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**Pushing Peace Worldwide**

*Battle supports the US antiterrorist position and has emphatically condemned the 11 September attacks in New York City and Washington. He, nevertheless, favors pursuing peace rather than aggression and has publicly called for all nations to avoid the spread of violence. Battle has stated that the attack was an act not of war but of terrorism and has called for a global peace movement to prevent the escalation of bloodshed. On the diplomatic front, Battle has announced that any military operation against terrorists should be authorized by the UN, adding that the attackers must be punished using international criminal law rather than acts of revenge.*

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problems, alleging the world's largest money-laundering system operates in the United States as a result of high US drug consumption. Never afraid to take a stand, he became the first Latin American leader to call for the legalization of illicit drugs. Battle, who admits that this topic is open for debate, says that legalization would lower drug prices and damage the livelihood of narcotraffickers.

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**Fulfilling Campaign Promises**

On the domestic front, Battle's independence and political persistence have enabled him to fulfill a number of his presidential campaign goals, despite resistance from within his coalition government. Early in his administration, for example, Battle pressured the Congress to pass reforms that increased the government's flexibility to administer state-owned companies and used that legislation to cut nonpersonnel expenses. Battle has lived up to his campaign pledge to increase tax revenue by establishing an antimuggling program within the Defense Ministry.

At the same time, Battle has made political inroads and blunted opposition to his market-oriented policies by addressing key concerns of left-leaning opponents. The President, for example, established a peace commission to

investigate disappearances during the 1973-85 military regime, becoming the first president to take up the issue. Battle won points across the political spectrum when he fired his Armed Forces Joint Staff Chief immediately after the officer opined that the military would eventually have to "fight the left." Despite his persistence, he has failed to implement deeper reforms—such as privatization of some state activities—because of the popularity of Uruguay's social welfare system.

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**A Career Politician**

Battle was born on 25 October 1927 in Montevideo. Several of his ancestors were Presidents of Uruguay, including his late father, President (1947-51) Luis Battle Berres. Battle holds a law degree from the University of the Republic of Uruguay. He began his political career in 1945, when he joined List 15—a minority faction of the Colorado Party (PC). From 1958 to 1967, he was a member of the Chamber of Deputies. Battle ran unsuccessfully for the presidency in 1966, 1971, 1989, and 1994. During Uruguay's military dictatorship (1973-1985), he was a representative of the PC in the Triumvirate, a clandestine party. After the restoration of civilian rule, he returned to the political arena as a senator, serving until 1989. Battle was president of the PC from 1990 until 1995, when he was reelected senator, a post he held until his 1999 presidential bid.

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**Personal Data**

Battle is married to his second wife, Maria de las Mercedes Menafrá; he has a daughter, a son, and three grandchildren from his first marriage.

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Battle enjoys reading, walking, and spending time in the countryside. He has a passion for old cars and is an avid fan of rowing and Nacional—one of the top soccer teams in Uruguay. The President, who is an agnostic, has received the Jerusalem prize from the World Zionist Organization for his religious tolerance. In addition to his native Spanish, he speaks English, German, French, and Portuguese fluently.

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