

Articles

Argentina: President-Designate Viola

General Roberto Viola, a retired 56-year-old former commander of the Army, will assume office on 29 March. Like his predecessor, he will share power with a three-man junta comprising the heads of the military services. Important government decisions can be made only with the junta's approval, but Viola is a strong and effective leader who will seek to impose his personal stamp on policymaking.

The Argentine military accords a high priority to normalizing relations with the US. In this regard, Viola's meeting with you is important in itself. Tangible results from the visit will strengthen his hand against opponents both inside and outside the military.

- He wants this support as he faces tough choices on national economic policy, political liberalization, and settlement of a longstanding dispute with Chile over the Beagle Channel.
- Although the change in emphasis in US human rights policy has been warmly received by Argentine leaders, they recognize the US will remain interested in their record. The recent arrests of human rights activists in Buenos Aires may be an attempt by Viola's political opponents to embarrass him rather than the start of a new wave of official repression.

Viola [REDACTED] has been open and friendly in his frequent contacts with American diplomatic and military personnel. He often has stated that bilateral disagreements could and should be settled amicably through negotiations.



President-designate Roberto Viola
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Differences Over Policy

Viola hopes to wipe the slate clean of some longstanding bilateral differences.

The crux of these has been human rights.

- Buenos Aires, which once relied on US military cooperation, has been forced to turn to Western Europe for advanced weapons systems and training.
- The Argentines feel that repeal or major modification of the Humphrey-Kennedy amendment is indispensable to improve overall bilateral relations.

Despite repeated assurances that it would sign the Western Hemisphere nonproliferation treaty, Argentina continues to develop its own nuclear program under less than full-scope safeguards.