

# Minefields and Humanitarian Demining at the Chile-Bolivia Border: A Step-by-Step Approach\*

## Minado-desminado humanitario en la frontera de Chile-Bolivia: Una dinámica gradual

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### ABSTRACT

The border is a place of encounter for geopolitical and literary accounts as well as historiographical and anthropological ones, but also is, like the doors guarded by the god Janus, a location where the dichotomy between control and integration—the paradox of globalization—is apparent. All this may allow an informal measurement of relations between neighbors. This article will discuss the implementation, over 30 years, of border controls at the Chilean-Bolivian frontier through the deployment of one of the most aggressive policies seen in *teichopolitics*: mine-laying that resulted in a virtual wall between both countries. Finally, the reasons that led Chile in recent years to remove mines and reduce its control of the border will be analyzed.

*Keywords:* 1. security, 2. integration, 3. border, 4. Bolivia, 5. Chile.

### RESUMEN

La frontera es un sitio de encuentro de relatos geopolíticos y literarios, historiográficos y antropológicos, pero también, cual dios Jano, lugar en donde más claramente se da la dicotomía control/integración, paradoja de la globalización, lo que puede permitir, informalmente, medir las relaciones vecinales. Este artículo analizará el control aplicado por Chile durante 30 años en la frontera con Bolivia, a través de una de las políticas más agresivas de la *teichopolítica*: el sembrado de minas que construyeron un verdadero muro explosivo entre ambos países. Y finalmente analizará las razones que llevaron a Chile a disminuir el control mediante la decisión de desminar esta frontera en los últimos años.

*Palabras clave:* 1. seguridad, 2. integración, 3. frontera, 4. Bolivia, 5. Chile.

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## INTRODUCTION

Borders are a place of encounter of geopolitical and literary accounts as well as historiographic and anthropological ones (Grimson, 2003:13) but also are, like the doors guarded by the god Janus, institutions of opening and closing, of union and rupture. It is where the control/integration dichotomy, the paradox of globalization, most clearly occurs. This can allow, in an informal way, the measurement of the relationships of neighbors in a directly proportional way: the less control, the more integration, and vice versa.

This article is the result of an analysis of news articles, official statements, and a review of the literature involving Chile's border with Bolivia over a 30-year period. It examines one of the world's most aggressive policies of *teichopolitics*,<sup>1</sup> in which Chile, through the laying of mines, built a true dividing wall; it also discusses Chile's reasons for changing this decision now.

The delay in the humanitarian demining that Chile committed to has resulted in polemics and a loss of trust in bilateral relationship between Chile and Bolivia in recent years.

## A HISTORY OF CONFLICTIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN NEIGHBORS

In Latin America, the dynamics of relations between neighboring countries have often been conflictive and complex, to the point that no country can affirm that its links with all its neighbors are easy to conduct. As Loreto Correa and Viviana García argue (2013:94),<sup>2</sup> “since the wars of independence, the legacy of mistrust between elites, caused by a series of other wars (Triple Alliance, the Pacific, the Chaco, etc.)—added to the aftertaste of *caudillismo*, populism, and in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the legacy of the *de facto* governments—contributed to cementing these sensitivities.”

In the case of Chile, history shows that it has had conflictive relationships with its neighbors. Correa and García (2013:94) say that “one occupation (1824) and two wars (1836 and 1879) affect Chile, Peru, and Bolivia in a binding way.

<sup>1</sup> This concept became known in Chile as a result of a paper presented by Stéphane Rosière at the Border Regions in Transition congress that took place in 2009 in Arica, Chile and Tacna, Peru.

<sup>2</sup> This article forms part of Fondecyt Project no. 1120405 (2012), “Between Conflict and Isolation: Development, Governability, and Security in the Border Zones of the Extreme North and South of Chile at the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

With borders resolved, and territorial treaties defined (1904 with Bolivia and 1929 with Peru), Chile grew rapidly with respect to its territorial formation at independence, principally due to territorial disputes going back to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.”

Correa, Muñoz, and García (2012:28) say that today, Peru and Bolivia are uncomfortable about the issue of territory and that old disputes continue to be key factors in their relationships with neighbors. With Argentina, the disagreement about Patagonian territorial limits (Beagle Conflict) traversed the 20<sup>th</sup> century, arriving at a critical point in 1978; after mediation of the Holy See, the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1984 put an end to the disagreement.

In the case of Peru, on January 16, 2008, President Alan García's administration brought a demand against Chile before the International Court of Justice in The Hague to resolve a dispute over its maritime border. Nevertheless, the position of Chile was that such a conflict did not exist, because a parallel line had been drawn over the waters of the Pacific Ocean, ratified in treaties signed in 1952 and 1954; Chile dismissed the opposing view, saying the agreements were to set fishing activity. In the end, the International Court of Justice established a border that gave 200 more maritime miles to Peru.

Ultimately, in the case of Bolivia, the relationship has been characterized by the issue of Bolivia being landlocked and its demand for a sovereign outlet to the Pacific Ocean. Correa, Muñoz, and García (2012) say that Bolivia's efforts to obtain an outlet to the Pacific Ocean have been structured using a back-and-forth logic, swinging between actions toward the revisionist thesis of the Treaty of 1904 in multilateral forums, both global (the League of Nations, now called the United Nations) and inter-American ones, on the one hand; and on the other, structuring a deployment of diplomats to seek rapprochement and direct negotiations with Chile. For that, it has resorted to the intermediation of third countries, as well as meetings with Chilean Foreign Service officials. They add that the disparity of views over the causes, events, and conclusion of the conflict of the Pacific of 1879 has brought about a devastating balance for the countries: Thinking of regional integration is a utopia when the events of the past are remembered, and infringement on sea access is seen as a source of inspiration (Correa, Muñoz, and García, 2012:28).

Thus we find ourselves in a scenario, as Correa and García (2013:94) point out, where differences between neighbors have remained and continue being key factors into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *THE PARADOX OF GLOBALIZATION*

A paradox of globalization is added to this complex scenario in Chile and Bolivia's relationship as neighbors. In the 1970s, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1971), authors of the theory of complex interdependence in international relations, pointed out that “globalization referred to the accelerated transfer of technology and transport, to the intensification of every kind of communications and finally to free financial circulation” (Aranda and Salinas, 2014:471).

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the so-called real socialisms, the collective imagination saw globalization as a driving force of an era without borders or walls. The proponents of this positive vision said the impact of the ever-increasing internationalization of economic processes would have social implications and bring about important political-culture phenomena. Globalization dynamics would bring about a trend, including the opening of borders and the elimination of ethnic differences, religious creeds and political ideologies. In other words, it would generate a homogenizing process on a planetary scale.

Nevertheless, today, as Stéphane Rosière (2012), one of the principal writers about this issue, says, new barriers—a generic term that designates any closed border—are erected over the entire planet. The French geographer says the security dimension of these structures is obvious (certain “walls” date to the Cold War). Nevertheless, most of these new barriers are anti-migratory walls that separate the countries of the north (which are transformed into fortresses) from the countries of the south. The difference in development between north and south generates ever-greater migratory flows. And, because of unquestioned global economic mechanisms, *teichopolitics* appears to be the only option. *Teichopolitics* is a neologism, from the ancient Greek τεῖχος (*teichos*), which literally means “wall”; that is, it can be understood as “fortress policy.”

Teichopolitics also is a manifestation of fear or rejection of otherness; in this scenario the immigrant can be seen as ranging from a beggar who profits from the welfare system in the host country to a potential terrorist. As Robin Corey (2004:342) explains in an excellent book about fear (*El miedo. Historia de una idea política*), if this “is of the community-alien variety, elites still take the initiative and derive the greater benefit. Designated protectors of a community's safety, they determine which threats are most salient, emphasizing, for example, the threat of Iraq over that of North Korea, of Islamic terrorism over domestic terrorism.”

The paradox of a supposedly globalized world, that is, without borders—the fiction of globalization referred to by Aldo Ferrer (1998:167), former Argentine

economy minister—can be seen where all types of border closures are constructed to prevent physical boundaries' permeability to human mobility. *Teichopolitics* contributes then to the construction of a segmented globalization. From this perspective, paraphrasing the historian Eric Hobsbawm (2008:38), even the smallest countries are rocks that break the waves of globalization:<sup>3</sup> It is not that these systems cut the flow, but rather that they make possible constant circulation under a strict control that allows the filtering of movement through the identification of what and who travel through the borders.

Historically, the main reason behind *teichopolitics* has been security policy. As Rosière (2011:153) says, it is one way to protect yourself from two big threats: the military one and the migratory one. The military worry is an ancient one, exemplified by the Great Wall of China or Roman walls, also called *limes*.

In this same sense, the Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito, one of the principal writers on this topic, says that in ancient societies the border was given a fundamental ordering role in the face of an originally shared world, and, henceforth, destined for chaos and reciprocal violence. Esposito (2009a:5-6) says: The linguist Émile Benveniste recorded the symbolic importance of this activity of marking borders, identifying in this the most ancient role of *rex*: that of *regere fines*, of drawing straight and inviolable boundaries between one land and another. *Fines* and *limes* are the words through the ancient Romans referred to this basic need of limiting space, to the point of making “terminus” a god, the god *Terminus*.

For Esposito (2009a:6), the building of the Great Wall of China responded to the same exigency of protection for those inside it, and, at the same time, of exclusion for those outside it: As Carl Schmit well explained it, *nomos* (administrative division) has separation as its initial meaning. It is established by engraving distinction on the earth, including the opposition, between mine and yours, between ours and theirs. From its origins it can be said that human civilization has practiced the drawing of limits, terminuses, boundaries: the raising of walls between one territory and another. For a policy often identified with the military art, what mattered was to impede border violations by those who, breaching protective terminuses, could have “exterminated” the inhabitants of that land.

<sup>3</sup> Hobsbawm (2008:38) says that “there have been some occasional attempts to counteract global political fragmentation through free trade zones, only the European Union went beyond its basic economic objectives. And not that even that shows signs of turning into a European federal or confederal state that its founders imagined.”

In relation to globalization, Esposito (2009b:6) says that it is a structurally ambivalent phenomenon, with contrasting effects. On the one hand, it tends to reconstruct a shared world, eliminating or debilitating the immune limits that separate different states and communities. In this sense, the sovereign violence that was present during the Cold War should be reduced between the two blocs separated by the Berlin Wall. And on the other, the generalized contamination causes a new and still more potent immune rejection, leading to the building of new walls and defensive barriers.

Globalization, along with creating the feeling that we are living in an open, networked world, also expands our perceptions of threats posed by strangers or foreigners, the so-called *strangeness*. As Chris Rumford (2013), professor of political sociology and global politics at Royal Holloway, University of London, says, “The increase in securitization in our lives exacerbates our feeling of otherness (the threat planted by the other): The world becomes familiar but is full of strangers” (Aranda and Salinas, 2014:461).

Then we find a scenario where, as the Mexican anthropologist, sociologist, and essayist Roger Bartra (2013:40), says,

enormous swaths of immigrants extend their mantle and generate tensions in the native population that feels its solidarity threatened by the presence of necessary but unsettling otherness. The *trasterrados* (strangers) live in a condition of paradox that combines the hopes of infiltrating oneself into a new life with the bitterness of exile.

### *THE LAYING OF MINES: RADICAL TEICHOPOLITICS*

In the face of the feeling of fear of the other, one of the most extreme forms of *teichopolitics* spread throughout the world, which developed following military industry technological advances: the mining of land, the construction of a true explosive wall.

Mine means

any artificial explosive, buried or camouflaged, which is detonated by direct contact, magnetic proximity or electrical control. They are made in all shapes and sizes according to the function they are supposed to perform. They are primed to explode when the enemy passes by. Their charge can be an explosive or another chemical material, such as an inflammable smoke producer or one of illumination. They are essentially made up of a charge and an explosive device (Comisso, 2007:13).

As for mine laying, the act of sowing mines in border areas, these are not placed in an isolated way, but are sown in groups in a certain area. Usually armies have rules establishing the arrangement of the mines. The areas sown with mines are known as minefields, and, according to the kind used, can be of various types. Thus, there are anti-vehicle minefields, which are those that principally have mines of that type, although they could also include some antipersonnel fragmentation mines to make it difficult to remove the anti-vehicle mines; antipersonnel minefields, which include blast and fragmentation mines; and mixed minefields, which combine both types of mines.

Many of the countries of Latin America, just like other places in the world where neighbors' relationships have often been conflictive, took the decision to mine large areas of land; this was considered to be a valid policy option for various governments.

During the Cold War, particularly in the developing world, a policy of mining large areas proliferated, as these countries were incapable of acquiring other, more expensive defense systems, particularly in low-intensity conflict zones. This is the reason behind the burying of hundreds of thousands of antipersonnel mines in regions with internal armed conflict. The principal providers were Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia; in the second tier were Belgium, Great Britain, China, France, and the United States. Currently, Pakistan, Egypt, and South Africa are vigorously introducing themselves into this market where Italy continues to maintain an important position (Alonso, 1995).

Mine-laying policy not only causes a separation that impedes passage but it also can damage the other, physically, and corporally. Its origins refer to an old military method: Dig tunnels with the idea of crossing enemy lines to introduce yourself into their territory, bypassing the walls of their defenses. Powder "perfected" the technique by adding to the bottom of the mine an explosive to blast it into the air. Over time there developed the option for mine-laying to impede the passage of others, bringing with it the possibility of injuring the nation's own citizens. Being a weapon that never takes a break—that is, that does not stop working with the end of hostilities—mine-laying went beyond the military arena to affect civilian life. And if "all the armed conflicts, be they international or internal ones, leave the land covered with a considerable quantity of explosive devices," as Peruvian diplomat Gustavo Laurie (2006:151) points out, the greater dangers are landmines, antipersonnel or anti-vehicle ones. These have been placed manually or deployed at various distances in a certain area, before or during hostilities,

to impede the passage of soldiers, enemy transports, or to slow them or channel them into an area where they can be efficiently attacked.

If international policy in the 1970s and 1980s accepted that antipersonnel mines were defensive, and not offensive, weapons, “the sowing of mines also is used to force the opponent's displacement in certain spaces, closing others. These uses presuppose antipersonnel mine placement that is signed and marked” (Ministry of Defense, 2012:44).

In the case of Colombia, Eduardo Bejarano (2010:263), former director of basic rights of the Labor Ministry, said, “According to the United Nations Development Programme in its *Land Mine Report* (2008), Colombia occupies the dishonorable first place in the world in terms of new victims of antipersonnel mines, followed by Cambodia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.”

### *MINE-LAYING AS A CHILEAN DEFENSE POLICY*

In the Chilean case, the military dictatorship decided in the 1970s to implement a policy that provided for the installation of antipersonnel mines at its borders as a consequence of a scenario of possible conflict with Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru. The historical ghost of a bad relationship with neighbors returned.

The BBC (2012) estimates that the Pinochet government (1973-1990) placed some 180 000 mines in border areas. This was not only along the boundary with Peru, but also with Bolivia and Argentina.

Chile laid “42 minefields in plateau areas along the Chilean-Bolivian border, with a total of 22 988 antipersonnel mines and 8 765 antitank mines” (Emol, 2010).

The Ministry of Defense said that the mined zones in Chile are in border areas, most of them in hard-to-reach, unpopulated locations far from population centers, being places where there is no regular transit for civilians. The entire perimeter of these mined areas is protected with a fence with three or four barbed wire strands supported by 2-meter-high metal posts, duly marked with triangular metal signs, 40 centimeters per side, painted red with the word “Mines” written in yellow or red.

These placards are hung from the top strand of the wire fence, with a distance of about 20 meters between each one. Together with this signage, each minefield has 1 x 0.6 meter signs, installed on posts at a height of about 2.5 meters, indicating the presence of mines. These signs, with yellow or white letters on a green background, are written in Spanish, English, German, and Aymara and/or Quechua, depending on their geographic location (Ministry of Defense, 2009:9).



The Ministry of Defense's official records maintain that in national territory, the minefields' entire perimeters are protected with an interior fence consisting of three strands of barbed wire, attached to metal posts, an intermediate fence 1.5 meters high, located about a meter from the previous one, with five strands of barbed wire, attached to wood posts, and an exterior fence, consisting of double run of concertina wire one meter in diameter, located one to four meters from the intermediate fence (Ministry of Defense, 2009:9).

### *CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: HUMANITARIAN DEMINING POLICY*

The notion of demining refers to activities for the clearing and removal of unexploded mines and munitions. "These included technical studies, mapping, removal of unexploded mines and munitions, signage, post-demining documentation, direct contact with affected communities, and transfer of the demined lands" (CIDHG, 2004:67).

Below we will see how the move toward demining was made. In recent years, as Martín, Nazal, and Zepeda (2000:35) say, of particular concern were "the effects of certain conventional weapons; it became part of the public interest to alleviate, and possibly avoid, the devastating effects of wars, particularly considering the havoc they produce in the civilian population."

The background behind this concern is found in the restrictions imposed on military conduct after the battle of Solferino in 1859; "The Hague Convention (1899) relating to asphyxiating or deleterious gases; The Hague Convention (1907) and the Geneva Protocol (1925), both of which prohibited the use of poisonous weapons, projectiles, or materials destined to cause unnecessary suffering" (Martín, Nazal, and Zepeda, 2000:35).

Also, in recent years,

a group of scientists and qualified persons in diverse fields have made it their work to research in depth what initially was created as a military strategy and border protection, but today is a problem that affects various populations around the world: antipersonnel mines. The studies seek to completely eliminate or at least greatly diminish the number of victims. Important advances developed to contribute to the task of demining are various types of sensors, detectors, and radars that allow the discovery and identification of a mine that could potentially be a cause of damage (Bedoya, Chávez, and Guzmán, 2011:239).

There also are “Mine-Related Activities”<sup>4</sup> that have to do not only with demining but also with “activities to reduce the social, economic, and environmental effects of unexploded mines and munitions” (Comisso, 2007:108).

In respect to this, in 1992 the Organization of American States (OAS) created the Program for Assistance for Demining in Central America (PADCA) in response to requests from some Central American states, including Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala, affected by the existence of antipersonnel mines.

This program received a strong impetus in 1997, with the international *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, also called the *Ottawa Treaty* (United Nations Organization, 1997). The convention was ready for signing December 3-4, 1997, and was placed before United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in New York on December 5 of that year. It went into effect March 1, 1999. Despite the great international support for the convention, it has not had the success it could have because the majority of states producing or utilizing antipersonnel mines refuse to sign the treaty. By February 2009, 156 countries had ratified the treaty; two states that had signed it had not ratified it. Thirty-seven states, including the People's Republic of China, India, Russia, and the United States, are not part of the convention.

In 1998, the PADCA expanded its technical assistance, turning itself into the Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines (known by its Spanish acronym AICMA, or *Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal*). The OAS (2010) said PADCA “evolved within its eminently humanitarian vision of reestablishing safe, secure, and productive living conditions for mine-affected populations. With six years of experience, and considering the negative impact of mines on the development, human rights, gender equality, and the needs of children and adolescents, PADCA expanded into” AICMA.

The AICMA became an eminently humanitarian program, through which it sought to reestablish living standards and citizens' trust, reduce the threat and danger caused by explosive devices and antipersonnel mines, and restore the affected land for productive activities. The OAS (2010) said, “Additionally, the Program is multilateral in nature in that, in addition to beneficiary countries, a number of donor and contributing countries, international organizations, and non-governmental entities participate in this effort.”

<sup>4</sup> Definition given by the United Nations in “International Mine Action Standards” (IMAS).

The principal fields of action covered by the AICMA program are: mine risk education for mine-affected communities; technical assistance in humanitarian demining, including locating and mapping sites; destruction of stockpiled mines; victim assistance, including physical and psychological rehabilitation as well as socioeconomic reintegration of cleared lands or communities; development of a mine action database; destruction of munitions, small arms, and explosive remnants of war; support for the total ban on the use, storage, sale, transport, or export of antipersonnel mines under the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction* (United Nations Organization, 1997).

Currently, the program supports the implementation of national plans in Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru with the goal of meeting national and international commitments.

#### *HUMANITARIAN DEMINING POLICY IN CHILE*

In the mid-1990s, Chile's relationship with its neighbors experienced some significant advances, mainly with Argentina, which was reflected in Chile's signing, on December 3, 1997, the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction* (United Nations Organization, 1997).

With respect to this issue, a Chilean National Defense white paper affirms that

in terms of international security, one area of Chile's Foreign Policy that Defense Policy supports is the promotion and development of International Humanitarian Law and its effective application. According to this, Chile has supported this international effort that seeks to eliminate conventional armaments that can be considered excessively harmful or to have indiscriminate effects (Resdal, 2011).

Also, the Defense white paper says that

Chile also has adhered to international principles according to which the right of the parties, in an armed conflict, to elect the methods or means of combat is not unlimited; to prohibit the use of arms, projectiles, materials, and methods of combat of such a nature that cause superfluous damage or unnecessary suffering; as well as the principle that a distinction must be made between the civilian population and military forces (Resdal, 2011).

After a moratorium period, the Ottawa Treaty was approved by the Chilean National Congress in May 2001 and ratified before the Secretary-General of the United Nations in September of that year, becoming the law of the republic in March 2002.

The National Defense white paper affirms that

Chile signed the Ottawa Treaty in 1997 under said international principles, of the evolution of the foreign policy of the country and of National Defense needs. Of particular importance has been the fact that antipersonnel mines are armaments that do not discriminate between the civilian population and belligerent forces (Resdal, 2011).

To carry out the provisions of the treaty, a National Commission of Humanitarian Demining was created, composed of members of various ministries, accountable to the President of the Republic and presided over by the Ministry of Defense.

The National Commission for Humanitarian Demining was constituted by a National Defense decree on August 19, 2002. Participating in its incorporation were the undersecretaries of the Treasury, Health, and Foreign ministries, the chief of the National Defense general staff, the chiefs of the armed forces general staff, and the executive secretary of the commission. There also was the Technical Advisory Committee, made up of representatives of various sectors involved in the issue of humanitarian demining. For work and support purposes it was located in the National Defense general staff, attached to the National Ministry of Defense.

In August 2002, then Minister of Defense (and current President of Chile) Michelle Bachelet, in a speech about the destruction of antipersonnel mines in Pampa Chaca, said 76 388 antipersonnel mines that had been warehoused would be destroyed, showing the good faith of the Chilean government to move forward on this issue. As Bachelet (2002:40) said, “This destruction of stored mines is just one milestone in a larger process, and of longer term, initiated by the state of Chile after the Ottawa Treaty was promulgated and introduced in our legislation beginning March 9 of this year.”

It should be noted that under the unilateral moratorium of 1999, Chile had definitively closed the national programs of antipersonnel mine production (FAMAE and Cardoen). Before that date, Chile was producing at least six different types of antipersonnel mines. The news said that “on April 26, 1999, in an official declaration signed by Foreign Minister Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, Chile imposed a unilateral moratorium on production, export, and use of new antipersonnel mines” (Gobierno de Chile, 1999).

The dynamics in the relationship between Chile and Bolivia continued, between 2000 and 2011, gradually improving, although always moving between good moments and bad. Most of the time the principal reasoning behind the polemics was the delay in the humanitarian demining to which Chile had committed. For its part, Chile reacted by explaining that this delay was due to an accident of geography and the occurrence of natural phenomena, such as seasonal rains that displaced mines from their original locations.

One of the good moments in this bilateral relationship occurred in August 2005; on that date technical delegations from the Chilean and Bolivian chancelleries met in La Paz, approving a Plan of Action that included military cooperation through an international system of mutual trust. Also, Chile committed to build an international customs complex in Tambo Quemado, on the same land where the demining at the Bolivian border began. “The first phase began July 21, 2005, when the Chilean government promised to eliminate by December of the same year 4 400 mines it had buried in the Tambo Quemado area, located in two fields, along the international highway” (Redacción Central, 2006).

Another good moment occurred in June 2008, when the Chilean Ministry of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding with the Bolivian Ministry of Defense about cooperation in the area, which constituted a milestone in the generation of a climate of confidence and the institutionalization of sectoral bilateral relations.

The third good moment occurred in 2010, when the Chilean and Bolivian defense ministers, Jaime Ravinet and Rubén Saavedra, signed a document declaring as free of mines the minefields Tambo Quemado 1 and Tambo Quemado 2, located at the countries' border, 140 kilometers from Arica (Emol, 2010).

This in essence was an agreement between the armed forces of Chile and Bolivia to cooperate. This created a system of coordination that facilitated the planning of and compliance with goals in tasks related to the education, skill-building, training, health care, cooperation in matters of emergencies and natural disasters (CNAD, 2010).

They included the following: An exchange of military training personnel between the institutions; execution of a combined joint exercise to confront natural disasters; creation of a technical evaluation group between joint chiefs of staff to propose a mechanism of reciprocal management of medical attention of the countries' military hospital system; commitment of both ministries to begin a 60-day time frame from the signing of this agreement for a technical process to generate

a common methodology to measure defense spending; to follow up on agreed-to issues, liaisons between both countries' joint chiefs of staff will be named to serve as permanent secretaries of the Chilean and Bolivian armed forces (CNAD, 2010).

Nevertheless, a serious reversal occurred in the bilateral relationship when the Chilean government sought, in 2011, an eight-year extension in the demining work. As analyst Erich Haun (2012:44) of the Chilean Army's Center for Military Studies and Research (Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Militares del Ejército de Chile) says,

The main reason for justifying such an extension is found in the complexity represented not only by the demining process, principally being done using human resources, but also the morphological changes in the places where the mines were laid, a product of landslides caused by fluvial floodwaters, among other things. What happened at the beginning of 2012 in the vicinity of the locality of Ollagüe in the Antofagasta region, as well as in the 'Quebrada de Escritos' in the Arica-Parinacota region gives a clear picture of that.

The previous year the relationship between both countries had deteriorated, a product of the repositioning of Bolivia's maritime demand, which caused various prepared protocols that dealt with the subject at hand not to be signed, canceling some initiatives, exchanges, and defense cooperation programs (Correa and García, 2013).

The situation touched bottom in 2013, fueled by differences in positions and the slow progress, a product of innumerable geographic and climatic problems, such as the plateau's winter, whose seasonal rains moved the mines. On March 24, 2013, Bolivian President Evo Morales said that Chile had paralyzed the process of eliminating the antipersonnel mines that had been laid 40 years before at the border of his county during the regime of Augusto Pinochet. "There is an international commitment that is not being met, not with Bolivia, but with the United Nations and the Ottawa Treaty,' the leader said after criticizing President Sebastián Piñera, whom he blamed for the deterioration in relations between La Paz and Santiago" (*La Estrella*, 2010).

Morales' declarations were made a day after it was confirmed that his government would sue Chile at The Hague to seek a sovereign outlet to the sea and that to this end, a peace committee would travel to the seat of the International Court of Justice in the coming days. "Pinochet realizes the mine-laying and Piñera paralyzes the demining [...] I hope I am not mistaken, Piñera has paralyzed the demining

ing between Bolivia and Chile and this was a commitment between Chile and the UN,' Morales said in an interview with his government's communications media, opening a new focus of criticism" (*La Tercera*, 2013).

On March 9, 2014, the daily *La Tercera's* headline read "Country's demining plan advances 44%" (Bertín, 2014). The story reiterated that the goal the Chilean state adopted by signing the Ottawa Treaty in 1997 was the elimination of all antipersonnel landmines "to put an end to the suffering and mutilation these objects cause to the civilian and military populations" (Bertín, 2014). Also in the article, the executive secretary of the National Demining Commission (Comisión Nacional de Desminado, known by its Spanish acronym CNAD), Colonel Juan Orlando Mendoza, said, "Our pace has been to destroy 10% of the mines annually, leading us to believe that we will meet our goal of ridding all mines from national territory by 2020 and certify ourselves as a country free of antipersonnel mines" (Bertín, 2014).

The news report mentioned the issue of victim reparation, a topic absent since 2002 even though the work of deactivating and destroying the mines had begun then. The report said that "in September 2013, a bill was introduced in parliament to establish economic, technical, and work reparation to the 160 registered victims, dead or mutilated, of accidents tied to antipersonnel mines (with whom the CNAD would work exclusively), and also other accidents with cluster bombs and abandoned munitions" (Bertín, 2014).

In short, the political relationship between Chile and Bolivia, marked by Bolivia's maritime demand, had a strong effect on their dialogue and cooperation when it came to the demining at the countries' border. On February 25, 2014, official information from the Demining Commission showed that the Chilean government had destroyed 79 485 mines of the 181 814 it had declared it possessed upon signing the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction* (United Nations Organization, 1997). In terms of area, of 23 229 224 square meters laid with mines, 9 302 475 have been cleared, an advance of 40 percent.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Chilean state, like many countries in the region, opted in the 1970s for a policy of mining its border, a true wall of explosives, a product of successive crises involving neighbors. Just in the high plateau, at the Chilean-Bolivian border, 42 minefields were sown, with a total of 22 988 antipersonnel and 8 765 antitank

mines. That is, this was the most extreme application of *teichopolitics*—fortress policy—but in this case through the building of a wall of explosives that placed at risk not only foreign citizens but also Chile's own.

In the 1990s the international community evolved toward a new climate of cooperative security that rejected the sowing of antipersonnel and antitank mines as a methodology of defense and interstate separation. In this context, the need to completely proscribe landmines acquired force for the international community and governments: “weapons that constitute, by their particular nature, a grave danger for civilian populations and in general a cruel and inhuman weapon because of the extent of harm it produces in people” (Sanhueza, 1998:16).

Chile signed the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction* (United Nations Organization, 1997) and from that moment began to implement international commitments with respect to demining its borders, a key confidence measure to advance toward a great integration with its neighbors. This process has not been without difficulties. The progress made in terms of accelerated destruction of this type of weapon in 2003 suffered setbacks in the years that followed due to various obstacles, often caused by the geographic and morphological characteristics of the terrain to be demined, with a subsequent lag in the execution of this work. In the same manner, diverse natural phenomena that occurred in recent years in the area complicated the task at hand due to the urgent need to get the job done because of the danger faced by the civilian populations. An additional obstacle to the implementation of the demining has been that disagreements between Bolivia and Chile in other areas have wound up contaminating the cooperative dialogue needed to remove mines from their border areas.

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