

At the same time, Argentina developed the closest links of any Latin American country with Europe and, as noted, especially with the United Kingdom. The Argentine economy was deeply incorporated into the international division of labour developing in the half century before the First World War. Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and later Italy and even the United States became major trading partners. Argentina was a full partner in the international affairs of the Western world and felt quite distant from its Latin American neighbours, generally much less developed and 'European' than Argentines felt themselves to be. This was reinforced by the vast European immigration experienced in the last decades of the 19th century and the first of the 20th, and by the relatively small non-white population in the country.

There were negative elements in all this but ones which also reflected Argentina's strong international ties. Not only was development skewed but European naval interventions marked the early years of the Republic with not only Britain but also France attempting to impose their will on the new country. This also forced Argentina to develop a more sophisticated approach to international relations than was always necessary for its Latin American neighbours.

Argentina has at one time or another had troops in the territory of all its neighbours, sometimes as allies, and at others as invaders. Open war with Paraguay and Brazil at varying periods in the 19th century, interventions to assist Bolivian and Chilean independence and much later serious disputes with the latter country, and various military occupations of part or all of Uruguay after that country separated from Buenos Aires, all marked the early decades of Argentine national life. Later on territorial and jurisdictional disputes with Chile continued to darken relations with that country, rivalry with Brazil at almost all levels was nearly constant and often spirited. Domination of Paraguay and Uruguay in competition with Rio de Janeiro was the normal stuff of Argentine foreign policy, and a steady interest in Bolivia normally was usually visible as well. Thus interstate disputes are no strangers to Argentines.

Neither, however, is cooperation. Despite the often-intense rivalry with Brazil, that country has also often been a strong supporter of Argentina on the international scene. Indeed, some authors have recently suggested that the rivalry elements of the relationship have historically received far too much attention from authors and that the cooperation the two countries have enjoyed has very often been of the greatest importance to both of them.¹⁴ Collaboration with Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, while perhaps not as visible, has also been relatively constant in one form or another and this has increased as schemes for regional development proliferated in the post-World War II years. The Chilean relationship alone, at least until recently, was so fraught with distrust that cooperation was sporadic and unimpressive indeed.

¹⁴ Useful detail on these aspects of the Brazil-Argentine relationship are found in Jorge Hugo Herrera Vegas, *Las Políticas exteriores de la Argentina y del Brasil: divergencias y convergencias* (Buenos Aires: Instituto del Servicio Exterior de la Nación, Documento de Trabajo, No. 12, 1995).