
Documentation

Argentina-Brazil Accord Moves Toward Integration

Brazil-Argentina Joint Declaration

On Jan. 18, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Argentine President Néstor Kirchner met in Brasilia, Brazil, and issued a Joint Declaration, which is translated and excerpted here.

[The Presidents] reiterated the current validity, the solidity, and the indispensable nature of the Strategic Alliance between Brazil and Argentina, the touchstone of South American integration and a factor of progress, development, and regional stability, and reaffirmed their willingness to continue to reinforce the basis for building a common future.

To this end, they decided to establish a new system of bilateral consultation and coordination, with Presidential meetings every six months, preceded by meetings of the Foreign Ministers, and they determined that the Deputy Foreign Ministers would meet every three months.

They reviewed the regional situation, marked by a broad convergence of values that open exceptional perspectives for the deepening of integration. In this sense, they stressed the essential role that Mercosur plays in this process, and the need to continue working for its consolidation and expansion, guaranteeing adequate benefits to all of its members. Similarly, they reiterated their full agreement with the goal of advancing in the direction of the consolidation of a South American Community of Nations. . . .

The two Presidents viewed with satisfaction the advances achieved by the Health Ministers of Brazil and Argentina since the signing of the Protocol of Intent regarding joint work on research, development, and production of medicines and vaccines, especially of retrovirals and reagents for HIV-AIDS, as well as the decision to install a bi-national factory for their production. The joint production of medicines and advanced technology reaffirms the spirit of greater health autonomy of the two Nations.

They committed themselves to always keeping open the channels of consultation and cooperation on these questions, and renewed their permanent readiness to actively and jointly contribute to solving situations that could affect regional peace and stability. . . .

Kirchner Speech Before Brazilian Congress

On Jan. 18, Argentine President Kirchner addressed a joint session of the Brazilian Congress. Excerpts follow.

. . . We are going through a change of era, which involves a strong paradigm shift, both in the region and in the world. Both of our governments have fully understood this reality. In our bilateral relations, we are absolutely aware of how much we have done but also of how much remains to be done. . . .



PR/Richardo Stuckert

The Ibero-American "Presidents' Club" is thwarting neo-con plans to loot the continent. Here, Venezuelan President Chávez, Argentine President Kirchner, and Brazilian President Lula at their summit meeting in Brazil on Jan. 19.

Similarly, our countries have decided to break with a past that has imprisoned us. Not only have we ended the debt with the IMF, but—and this is the most important—we have recovered our total autonomy to decide what to do with our resources and our autonomy.

We transmitted this same message of sovereignty and defense of our interests during the Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, where we firmly stated that the only free trade we accept is that which brings with it benefits for all participants, and not one that conceals one-sided agreements.

We were also a solid, serious, and forceful voice at the Hong Kong meeting of the World Trade Organization's Doha Round, where we unreservedly exposed the hypocrisy of a world trade which proclaims free trade for those products in which the developed countries are competitive, and protectionism for those in which they are not. Argentina and Brazil were the protagonists of a group of countries which offered creative, intelligent, and constructive ideas and proposals.

In October 2003, when President Lula conducted a state visit to my country, we issued the Buenos Aires Consensus . . . [in which] we stated that regional integration constituted a strategic option for strengthening the insertion of our countries into the world, increasing their negotiating power. We declared that greater autonomy in decision-making would allow us to more effectively confront the destabilizing movements of speculative financial capital and the opposing interests of the most developed blocs, amplifying our voice in various forums and multilateral organizations. We stated that management of the public debt had to have as its objective the creation of wealth and of jobs, protection of savings, reduction of poverty, fostering of education and of health, and the possibility of maintaining sustainable policies of socio-economic development. . . .

On the multilateral plane, as we indicated earlier, one can clearly see the new way we relate to the international financial world, and the hard-fought defense of just trade, beneficial to our people, as we demonstrated by coordinating our actions in Mar del Plata and in Hong Kong. . . .

We must consolidate the unity of the countries of South America, but we must also raise one voice, one plan, and one sense of identity, to give us the necessary potential to dialogue with other world blocs. The idea of South America as the Cinderella of the world is over. We don't want to be the backyard anymore; we want to take an active part in building the new times that await us. . . .

We must be at the forefront, in the vanguard of the battles, making clear to the whole world that South America wants to be a part of the world, and no longer in the rear. And we definitely want our leaders, we ourselves, those of us to whom it has fallen to be Presidents and legislators, to achieve the summit of history, so that that history begins to become the history that our brothers and sisters, that our citizens deserve.

Kirchner Speech Following Meeting with Lula

On Jan. 18, Argentine President Néstor Kirchner delivered remarks, excerpted below, after meeting with Brazilian President Lula da Silva.

. . . Argentina and Brazil are partners in Mercosur, in the South American Community of Nations, in the Americas, and in the world. We are partners for democracy, we are partners for peace, and we should be partners in obtaining our development. The times are propitious. It is up to us to take advantage of them, and to understand that individually, it will be much more difficult to do this. International economic circumstances are favorable, the world is marching toward a new multilateralism marked by greater consumption by giants like China and India, who are embarked on a path of development. Immense sectors of their populations are rapidly improving their quality of life, and they demand a class of products and services that we can provide, some of which—like soy and steel—we are already providing. . . .

Mercosur should transform itself into the key policy for job creation and for successfully resolving the enormous challenges that we face from a world that puts a premium on producing and exporting goods with high value added, and on obtaining raw materials. Our strategy should be to complement each other in Mercosur to be able to negotiate and compete more strongly with the rest of the world, producing high technology goods and raising salaries that reflect the development of the region. . . .

In Paraguay and in Uruguay, criticisms of Mercosur grow stronger with regard to what is considered a lack of attention to those asymmetries. It is necessary for us to meet in a joint exercise to address these complaints, preserving our solidarity. . . .

I cannot fail to emphasize the satisfaction we all feel in

affirming that our beloved Bolivia has been able to resolve a difficult situation, adhering to democratic institutions and to its Constitution. This is, doubtless, the Bolivian people's achievement.

We also want to send our congratulations to, and to deepen integration with, the sister Republic of Chile. . . .

Mercosur was the proud and hopeful witness to a clean and peaceful election, and now awaits the full incorporation of Bolivia into an increasingly more powerful and promising bloc. . . .

I would like to say to brother Brazilians, and to all the members of Mercosur, but in this special case to all the brothers and sisters of Brazil, that they can take pride in the President they have. We Argentines have valued him as a Latin American brother who has accompanied us, in Brazil's name, during a tremendously difficult situation. You all know what we went through. . . . It is something that we Argentines will never forget and that the brothers and sisters of Brazil can feel proud of, because they have a President who reacts the way he did in the face of a brother nation such as Argentina, which faced a particular problem. . . .

Lula Speech Following Meeting with Kirchner

On Jan. 18, Brazilian President Lula delivered remarks, excerpted below, after his meeting with Argentine President Kirchner.

. . . Argentina and Brazil are committed to the consolidation of an area of peace and prosperity in South America.

In the series of visits which Bolivia's President-elect, Evo Morales, just made to Brasilia and Buenos Aires, Argentina and Brazil are examining ways to help this brother country, contributing to its full integration with the region, and above all to the well-being of the Bolivian people. . . .

The decision of our governments to pay off our debts to the IMF, in particular, reinforces the determination of Argentina and Brazil to redefine, in a coordinated way, their place in the world. . . .

We are perfecting our nuclear collaboration in the framework of the Brazilian-Argentine Control and Accounting Agency [for Nuclear Material]. We want to broaden our cooperation in the area of nuclear power and aerospace. . . .

My friends, I want to pay special homage to the leadership of President Kirchner. Under his direction, Argentina left behind years of skepticism and submission, to finally find its destiny.

His government overcame the worst economic crisis in the history of Argentina, recovering income and employment levels. He restructured an asphyxiating foreign debt and wrote down the country's financial obligations, restoring Argentina to its traditional outstanding place in the international community. More than that, he restored pride and hope to a nation rich in history and potential. . . .

We both won elections, and we, politically, exist precisely to solve the challenges which others don't dare solve. . . .