



Argentinean Submariners Lost at Sea

OE Watch Commentary: Argentina mourned the passing of 44 of her submariners in the loss of the boat ARA San Juan. The rescue mission was called off after two weeks of search efforts, despite which, the wreck was not located. Thus, hope was gone, but blame was still lingering. The loss of a ship at sea, of its crew, but especially perhaps the loss of a submarine crew is generally a subject of universal empathy and was in this case. The second accompanying reference, however, gave one reasonable and timely strategic analysis of why Argentina even had a submarine crew to loose, the news apparently coming as a bit of a surprise to some of the Argentinean citizenry. Rosendo Fraga is a well-respected Argentinean political analyst. He makes a broad-ranging commentary, to include argument of why the protection of Argentinean sovereignty depends in part on naval power, pointing out that “Argentina is 50% territory, 25% sea and 25% Antarctica.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

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“...The submarine was in perfect condition...”

Source: “ARA San Juan: suspenden a un alto oficial en la Armada (ARA San Juan: A senior Naval officer is suspended),” *Diario Panorama*, 12 December 2017. <https://www.diariopanorama.com/noticia/275615/ara-san-juan-suspenden-alto-oficial-armada>

“To confirm this fact [that inspection protocols were followed and the boat was in good condition] Aguad [Minister of Defense Oscar Aguad] spoke personally with petty officer Humberto René Vilte, who got off in Ushuaia to return to Jujuy due to the grave sickness of his mother. Aguad talked with ‘crew member 45’ [44 crew members were lost on the boat] who assured him that ‘he participated in the first twenty-four hours of the inspection and there was nothing reportable, except small gigs. There was nothing in reference to the snorkel. The submarine was in perfect condition.’ These and other indicators brought the Ministry of Defense to subscribe to the theory of ‘sudden and uncontrollable crisis.’”

Source: Rosendo Fraga, “¿Por qué la Argentina necesita un submarino? (Why does Argentina need a submarine),” *La Nacion*, 27 November 2017. <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/2086293-por-que-la-argentina-necesita-un-submarino>

“The complete map of Argentina is 50% territory, 25% sea and 25% Antarctica. The question of the sea is a constantly increasing issue in the world and today it is more important due to the subsurface and for fishing. In the Malvinas they are extracting oil and gas (...) States are constantly further advancing their sovereignty by way of the sea, at the depths of the sea, he illustrated.”



ARA San Juan Submarine, May 2017.

Source: By Juan Kulichevsky from Argentina (Submarino ARA San Juan), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bb/Submarino_ARA_San_Juan_%2833866567363%29.jpg, CC BY-SA 2.0.