



International Boundary Study

No. 166 – January 30, 1979

Argentina – Paraguay Boundary

(Country Codes: AR-PA)

**The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research**

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 166 - January 30, 1979

ARGENTINA – PARAGUAY BOUNDARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Boundary Brief.....	2
II. Historical Background.....	2
III. Alignment	4
APPENDIX – Documentation	6

ARGENTINA – PARAGUAY BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Argentina - Paraguay boundary is approximately 1,880 kilometers (1,168 miles) long. From the tripoint with Bolivia to the Brazilian tripoint, it follows successively the Rio Pilcomayo, Rio Paraguay, and Rio Parana. In the poorly drained area along the Rio Pilcomayo between Punto Horqueta and Salto Palmar, the boundary consists of straight-line segments.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A treaty of union and alliance was signed by Argentina (Junta of Buenos Aires and Deputies from La Plata) and Paraguay (Junta of Asuncion) on October 12, 1811.¹ The treaty postponed settlement of the sovereignty of the Pedro Gonzalez district on the Rio Parana and provided for the maintenance of the existing boundaries of Paraguay.

On July 31, 1841, a provisional boundary treaty was signed by Argentina (Corrientes) and Paraguay. In accordance with the treaty, Paraguay received territory corresponding to the Villa del Pilar, the lands known as San Jose de la Rinconada, and a number of now-extinct towns. Corrientes received San Carlos, Apostoles, Martires, some towns on the Uruguay river, and Islas Apipe or Isla Borda in the Rio Parana.

Following a war between Argentina and Paraguay, a treaty of friendship, boundaries, commerce, and navigation was signed by the two countries at Asuncion on July 15, 1852. The treaty established the Rio Parana as the Argentina - Paraguay boundary from the tripoint with Brazil to a point two leagues above the lower mouth of the Islas de Atajo. The Isla de Jacireta was to belong to Paraguay and the Isla de Apipe to Argentina; all other islands were to belong to the country to which they were closest. The Rio Paraguay was to belong to Paraguay from bank to bank, while the bank from the mouth of the Rio Bermejo to the Rio del Atajo was to be neutral territory to the width of one league.

On June 4, 1856, the Argentine Congress approved an act recognizing the independence and sovereignty of Paraguay. The act also stated that the final adjustment of the Argentina - Paraguay boundary was still pending. An Argentine - Paraguayan treaty of July 29, 1856, postponed the final settlement of the boundary.

A treaty for an offensive and defensive alliance against Paraguay was signed by Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay at Buenos Aires on May 1, 1865. The treaty also provided that, after the conclusion of permanent boundary agreements, Argentina and Paraguay were to be separated by the Rio Paraguay and the Rio Parana to the Brazilian tripoint. This would have given Argentina the Gran Chaco from the Rio Bermejo northward to Bahia Negra on the Rio Paraguay and the Misiones territory in the northern part of Mesopotamia (between

¹ Although the Argentine people had revolted against Spanish rule on May 25, 1810, independence for the United Provinces of La Plata was not proclaimed until July 9, 1816, at a congress in Tucuman. Paraguay gained independence from Spain on May 14, 1811.

the Rio Parana and Rio Uruguay). During the years 1865 - 70, Paraguay was involved with the signator countries of the treaty of the War of the Triple Alliance.

A boundary treaty signed by Argentine and Paraguayan representatives on May 20, 1875, was rejected the following June 17 by the Government of Paraguay. A treaty of peace was signed at Buenos Aires on February 3, 1876, in which it was agreed that the final Argentina - Paraguay boundary would be delimited in a special treaty to be signed by both countries simultaneously.

A second boundary treaty, signed in Buenos Aires on February 3, 1876, affords the present delimitation of the Argentina - Paraguay boundary in the Rio Parana and the Rio Paraguay. By this treaty, Paraguay relinquished its claims to the Misiones territory and the Chaco Central (Formosa) between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Tenco - Rio Bermejo. Argentina agreed that the Chaco Boreal (northern) between Bahia Negra and the Rio Verde belonged to Paraguay. It also was agreed that the ownership of the territory in the Chaco Boreal between the Rio Verde and the Rio Pilcomayo would be submitted to the arbitration of the President of the United States. In a decision rendered on November 12, 1878, President Rutherford B. Hayes awarded the territory southward to the main branch of the Rio Pilcomayo, including Villa Occidental (Villa Hayes), to Paraguay.

On September 11, 1905, a convention was signed by Argentina and Paraguay concerning their common boundary in the Rio Pilcomayo. It provided for a mixed commission to determine which was the main branch or channel of the Rio Pilcomayo in the poorly drained or flooded lowlands of the Gran Chaco according to the arbitral award of President Hayes. A modifying agreement on February 1, 1907, changed the mixed commission to include two experts, one appointed by each country. A report was submitted by the experts to each of the two governments, but no further action was taken on the delimitation of the sector until 1939.

A complementary treaty was signed in Buenos Aires on July 5, 1939, to delimit the Argentina - Paraguay boundary from the confluence of the Rio Pilcomayo with the Rio Paraguay to Salto Palmar on the Rio Pilcomayo and from Punto Horqueta to La Esmeralda at the tripoint with Bolivia. Between Salto Palmar and Punto Horqueta, the boundary was to be determined by a mixed commission of Argentine and Paraguayan experts. Also on July 5, 1939, a special protocol attached to the complementary treaty provided for and instructed a mixed demarcation commission composed of three delegates from each country.

A supplementary treaty signed at Buenos Aires on June 1, 1945, establishes the boundary in the poorly drained lowlands along the Rio Pilcomayo between Punto Horqueta and Salto Palmar, where there is no fixed and continuous water course. The boundary later was demarcated by a mixed commission with geodesic lines or straight-line segments; pillars were erected at the vertices.

On January 23, 1967, an Argentine - Paraguayan River Navigation Treaty was signed in Buenos Aires. It provided freedom of navigation for the ships of Argentina and Paraguay along the Rio Paraguay, Rio Parana, and Rio de la Plata within the jurisdiction of both High Contracting Parties.

III. ALIGNMENT

The boundary follows the Rio Parana for approximately 732 kilometers (455 miles). It extends downstream between the Brazilian tripoint² at the confluence of the Rio Parana and the Rio Iguazu (Rio Iguacu) and the confluence of the Rio Parana and the Rio Paraguay. The boundary then follows the Rio Paraguay upstream for approximately 383 kilometers (238 miles) to its confluence with the Rio Pilcomayo.

The Argentina - Paraguay boundary treaty of February 3, 1876, delimits the sector between the Brazilian tripoint and the confluence of the Rio Paraguay and the Rio Pilcomayo as follows:

(Article 1) Paraguay should be divided from Argentina on the east and on the south by the mid-channel of the main stream of the Parana from its confluence with the Paraguay to the boundary of Brazil, on its left (east) bank, the island of Apipe to belong to Argentina and the island of Yesireta to Paraguay, as declared in the Treaty of 1856; (Article 2) Paraguay should be divided from Argentina on the west by the mid-channel of the main stream of the Paraguay from its confluence with the Parana, the Chaco [belonging to Argentina] as far as the main channel of the Pilcomayo ...; (Article 3) the island of Atajo or Cerrito should belong to Argentina and the remaining permanent or temporary islands in either the Parana or the Paraguay to Argentina or Paraguay according to their [closer] position with reference to one or the other republic ..., the channels between the islands, including Cerrito, to be common to the navigation of both states ...

The boundary follows the Rio Pilcomayo for approximately 765 kilometers (475 miles). It extends between the confluence of the Rio Pilcomayo with the Rio Paraguay and the tripoint³ with Bolivia at La Esmeralda. From the confluence, the boundary follows the Rio Pilcomayo upstream about 266 kilometers (165 miles) to Salto Palmar (approx. 24°19'45" S., 59°28'20" W.). The line then continues by an approximate straight line for about 64 kilometers (40 miles) through the poorly drained area of the Estero Patino to a point about 600 meters northwest of Ex Fortin Zalazar (approx. 24°00'20" S., 60°02'00" W.). The boundary next continues from the point northwest of Ex Fortin Zalazar through the flooded areas of Laguna la Belle and Banados del Rio Pilcomayo for 100 kilometers (62 miles) to

² The Argentina - Paraguay boundary treaty of February 3, 1876, establishes the boundary as the mid-channel of the main stream of the Rio Parana to the Brazilian boundary or tripoint. In accordance with the Argentine - Brazilian boundary treaty of October 6, 1898, the boundary of the two principals follows the thalweg of the Rio Iguazu to its confluence with the Rio Parana to determine the Paraguayan tripoint.

³ An award of October 10, 1938, by the Arbitral College in Buenos Aires delimiting the Bolivia - Paraguay boundary indicated the location of the Argentine tripoint in the Pilcomayo. The award stated that the boundary continued in a "straight line to end in the thalweg of the Rio Pilcomayo at 62°37'19" longitude west of Greenwich." A First Category Pillar designated La Esmeralda was erected on the left bank of the Rio Pilcomayo at 22°13'43.66" S. and 62°38'17.10" W. Both an Argentine - Paraguayan boundary protocol of July 5, 1939, and an Argentine - Bolivian boundary protocol of February 10, 1941, indicated that the tripoint was at La Esmeralda.

Punto Horqueta (23°52'22" S., 60°50'08" W.). From Punto Horqueta, the boundary follows the Rio Pilcomayo to the tripoint at La Esmeralda.

The complementary treaty signed in Buenos Aires on July 5, 1939, delimited the boundary in the Rio Pilcomayo as follows:

Art. 1. Starting from the mouth of the Rio Pilcomayo in the Rio Paraguay south of Cerro Lambare, whose coordinates are 57°38'57.6" W., 25° 22' 55.2" S., the boundary will go up the course of the Pilcomayo to the bifurcation of the two arms in the Juntas de Fontana, and from here it will follow the actual course of the south arm as referred to in March 1909 ... to its headwaters at a point called Salto Palmar.

From the point called Horqueta, situated approximately 5 kilometers east of the Argentinian fort of Nueva Pilcomayo, the line will again follow the actual course of the Rio Pilcomayo to the place called Esmeralda, on the boundary between Bolivia and Paraguay.

Art. 2. In order to determine the boundary between Salto Palmar and Horqueta, in the zone excluded in the preceding Article, it is decided to create a mixed commission composed of Argentinian and Paraguayan technicians to study the zone between the following points; on the north, from Horqueta following the esteros formed by the north arm of the Pilcomayo to the Argentinian fort of Caracoles; on the south, from the same point at Horqueta, continuing along the dry course of the Pilcomayo to Fortin Zalazar and from this point to Salto Palmar. On the east the line between Fortin Caracoles and Salto Palmar.

The supplementary treaty signed at Buenos Aires on June 1, 1945, delimited the boundary between Punto Horqueta and Salto Palmar as follows:

Art. 1. The Republics of Argentina and Paraguay agree to set a definite boundary between both countries in the section included between the points called Horqueta and Salto Palmar referred to in Article II of the complementary boundary treaty of 5 July 1939, in the following form, from west to east:

a) Beginning from Punto Horqueta (latitude 23°52'22" South, and longitude 60°50'08" West of Greenwich) the dividing line shall follow the course of the waters of the Pilcomayo as they exist in the dry season according to results of the aerial photogrammetric survey already made, and from the above-mentioned Punta Horqueta, the line shall pass through Zanja de la China (latitude 24°54'12.2" S, and longitude 60°36'45.3" W), and from this point will pass successively to the north of ex-Fortin Guemes, to the north of Puerto la Palmita (latitude 24°00'36.4" S, 60°29'25.5" W), and to the north of ex-Punta General Lavalle;

b) From this last-named point the dividing line shall continue in a general easterly direction through the banados [flooded lands] of the Rio Pilcomayo which pass to the north of Santa Ana (latitude 24°06'09.8"S, longitude 60°19'25"W), to the south of Tap. B. Madrid (latitude 24°01'23.2"S., longitude 60°12'44"W), and to the north of Puerta Isleta (latitude 24°04'05.6" S, longitude 60°07'53.8" W) to Laguna

la Bella; it shall cross the lake to the mouth of the principal outlet of the lake at a point situated approximately 600 meters northwest of ex-Fortin Zalazar;

c) From this last-named point, the dividing line shall follow an approximately straight line until it reaches the Salto Palmar on the date of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Treaty of Union and Alliance. Signed at Asuncion, October 12, 1811. Paraguay, Misiones Arbitration, Appendix, pp. 136 - 138.
2. Provisional Boundary Treaty between the Government of Corrientes and Paraguay. Signed at Asuncion, July 31, 1841. Ratified by Government of Corrientes on August 23, 1841. Ratifications exchanged at Asuncion on September 6, 1841. Paraguay, Tratados (1934), 1:24 - 27 (Spanish).
3. Treaty of Boundaries, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation. Signed at Asuncion, July 15, 1852. Ratified by Argentina on July 17, 1852, and by Paraguay on July 19, 1852. Ratifications exchanged at Asuncion on September 14, 1852. British and Foreign State Papers (BFSP), Vol. 42 (1852 - 1853), pp. 1256 - 1258.
4. Offensive and Defensive Alliance against Paraguay [Triple Alliance]. Signed at Buenos Aires, May 1, 1865. Approved by Argentina, May 26, 1865. Ratified by Brazil on May 23, 1865, and by Uruguay on May 26, 1865. Ratifications exchanged at Buenos Aires by Argentina and Brazil on June 12, 1865, and at Buenos Aires by Argentina and Uruguay on June 13, 1865. Paraguay, Misiones Arbitration, Appendix, pp. 179 - 185.
5. Boundary Treaty. Signed at Rio de Janeiro, May 20, 1875. Rejected by Paraguay, June 17, 1875. Brazil, Relatorio do Ministerio das Relacoes Exteriores (1877), Anexo 1, pp. 9 - 11 (Portuguese).
6. Boundary Treaty. Signed at Buenos Aires, February 3, 1876. Approved by Argentina, July 7, 1876. Ratified by Paraguay on August 24, 1876, and by Argentina on September 1, 1876. Ratifications exchanged at Buenos Aires, September 13, 1876. Request to the President of the United States by Paraguay on January 13, 1877, and by Argentina on January 25, 1877. Acceptance by the President of the United States, March 28, 1877. BFSP, Vol. 68 (1876 - 1877), pp. 97 - 100.
7. Arbitral Sentence Rendered by the President of the United States of America in the Boundary Question. Signed at Washington, November 12, 1878. United States, Treaty Series, No. 390.
8. Convention Concerning Definitive Fixing of the Boundary. Signed at Buenos Aires,

September 11, 1905. Approved by Argentina, September 11, 1905. BFSP, Vol. 98 (1904 - 1905), pp. 770 - 771.

9. Complementary Boundary Treaty. Signed at Buenos Aires, July 5, 1939. Approved by Argentina, September 28, 1939. Ratifications exchanged at Buenos Aires, March 10, 1939. Argentina, Memoria del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (1939 - 1940), 1:153 - 155 (Spanish).
10. Special Protocol Attached to the Complementary Boundary Treaty. Signed at Buenos Aires, July 5, 1939. Paraguay, El Pais, 3, No. 645 (August 14, 1939): 24 - 25, 32.
11. Supplementary Treaty of Definitive Boundaries in the Rio Pilcomayo between the Republics of Paraguay and Argentina. Signed at Buenos Aires, June 1, 1945. Ratified by Argentina on July 23, 1945, and by Paraguay on August 7, 1945. [Annexes to the treaty include a Special Protocol, Final Report of the Argentine - Paraguayan Joint Boundary Commission of August 16, 1944, and Definitive Topographical Map of the area of the Rio Pilcomayo between Salto Palmar and Punta Horqueta.]

This International Boundary study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by the Office of the Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, in accordance with provisions of the Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-16.

Government agencies may obtain additional information and copies of the study from the Office of the Geographer, Room 8742, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520 (Telephone: 632-2021 or 632-2022).