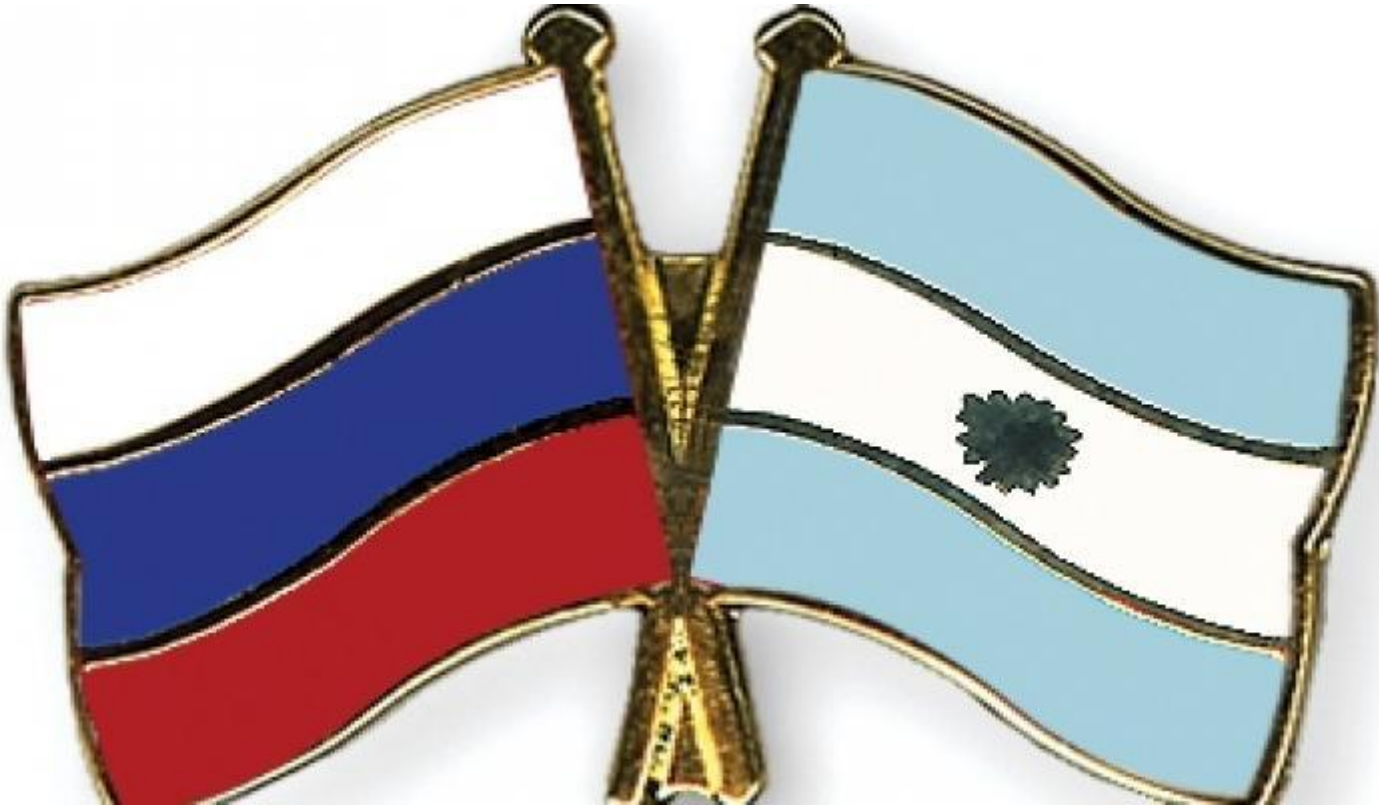


# *Argentina and Russia Ratify Close Links*

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Moscow, May 29 (Mercopress-RHC) -- Argentina has been formally invited to take part in a BRICS summit to be held in Brazil next month. Moscow's Kremlin also ratified support to Buenos Aires in its long-standing dispute with the UK over the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands.

The announcements were made during Wednesday's meeting in Moscow of visiting Argentinian Foreign Minister Hector Timerman and his Russian counterpart, Sergi Lavrov, who ratified the 'strategic association' between the two countries.

Lavrov's office confirmed the invitation to Argentina to attend a summit of the BRICS countries – Brazil, India, China, Russia and South Africa.

Indian Ambassador to Argentina, Amarendra Khatua, had earlier said Buenos Aires was interested in joining the BRICS, and three of the group's five members – India, Brazil and South Africa – supported the idea. The Russian Foreign Ministry said the issue would require careful consideration.

Wednesday's meeting took place at the Spiridonovka Palace in Russia's Foreign Ministry where Argentina's Timerman assured the “strategic association” between both countries “is based in a common vision about the essence of international relations, values and objectives of common well-being that both nations are building.”

At the Moscow gathering, Héctor Timerman and Sergi Levrov signed a Joint Declaration over the deployment of weapons in outer space, thus ratifying their pro-disarmament and anti-proliferation stance.

The statement came as a follow-up on a 2008 international draft agreement to ban the "weaponization of space." The Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space was first proposed by China and Russia in a bid to forestall the next stage of the global arms race.

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