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## INTRODUCTION

Until comparatively recently it has proved difficult to find a time when Argentina could be truly identified as a fully-fledged democracy. Instead Argentinean politics was punctuated by periods of authoritarian military rule, attempts at free-market democracy or the populist rule of demagogues. Such fluctuations in political control demonstrate that Argentina's political history is by no means dissimilar to that of its Latin American counterparts. As with other parts of the continent Argentina remains witness to a strong authoritarian legacy and deeply unequal societies.

Argentina's political problems were at their most profound between 1930 and 1983. Throughout this period Argentina witnessed numerous military coups and twenty-five changes of presidential control. As a consequence of such political turmoil a further pattern emerged. During this period no constitutionally elected president served a full-term in office before handing power over to an elected successor.

The gradual consolidation of democracy prompted Argentina to redefine its role and reputation in the international system. This has resulted in Argentina becoming a leading contributor to international peacekeeping activities. Furthermore, working within international mechanisms has also allowed Argentina to develop closer ties with traditional regional adversaries. Not only have improved ties with Brazil benefited Argentina's contemporary military and energy policies, the potential for enhanced geopolitical significance has also increased.

As a result of increasingly cordial relations with its immediate neighbours, Argentina has also become a leading proponent of increased cooperation within the developing world. It is anticipated that such forms of cooperation will lead to a distinct geopolitical bloc that will advance the causes of developing states during negotiations within mechanisms of global governance. However the reinforcement of its commitment to the Western-led 'War on Terror' demonstrates that Argentina remains keen to develop good relations throughout the entire international system.

The full study is published by the U K Defence Forum [www.ukdf.org.uk](http://www.ukdf.org.uk)