

MILITARIST PEACE
IN SOUTH AMERICA

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MILITARIST PEACE IN SOUTH
AMERICA

CONDITIONS FOR WAR AND PEACE

Félix E. Martín



MILITARIST PEACE IN SOUTH AMERICA

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>Abstract</i>	xv
Introduction: Absence of War or Enduring Peace?	1
Chapter 1 Peace in South America: Norm, Anomaly, or Historical Paradox?	7
Chapter 2 Political Realism: Peace through Power?	25
Chapter 3 Balance of Power, Empirical Findings, and Peace	49
Chapter 4 U.S. Hegemony, Empirical Findings, and Peace	79
Chapter 5 International Liberalism: Peace through Principles?	101
Chapter 6 Democracy, Trade, Diplomacy, and Peace: Empirical Findings	117
Chapter 7 The Military, External Peace, and Internal Violence	149
Summary and Conclusions: Power, Principles, or Militarist Peace?	177
<i>Notes</i>	183
<i>Bibliography</i>	223
<i>Index</i>	247

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LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Normal and Anomalous Nature of War and Peace	16
6.1	Bolivia's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	129
6.2	Paraguay's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	129
6.3	Chile's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	131
6.4	Peru's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	133
6.5	Colombia's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	134
6.6	Venezuela's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	134
6.7	Ecuador's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	137
6.8	Argentina's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	141
6.9	Brazil's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	141
6.10	Uruguay's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	143

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LIST OF TABLES

3.1	Annual Values for the Computed Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) Score of the National Material Capabilities of South American States in Five-Year Intervals, 1850–1930	53
3.2	Annual Values for the Computed Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) Score of the National Material Capabilities of South American States in Selected-Year Intervals, 1932–2001	54
3.3	Polar Classification of the South American Subsystem According to Schweller’s Polarity Index	55
3.4	Polar Classification of the South American Subsystem According to Wayman’s Polarity Index	56
3.5	Polarity and Intra-regional Interstate Outcome of the South American Subsystem in Selected-Year Intervals, 1850–2001	58
3.6	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Argentina and Brazil, 1935–2001	63
3.7	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Argentina and Chile, 1935–2001	65
3.8	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Bolivia and Chile, 1935–2001	67
3.9	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Colombia and Peru, 1935–2001	68
3.10	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Colombia and Venezuela, 1935–2001	70
3.11	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Chile and Peru, 1935–2001	72
3.12	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Ecuador and Peru, 1935–2001	74
3.13	Dyadic Balance of Military and Overall National Material Capabilities between Guyana and Venezuela, 1935–2001	75

3.14	Synoptic Chart of the Results of the Analysis of Dyadic Deterrence in South America, 1935–2001	77
4.1	United States Overt Military Interventions Abroad, 1945–1991	99
6.1	Classification of Political Regimes in South America, 1935–2005	120
6.2	Classification of Political Regimes in South America, 1935–2005	121
6.3	Bolivia's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	127
6.4	Paraguay's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	128
6.5	Chile's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	130
6.6	Peru's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	132
6.7	Colombia's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	135
6.8	Venezuela's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	136
6.9	Ecuador's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	138
6.10	Argentina's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	139
6.11	Brazil's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	140
6.12	Uruguay's Bilateral Trade with Its Principal World and Adjacent Intraregional Trading Partners, 1938–2001 (Value as Percentage of Total Trade)	142
7.1	Observation of Military Socialization in South America, 1935–2005	165

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ABSTRACT

Despite the presence of enduring bilateral rivalries, recurrent militarized interstate disputes, and notoriously violent internal political processes, South American states have paradoxically avoided a major intraregional war since the end of the Chaco War in 1935 between Bolivia and Paraguay. Contending that realist and liberal explanations are inconclusive, this monograph advances an alternative explanation: the “militarist peace” hypothesis. This proposition centers on the sociopolitical role of the military institution at both national and regional levels.

It is argued that through an evolutionary, social process, the military of the region developed common socioeconomic values, beliefs, principles, and objectives. This fostered the armed forces’ increasing identification with the interest, progress, and success of the transnational and national dimensions of the military institution in South America. The increasingly transnational identity of the military transformed their traditional mission as protectors of the state from external threats to national political players and guardians of the state from internal political foes in their respective polities. The direct consequence of this evolutionary dynamic is the “external-peace-and-internal-violence paradox” in South America.