with legislative and executive initiatives focused on the fight against "new threats." The tension between fiscal-economic fiscal objectives and strategic-military considerations is examined closely to understand the "militarization-demilitarization" dynamic.

The "basic consensus"

With an agenda focused on the civilian control of the military,[5] the following governments of the recovered democracy implemented a range of measures that underpinned the military subjection, which resulted, from the normative point of view, in what has been characterized as a "basic consensus" in defense and security matters (Sain, 2001, p. 2). This consensus, crystallized in the laws of National Defense (1988), Interior Security (1992), and National Intelligence (2001), formalized the subordination of the Armed Forces to political power and restricted its limits of autonomy. The latter was achieved through the demilitarization of civil functions and a precise normative and doctrinal delimitation of military missions.

In 1983, the reestablishment of civilian control over the Armed Forces was one of the core challenges of Raúl Alfonsín's presidency at the end of which a new regulation was developed. The new legal approach, embodied in Law No. 23,554 of National Defense, enacted in April 1988, produced the foundation that enabled the construction of a proper doctrinal framework for the integration of the Armed Forces in the new democratic context. This regulation involved

> the conceptualization of defense as a national effort to address all types of aggressions of external origin, the legal and institutional distinction between national defense and internal security (...) the explicit proscription of the Armed Forces producing intelligence on issues of internal politics of the country (...), and the creation of a national intelligence system based on the delimitation of the spheres of strategic-military intelligence and criminal intelligence. (Sain, 2002/2003, pp. 256-257)

5 On this issue, see Fontana (1984, 1986, 1987), López (1987, 1988), and Moneta (1985).

Although the agreements set out in the National Defense Law were the structural pillars to a future reorganization of the system of defense, the consensus was still incomplete. The normative framework began completion with the enactment of Law No. 24,059 on Internal Security in 1992. This regulation was of particular importance because it ratified the exhaustive distinction between internal security and national defense that had already been established by the Defense Law. It also stipulated the exceptional situations in which the Armed Forces can operate in the field of public security.

At the end of 2001, during the government of Fernando de la Rúa, a paramount normative achievement was reached to consummate the National Defense System; that is, the sanction of Law No. 25,520 of National Intelligence, which established the prohibition of using the efforts of military intelligence in problems unrelated to national defense. This law clearly distinguishes the concepts of "national intelligence," "criminal intelligence," and "strategic military intelligence;" the latter belonging exclusively to the field of national defense.

However, the National Defense Law, which had been the starting point of the "basic consensus," remained unregulated, despite the almost two decades since its sanction. After eighteen years of unjustifiable postponement, the government of Néstor Kirchner promoted the regulation of the National Defense Law.[6]

Although the sanctioned regulations established a clear distinction between "national defense" and "internal security," it did not differentiate between state and non-state, external aggressions. In 2006, with the approval of the Regulatory Decree 727 of the Defense Law, the central mission of the Armed Forces was restricted to "addressing and deterring external military state aggressions," delimiting the Armed Forces' field of action more precisely. This definition excluded the so-called "new threats" as a hypothesis of employment.

This normative framework comprised of the laws of National Defense, Internal Security, National Intelligence, and the Regulatory Decree of the National Defense Law, specified the Armed Forces' areas of activity and competences, that is, the "maximization of subordination and civil control" (Battaglino, 2013, p. 268) –which led to the consolidation of the legal and institutional bases of national defense– was established as an unavoidable reference to address strategic defense planning (Anzelini & Poczynok, 2014, p. 149).

6 This legal "vacuum," present since the mid 1990's, drove some political and military sectors to promote the incorporation of terrorism and drug trafficking as hypotheses for the use of the Armed Forces. The fact of this issue can be observed in the *Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional*, edited in 1999. Since mid-2015, the expansion of military missions once again occupied a significant place on the public agenda. Two antagonistic views on this issue can be found in Tello and Spota (2015) and Anzelini (2017).

In 2006, the National Defense Council (CODENA in Spanish)[7] was convened for the first time to prepare the Comprehensive Diagnosis on the National Strategic Situation. During this assembly, the Directive on Organization and Functioning of the Armed Forces was approved (Decree 1691/2006), which establishes the Armed Forces' design, use, and outfitting. This directive was soundly concurrent with the "basic consensus" and structured the capacity development of the military instrument based on its main mission ("to address and deter external military state aggressions").

This decree established the foundations for the modernization of the Armed Forces. It indicated that the "central mission" would be the main criterion for the design of powers and that subsidiary missions should not affect "the capacities required to fulfill that primary and essential mission." The Argentine Armed Forces are authorized to participate in four subsidiary missions: multilateral operations of the United Nations, internal security operations in situations foreseen by the Law of Internal Security 24.059, operations of support to the national community or of friendly countries, and contribution to the construction of a subregional defense system.

The need to articulate the design of power with national and regional strategic assessments and with the objectives of cooperation at the South American level was addressed. Ultimately, the directive established that the design of power would be carried out according to the planning method based on the military capabilities factor, replacing the anachronistic conflict hypothesis method. Thus, and for the first time since the recovery of democracy, the political leadership of the State ratified its will to materialize the national defensive positioning in the competencies related to strategic-military planning.

In this context, in 2007, Decree 1729 approved the "National Defense Planning Cycle" (INDC in Spanish). This presidential directive laid the foundations for defense planning in the short, medium and long-term. The regulation established that each cycle should begin with the issuance of a National Defense Policy Directive (DPDN) conceived by the executive branch, which would provide a battery of regulatory tools that would allow it to establish strategic guidelines for addressing the "new" threats, "including drug trafficking and terrorism."

Some argue that the National Defense Law –regulated by a new decree or merely through the repeal of the one currently in force– would allow the military to assume responsibilities in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism, as these crimes are conceived with the generic formula of "external threats" (Tello & Spota, 2015, p. 33).

However, Decree 727/2006 has yet to be repealed or modified. More revealing of the inefficiency of management, a new National Defense Policy Directive (DPDN), presenting its appreciation of the global and regional scenario and the visualization of the

7 The CODENA was created in 1988 with the sanction of Law 23,554 of National Defense.

threats to be dissuaded or consigned and the strategic guidelines for the actions of the Armed Forces, has not been issued. This shortcoming must be attributed –among other issues– to the interministerial bids of the sectors responsible for drafting it and to the lack of effective political leadership of those who manage the defense sector.

The militarizing bias of public security

Neither the executive nor the legislative branch in Mauricio Macri's government, have materialized the strategic assessments contained in the presidential discourse. In other words, neither the National Defense Law nor its regulatory decree been reformed, nor has the sanction of a political directive of maximum level intended to align –in its medullary aspects– the defense policy with the threats visualized by the president and the ministers of the area.

There have been some attempts to couple the sectoral policy with the strategic line contained in the presidential discourse. At the most, a set of spasmodic measures has been generated aimed at "forcing" the interpretation of the laws in force to allow the use of the military instrument in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism.

Although these attempts have not been of the required magnitude, they have been recurrent during the first two years of Macri's term. These "militarizing" impulses have coexisted with other economic-financial decisions on the budgetary restriction of the Defense sector, but, paradoxically, they have generated a force in the opposite direction, which could be defined as "demilitarizing."

Main measures with strategic and doctrinal implications for national defense (2015-2017)

Public safety emergency

Macri's government issued Decree No. 228/2016, which declared a national "public security emergency" for a year with the intention of "reversing the situation of collective danger created by the complex crime and organized crime." This norm authorizes the military instrument –within the framework of its airspace control activities– to use lethal force against aircraft that do not respond to warnings. The decree put into effect –in a generalized manner and to address issues in public security– a set of "aerospace protection procedures" whose implementation and enforcement authorities are officials of the Armed Forces.

Apart from the widespread discussion regarding the historical effectiveness of this type of measure and that its implementation could lead to a death sentence without trial, what is out of the question is that the sanctioned decree openly contradicts the norma-

tive plexus that structure the national defense and public security systems.[8] Indeed, the Internal Security Law No. 24,059 provides for the participation of the military instrument in matters of public security only for three cases and very exceptionally. The instruction in the decree of "public safety emergency" does not conform to what is contemplated in any of those cases.

Cooperation agreements in security and defense

After Barack Obama's visit in 2016, Buenos Aires and Washington sealed a set of cooperation agreements on security and defense. Without distinguishing between the responsibilities of military and security organizations, the broad spectrum of issues agreed between countries includes the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism, assistance in the Triple Border, development of peacekeeping missions in Africa, establishment of intelligence fusion centers, asylum for those displaced by the bombings in Syria and issues inherent in hemispheric defense and security forces in the Southern Command (Embajada de los Estados Unidos en Argentina, 2016; Verbitsky, 2016).

Until the assumption of the Macri government, the set of guidelines contained in the documents prepared by the Department of Defense had been resisted because it contradicted the normative plexus in force in the country. Several analysts have postulated that, concerning security and defense, this has been a means of ingratiation to promote future economic investments (Meyer, 2016; Tokatlian, 2016).

The renewed association with the US Southern Command

Following the "Obama-Macri" agreements, Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, commander of the U.S. Southern Command (Aguilera, 2016), visited the country. The US Southern Command is "responsible for all aspects of cooperation in security matters of the Department of Defense in the 45 nations and territories of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Sea, an area of 16 million square miles."

Tidd –an adamant defender of the intervention of the military in matters of internal security– stressed that organized crime, widespread poverty and the fragility of institutions, corruption, inequality, and the deterioration of citizen security were among the main problems afflicting stability in the region. Among the concrete results of the visit were the creation of an Argentinian "attaché" at the headquarters of the Southern Command in Miami and the resumption of exercises and bilateral training in the framework of regional and international maneuvers.

8 According to León Arslanián: "the sunject of striking down violates, initially, two laws: Homeland Security and National Defense, which prohibit the involvement of the Armed Forces or Military in these matters. Therefore, involving the Armed Forces to this avail presents a serious legal issue" (Narcotráfico: más críticas opositoras al derribo de aviones, 2016).

Against piracy on the high seas

According to a note published in the newspaper *La Nación*, the attack of pirate ships in the seas of China to ships transporting agricultural products was a matter of concern to the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense (Dinatale, 2016). The information showed that the defense portfolio had been analyzing this issue for some time and that its officials were observing the situation with alarm.

Some of the measures evaluated by the Argentine government were the creation of new military attaché units in the embassies of countries located in the China Sea. These units would provide "more military support delegates to produce intelligence reports and detect areas at risk of piracy opportunely," and promote the coordination of intelligence tasks with other countries experienced in the fight against piracy such as China, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Protection of strategic objectives

In December 2016, national government officials acknowledged that they were studying the possibility of issuing a necessity and urgency decree to authorize the Armed Forces to guard hydroelectric dams, nuclear power plants, and other strategic objectives. A more significant presence of this federal force at the borders was the reason given to replace the personnel of the National Gendarmerie of Argentina (GNA in Spanish) that fulfills these functions currently.

The request was made in writing by the Security Minister, Patricia Bullrich, to her Defense counterpart, Julio Martínez, who warned that acceding to this request (which included the assignment of strategic objective protection tasks to 1,200 Army personnel) would require an enabling legal framework.

Agreement with the National Guard of the State of Georgia (United States)

In a statement, the state of Georgia (United States) reported that its National Guard had been selected as the operator of the US Southern Command for the Argentine Republic as part of the State Partnership Program (SPP) of the Department of Defense. The Argentine Ministry of Defense reported that a humanitarian aid agreement was signed with the National Guard of the State of Georgia to assist in the face of natural disasters and humanitarian aid (Ministerio de Defensa de la República Argentina, 2016).

The text of the agreement does not provide detailed information on the scope, terms, and operational issues that pertain to the SPP. According to the official information published by the US National Guard, the benefits attributed to the agreements framed in the SPP do establish the areas of responsibility differentiated between external defense and internal security. The supposed benefits include the improvement of "full spectrum

military capabilities," the "response to disasters," "border, port, and airspace security," and the tasks "against drug trafficking" (Guardia Nacional de los Estados Unidos, 2016).

Several analysts have warned that this type of agreement could enable the employment of military personnel in domestic security tasks, which circumvents the explicit prohibition established by the National Defense and Homeland Security laws. For example, from the Center for Military for Democracy Argentina (CEMIDA in Spanish) was alerted about the "danger posed by the signing of this agreement that will empower the Northern Army to conduct our internal security (...). When deemed necessary, the troops National Guard soldiers may operate in the partner country and if necessary make decisions with and over the local Armed Forces and Security" (Federico, 2016).

Redeployment of troops of the "Operativo Fronteras"

In 2017, the media revealed that –produced by a strong policy of fiscal adjustment– the Ministry of Defense redeployed, during 2016, some 1800 personnel assigned to the "Operativo Fronteras." This decision, in concrete terms and in contrast to the militarizing rhetoric of public security, implied a relative "demilitarization" regarding the line taken during the last years of Cristina Fernández's administration in the fight against drug trafficking.

During the Macri government, Decree 228/2016 was issued, which declared the "public security emergency" throughout the national territory for a year, and transformed the "Operativo Escudo Norte" into the "Operativo Fronteras." The norm indicated that the policies undertaken on the northern border by the previous government had not "yielded (...) the expected results," and that the new operation's objective was to provide material, technical, and technological devices to fight drug trafficking and organized crime in the border area.

As a result, the national government demilitarized the only area in which it had advanced with concrete measures from the operational point of view. A paradox that is explained more by budgetary reasons than by doctrinal or strategic-military factors. In a presentation made to the president of the nation, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lieutenant General Bari del Valle Sosa, reported that 160 million pesos were saved (Iñurrieta, 2017; Aguilera, 2017b).

Crimes in "military zones"

In February 2017, the Ministry of Defense repealed and replaced Resolution MD No. 1020/2009, which established a set of criteria to be applied in cases of crimes committed under military jurisdiction. The purpose of this regulation was to regulate the exceptions to the use of the military instrument provided for in Articles 28 and 29 of Law No.

24,059 on Internal Security. In addition to partially modifying the criteria of the previous one, the new Resolution No. 154-E/2017 introduced a series of concepts that contravene the doctrinal principles established in the laws of National Defense, Internal Security, and National Intelligence. In the first place, the norm replaces the concept of "military jurisdiction" with "military zone," denominations that are not interchangeable. While the first refers specifically to the territorial areas where a military authority exercises its powers derived from the National Defense Law –as defined in the repealed Resolution MD No. 1020/2009–, the second refers to those operational spaces considered of interest concerning the defense policy of the Argentine Republic, subject to parliamentary approval.

The resolution also modified the nature of the criminal actions to be addressed by the Armed Forces in the denominated "military zones." The previous Resolution stipulated that the Armed Forces personnel should use the necessary, proportionate, and reasonable force to reject the commission of any "flagrant, violent crime against the military jurisdiction." Thus, "violence" was the exceptional basis on which the issue was addressed. Resolution MD No. 154-E/2017, on the other hand, established the mandatory action of the Armed Forces before the commission of any "flagrant crime against the Military Zone." The elimination of the requirement of a "violent" crime could imply addressing any type of criminal activity taking place in a "military zone."

Request for military equipment to the United States

In a letter from the former Argentine Ambassador to the United States, Martin Lousteau, addressed to Congressman Peter Visclosky (Democratic Party, Indiana), cooperation was required to include financing for the incorporation of military equipment in the 2017 Fiscal Budget of the Year project, specifically, in the item "Department of State, External Operations, and Related Programs" (Amorín, 2017).

The former Argentine Ambassador's justification of the request was based on the commitments signed by Presidents Macri and Obama in 2016. Lousteau mentioned the requirement for the financing of materials for the armed forces –for purposes of "defense" and "peace missions"– and insisted upon Argentina's role and cooperation with Washington in everything related to "urgent global threats" such as the "fight against terrorism, financing of terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime." This justification openly contravenes the legal and doctrinal plexus in force.

Missions of peace and terrorism in Africa

Unlike the previous administrations, Macri's has been predisposed to heed to the pressures from Washington regarding defense and security. This disposition has met with some internal resistance –especially from parliament– which can partially explain the

doubts of the governing alliance when it comes to addressing the strategic aspects of the defense policy.

An area in which confusion has been generated between the functions of national defense and public security is peace missions. The historic pressure by the United States –exercised through the Southern Command– for the Latin American military to assume a role in the face of "new threats" has spread from an internal to a global level. In the Argentine case, currently, the demand is that the military not only plays an eventual role in the anti-terrorist frontier but also contribute to the fight against that crime abroad.

Juan Gabriel Tokatlian has synthesized the issue very well, making the strategic aspects of the budgetary variable converge in his analysis.

> (…) those who aspire to have the military pursue alleged terrorists also want them to fight them. That is part of a gradual change of the UN peace missions, which are turning into offensive operations against terrorism (...) Is it to assign tasks to Argentine military abroad while internally adjusting the budget of defense and re-equipment of the Armed Forces expands in time? (Tokatlian, 2017)

2016 and 2017 Combined Exercise Program

The 2016 and 2017 bills contemplated the planning of 20 military exercises. Of this programming, in 2016, none of the exercises addressed the universe of the so-called "new threats" or "multifaceted security problems."

The troop entry and exit project presented by the government in 2017, forecasting the military exercises between September 1, 2017, and August 31, 2018, is the first of this type, entirely designed by the Macri administration. It is noteworthy that the executive branch entirely omitted, in the proposal's text, the fact that the employment hypotheses of some of the exercises were the so-called "new threats" (drug trafficking, terrorism, narco-terrorism, piracy, among others). Four of the proposed exercises –Unitas, Bold Alligator, Panamax, and Team Work South– openly contravene the doctrine of national defense in force in Argentina (Cámara de Diputados de la Nación de la República Argentina, 2017).

Military Personnel Law

Resolution 1283/2017, issued by the Minister of Defense, created the "Military Personnel Law Workgroup" to prepare the legal instrument to promote the replacement of Law No. 19.101 of Military Personnel in force. Although the objective of the work –laying the foundations of a renewed military career scheme– is not eminently of strategic nature but of "military policy," two elements that stand out. On the one hand, the reso-

lution states that "reconverting the National Defense System is a National Government priority," on the other, the operative section specifies that "the career scheme will be based on the premise that the reason of being of the Armed Forces, and therefore of its personnel, lies in the mission and the functions enunciated in the Regulation of the Law of National Defense."

The latter begs the question: why does the resolution in question reject the mention of the National Defense Law when referring to the role of the Armed Forces and chooses to merely mention its regulatory decree? It is possible that the omission in the text has to do with the difficulties that a reform of the National Defense Law in the Congress would imply for the government.

In other words, the modification of the greater norm (the Law of National Defense) is avoided, and the military reconversion is supported in the presumptive sanction of a new decree, which would mean a much safer and more expeditious path. As previously noted, there are many speculations that a new regulatory decree could place drug trafficking and terrorism as threats to be dissuaded or confronted by the Armed Forces.

Rapid deployment forces

In 2018, it was reported that the Ministry of Defense had conceived the creation of a military unit to support the security forces. The initiative would involve the folding of elements of the Navy and the Air Force and would be destined to the logistical assistance for the security forces in the fight against drug trafficking, care of natural resources, and control of "extremist violent *Mapuche* groups" (Dinatale, 2018).

When asked about the possible creation of this military support unit for the security forces, Defense Minister, Oscar Aguad, said "Except in Chile and Argentina, in almost all countries, the Armed Forces actively collaborate with the security forces specific issues, such as the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism" (Verbitsky, 2018).

Hybrid war

Although a new National Defense Policy Directive (DPDN) has yet to come to light –according to government spokesmen– it has been said that it will include a fundamental doctrinal change, the incorporation of the concept of "hybrid warfare." This essential doctrinal change is a sign of full alignment with the United States in military-strategic matters, ingratiating itself with Washington while awaiting investments in the economic/financial field. It is basically an updated version of what Robert Russell and Juan Tokatlian defined as the "paradigm of pragmatic acquiescence," in force during the 1990s and early 2000s (Russell & Tokatlian, 2003, pp. 45-47)[9].

9 According to Russell and Tokatlian, the premises of this paradigm –applied during the governments of Carlos Menem (1989-1999) and Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001)– are: 1) the folding of the political and strategic

Ultimately, the incorporation of a "hybrid war" as a strategic and doctrinal novelty of the Argentine defense policy seems to be inscribed, rather than a balanced analysis of the national objectives in the matter, in the uncritical follow-up of the US priorities. Before the United States issued its new ESN, Macri took it upon himself to insist –at every summit or bilateral meeting– on his willingness to embrace the "global fight against terrorism" embodied by Washington (Tokatlian, 2016).

Discussion

A set of economic and political factors has prevented the discursive militarization of public security from materializing into effective public policies. This lack of correlation between discursive militarization and effective militarization does not mean that there have not been some concrete steps in the expressed direction. The most important decision, in this sense, was the sanction of Decree No. 228/2016, which declared a "Public Safety Emergency" and authorized the military instrument to use lethal force against aircraft that do not respond to warnings, under the presumption of the commission of crimes linked to drug trafficking. Some demilitarizing measures of public security have also emerged, such as the redeployment of 1,800 Army personnel assigned to the "Operativo Fronteras," whose mission was to assist the security forces in the fight against drug trafficking on the northern border of the country.

Apart from these measures –and similar ones that have had more to do with advertisements than with concrete facts– the legal framework of national defense has remained unchanged. The very precise normative and doctrinal delimitation of the military missions, crystallized in the National Defense (1988), Internal Security (1992), and National Intelligence (2001) laws, continues to constitute a solid pillar that the national government has not dared to modify in the parliamentary field. Neither has it carried out, until now, what seemed very predictable: the repeal of Decree 727/2006, which regulated the Defense Law and circumscribed the main mission of the Armed Forces to "address and repel external military state aggression."

The lack of strategic measures –to the non-sanction of a new regulatory decree of the Defense Law must be added the delay in the issuance of a new National Defense Policy Directive (DPDN)– has been one of the factors that have failed, so far, to provide the empirical correlate with the militarizing discourse of public security. Apart from

interests of the United States , both global and regional; 2) the definition of the national interest in economic terms; 3) active participation in the creation of international regimes in tune with the position of the developed western countries, particularly in the area of security; 4) support for economic integration within the framework of open regionalism; 5) the execution of an economic development strategy based on the guidelines emanating from Washington for the peripheral countries; 6) confidence that market forces, more than the State, will ensure a successful international insertion for Argentina; and 7) acceptance of the basic rules of the international economic and financial order (Russell & Tokatlian, 2003, pp. 46-47).

possible internal ministerial issues between alleged "hawks" (the colonels of the Ministry of Defense who want the Armed Forces to fight drug trafficking and terrorism) and "pigeons" (the specialists in international relations who respond to the secretary of Strategic Affairs, Fulvio Pompeo), the truth is that there is a determining factor that dramatically exceeds the inter-bureaucratic bids of these sectors.

This factor has to do with the macroeconomic policy of neoliberal bias that drives the Mauricio Macri government for this sector. Indeed, it has not been strategic-military disquisitions that, until now, have blocked the "hope" of the colonels to follow the agenda of the Southern Command involving the "new threats." Rather, these "hawks" have clashed persistently with the spreadsheets of the specialists in the fiscal adjustment of the Cabinet Office, which respond to the orders of the Secretary of Public Policy Coordination, Gustavo Lopetegui.

Thus, the primary objective of the defense policy has been, during the 2015-2017 biennium, the rationalization of jurisdictional spending. Consequently, the first thing that must be taken into account, to understand the lack of changes regarding the mission of the Argentine military, is this primacy of the "fiscalists" over the "warriors." That is to say, the economic agenda has prevailed over the military, which explains the central role of the Casa Rosada's offices, specialized in the turnstile for public spending, and the lackluster role of those in the Ministry of Defense who produce strategic-military analysis documents.

The Armed Forces' operational situation has worsened since 2015; it was stated in the state of the State report that

In December 2015, the Ministry of Defense was dismantled. It had the lowest budget in its history in relation to the size of the economy [...] 70% of the ministry's budget, which last year was 57,000 million pesos, was dedicated to paying salaries and pensions. There was no room to invest in the growth, training or modernization of the armed forces. (Gobierno de la República Argentina, 2015, p. 142)

In the budget raised to the National Congress by the governing alliance *Cambiemos*, in 2017, the payment of salaries and withdrawals reached 81.8% of the total expenditure of the Defense jurisdiction, which shows a definite setback in the amounts allocated to the operation of the military instrument. Operating expenses (15%) were also below the expenditures in this area for the period 2011-2015. Further worsening the situation, on October 30, 2017, the Secretary of Logistic Services of the Ministry of Defense, Graciela Villata, transmitted to the directors of Plans, Programs, and Budgets of the three forces a cut of more than 300 million pesos in the fourth installment of the budget for operation and operating expenses for 2017 (Aguilera, 2017).

The policy of fiscal adjustment for the defense sector, monitored by the Department of Public Policy Coordination, has implied a substantial reduction of the jurisdictional

budget. This is the result of the previously mentioned presentation made by military leaders to President Macri at the Casa Rosada in March 2017. The document, entitled "Detail of Reduction of Expenditure [...] Contribution of the Defense Jurisdiction to Fiscal Effort" has been revealed by various media and analysts (Iñurrieta, 2017; Loizou & De la Vega, 2017); it constitutes an essential element for the argument that is presented here. The budgetary pruning of the sector, with a substantial impact on the operational capacities of the Armed Forces, would reach, according to that document, the 8,929.3 million pesos for the 2016-2017 period.

Before this outlook of accelerated reduction of military expenditures, it is very difficult to imagine an armed force that assumes new roles and missions in the field of public security. The squalid budget becomes a challenging barrier to overcome for those who were enthusiastic about the militarizing narrative of public safety. The implacable expenses of the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers have put, until now, the wishes of the colonels on the shelf of unfulfilled promises.

Conclusions

A review of the first two years of the government of the *Cambiemos* alliance exhibits three dominant features of national defense: a "militarizing" rhetoric of public security, a set of spasmodic measures –or public statements– that contravene the defense doctrine current, and a serious inability by the Ministry of Defense to translate the speech emanated from the highest national authority into strategic documents and specific policies.

As a result, there have only been unproductive attempts to modify the rules that constitute the "basic consensus on defense and security" (Sain, 2001, p.2) and inactive management of the military-defense authorities to materialize a strategic outlook, according to the presidential speech. This means that, contrary to expectations, the national government did not promote, at the parliamentary level, a reform of the National Defense, Homeland Security, and National Intelligence laws. What is even more striking is that the decrees of strategic content of the executive branch sanctioned by previous governments have not been modified.

Assigning the military instrument the mission of combating "new threats" in its current conditions of operational restriction would mean fulfilling more functions with less budget. In addition, it would involve assigning to the Armed Forces responsibilities that are already exercised by other public agencies, mainly in the area of internal security. All this would lead to a duplication of functions, structures, and bureaucratic organizations within the State.

On the other hand, there is a second element of political order that helps to explain why the discursive militarization of public security has not had a correlate in the

field of concrete policies. It is about the stronghold, inside President Macri's cabinet, of the Security Minister, Patricia Bullrich, responsible for the security forces. This grip has allowed her to avoid the eventual removal of functions by the armed forces from the security forces, who have enjoyed, during the Macri government, budgetary support that the military has not had.

The third factor of a political nature is related to the role of the Drug Control Administration (DEA) of the United States. The influx of old data of this organism into the policy and the Argentine security forces has prevented an eventual displacement of the police tasks of drug control towards the military world. In turn, the inter-bureaucratic bid between the DEA and the US Southern Command to influence the fight against narcotics in Argentina has been "won" by the first of these organizations. This is the result, at the national level, of the preeminence of the security forces and the police –the historic local "partners" of the DEA– on the military world when it comes to dealing with the drug-trafficking phenomenon.

The paradox of the first two years of Macri in the government is that, despite his militarizing discourse of public security, the "basic consensus on security and defense" has not been altered substantively. The fiscal adjustment, the resolution of the palace intrigues in favor of the Cabinet and the Ministry of Security, and the preponderance of the DEA –and its police partners– over the Southern Command –and its military partners– have played in favor of the *status quo* and have snubbed the self-sacrificing strategic-military interpreters of the presidential speech.

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