

MEMBERSHIP POSITION: ARGENTINA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Official Name: República Argentina

Capital: Buenos Aires

Population: 42.7 million (2014 estimate)

Major Languages: The official language of Argentina is Spanish. Over 40 percent of all Argentinians claim to speak English.

Major Religions: More than 92 percent of the population identifies as Roman Catholic, yet only about 20 percent are practicing. Other faiths, such as Protestantism, Judaism, and Islam, represent small percentages of the national population.

Regional/Economic Organizational Membership: AfDB (nonregional member), Australia Group, BCIE, BIS, CAN (associate), CD, CELAC, FAO, FATF, G-15, G-20, G-24, G-77, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAES, LAIA, Mercosur, MIGA, MINURSO, MINUSTAH, NAM (observer), NSG, OAS, OPANAL, OPCW, Paris Club (associate), PCA, SICA (observer), UN, UN Security Council (temporary), UNASUR, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNFICYP, UNHCR, UNIDO, Union Latina (observer), UNTSO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

OVERVIEW

Argentina is a large, resource-rich country occupying the southernmost portion of the South American continent. Settled as a Spanish colony, Argentina effectively achieved independence from Spain in 1816 as part of the United Provinces of the Rio Plata long with modern-day Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Like the United States, the country was the beneficiary of large waves of European immigration (mostly Spanish and Italian) from the 1860s to 1930s. Following a series of unsuccessful democratic governments, a military junta took power in 1976. Democracy returned in 1983 following the unsuccessful Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas). Since the return to democracy in the 1980s, Argentina has forged forward to become one of Latin America's largest and most well-developed economies. A major economic crisis in 2001-02 threatened the legitimacy of the Argentine government and the resignation of several successive Argentinian presidents. However, since then Argentina has generally been a stable, democratic country closely aligned with the major Western powers.

GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

Argentina is a federal constitutional republic operating under the premises of representative democracy, similar to the United States. The president and vice president are elected by a

majority vote of the Argentine population once every four years with the most recent presidential election being in 2011. The current president is Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner – she has served since 2007 and is a member of the Justicialist Party. Legislative power in Argentina is split between the Senate and the House of Deputies. The Justicialist Party holds majorities in both houses of the Argentina Congress. A large and robust federal judiciary is responsible for enforcing federal law and the Constitution throughout all of Argentina's 23 provinces. Argentina's two largest political parties are the Justicialist Party, which evolved out of Juan Perón's efforts in the 1940s to expand the role of labor in the political process, and the Radical Civic Union founded in 1891. Traditionally, the UCR had more urban middle-class support and the PJ more labor support, but as of 2011 both parties are broadly based. Most of the numerous political parties that emerged in the past two decades have their origins or even the bulk of their identity tied to them.

FOREIGN POLICY

Due to its position as an economic power in South America, Argentina is extensively involved in both international and regional affairs. Argentina's independence was recognized by the United States in 1822, and most of the other European powers had recognized it as a sovereign state by the 1840s. During World War I and World War II, Argentina stayed neutral in order to maintain its large agricultural export market. In the wake of World War II and the opening of the Cold War, Argentina opened formal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union hoping to take advantage of the Soviet's dire need for grain imports. Nevertheless, relations between NATO powers and Argentina remained amicable up until the establishment of the military government in 1976. The ill-fated Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1983 proved to provide a turning-point in Argentina's domestic and foreign policy. The failed invasion discredited the legitimacy of the military junta and by 1986 democracy had been restored in Argentina. Early on in the administration of President Carlos Menem (1989–1999), Argentina restored diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom and developed a strong partnership with the United States. It was at this time that Argentina left the Non-Aligned Movement and adopted a policy of "automatic alignment" with the United States. In 1990, Menem's Foreign Minister, Guido di Tella, memorably pronounced the U.S.–Argentine alliance to be a "carnal relationship." Argentina was the only Latin American country to participate in the 1991 Gulf War coalition and all phases of American operations in Haiti. Since 2003 Argentina has stopped its policy of automatic alignment with the United States. Argentina has instead focused on building stronger relationships with its Latin American neighbors through participation Mercosur – a trade organization promoting free trade in Latin American.

ISSUES SUMMARY

At regional level Argentina attaches great importance to the relations with Latin America and the Caribbean countries. MERCOSUR (the Common Market set up by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) is a model of economic integration based on freedom and democracy, in which cooperation is at the very heart of the system. Bolivia and Chile have become associate partners of MERCOSUR through the negotiation of a free trade agreement with the four original members. As a demonstration of the excellent relations with neighbouring countries in the area of security and defence, Argentina proposed the adoption of the political declaration of

MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, which was signed at the MERCOSUR summit held in Argentina on July 24th 1998. The resurgence of terrorist attacks comes as a harsh reminder that no state is immune to terrorism. Argentina firmly supports the initiatives underway to supplement the network of anti-terrorism rules currently in force with new conventions, leading to enhanced international cooperation and the establishment of the obligation of all states to bring to justice and punish those responsible for these terrorist acts. On nuclear issues, Argentina was the first country which, having mastered the nuclear fuel cycle, chose to limit the use of this technology to peaceful purposes. With regard to the reform of the Security Council, Argentina believes that the situation born out of the Second World War cannot prevail indefinitely. It is necessary to find democratic solutions that will allow for periodic renewal of the members of the Security Council within the modalities chosen by each region, however, any increase in the numbers of permanent members should be based on rotation. The viability of this reform will necessarily depend on the political engagement of the parties towards consensus. The deterioration of the environment, in its various forms, is one of the problems urgently requiring concrete answers and effective commitments by governments and the civil society. In awareness of this necessity, Argentina hosted the Fourth Conference of Contracting Parties of the Convention on Climate Change and the Tenth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10), from 6-17 December 2004 in Buenos Aires.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UN

The Togolese Republic joined the United Nations September 20 1960 after gaining its independence from France. Since then the Togolese Republic has been very cooperative with the United Nations in searching for solutions to various crises and the many conflicts in Africa.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER UNSC MEMBERS

China – China and Argentina officially assumed diplomatic relations in 1972. Since the 1990s Argentina has pursued a vigorous foreign policy in regards with China with an emphasis in fostering a positive economic relationship between the two countries. China is Argentina's largest Asian trading partner.

Russian Federation – In the post-Soviet era, Argentina and Russia have both made moves towards more amicable relations. In July of 2014 Argentina and Russia signed a nuclear cooperation agreement. Of particular interest to the Russian Federation are large amounts of Argentinian shale oil reserves that make Argentina a strategically important partner for Russia. According to a statement from Vladimir Putin in summer 2014, Russia and Argentina “cooperate in all areas.”

United Kingdom – Among all of the relations that Argentina has with P-5 members, the relationship that Argentina has with the U.K. is the most complicated due to remaining issues surrounding the Falkland Islands. Both countries established diplomatic relations in 1823, but these relations were cut off between 1982 and 1990 due to the Falkland War. As part of Argentina's general realignment with the United States during the 1990s, relations between the U.K. and Argentina generally improved. However, Argentina has never recognized the Falklands as British territory and continues to claim them to this day. Most of Argentina's South American neighbors have now called on the United Kingdom to engage in talks with Argentina over the status of oil and mineral deposits in waters located off of the Falkland Islands. Since the 2000s,

relations between the U.K. and Argentina have generally degraded. While the two nations are still amicable towards one another and remain important trading partners, tensions regarding the Falklands have swelled once again. In 2010, Argentinian President Cristina Fernandez de Kircher headed an Argentinian delegation to the UN's Decolonization Committee to put pressure on the U.K. to engage in bilateral talks on the status of the Falklands. The U.K. has refused cooperation up until this point.

United States – Bilateral relations have existed between the U.S and Argentina since 1823. Since 1998, Argentina is the only Latin American country to be designated as a major non-NATO ally by the United States, owing largely in part to Argentina's involvement in the First Persian Gulf War. The United States has a positive bilateral relationship with Argentina based on many common strategic interests, including non-proliferation, counter narcotics, counterterrorism, the fight against human trafficking, and issues of regional stability, as well as the strength of commercial ties. Argentina signed a Letter of Agreement with the U.S. Department of State in 2004, opening the way for enhanced cooperation with the U.S. on counter narcotics issues and enabling the U.S. to begin providing financial assistance to the Government of Argentina for its counter narcotics efforts. The United States has been intentionally ambiguous on the Falklands issue, not taking a strong position for-or-against a new round of talks.