

9. How Perón Took a Third Position between Washington and Moscow

We have had much to say about Argentina's economic relations with the outside world from the point of view of their impact upon her domestic economy. Here they will come into the discussion again, but from the point of view of Argentine foreign policy and as only one of several factors — political, military, cultural, and psychological, as well as economic — that shaped the course of Argentina's relations with the United States from Perón's formal advent to power as President of Argentina in June 1946 down to the end of 1953.

I. OLD AND NEW POLICY STRANDS

For Argentina, as for the rest of the world, this period was dominated by the rift between the communist and noncommunist powers, which was primarily a rift between Moscow and Washington. By a singular coincidence, the split became wide-open and a threat to world peace on the eve of Perón's first inauguration in June 1946, and consequently exerted a decisive influence upon Argentina's international position and his foreign policy from the very beginning of his administration.

This explains why the central theme of his foreign policy throughout the period was his Third Position, as he came to call it — a position, or better a "middle way," between "collectivism" (that is, communism) and capitalism. By taking a middle way, he hoped to increase Argentina's bargaining power in dealing with the core problem facing Argentina in the postwar period, namely,