

Weekly Asado

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Argentina Project, Wilson Center

Maldonado: Uneasy historical echoes

The disappearance of indigenous rights activist Santiago Maldonado, 28, continues to resonate in Argentina, where [violent protests](#) broke out Friday in the Plaza de Mayo. Maldonado was last seen August 1, during a clash with border police officers (Gendarmerie) in Patagonia, and his relatives accuse the security services of illegally detaining him. Many have expressed alarm, including [Human Rights Watch](#). The incident has drawn comparisons to the 1976-1983 dictatorship, which saw the systematic disappearance, torture and murder of as many as [30,000](#) Argentines.



Photo: [EFE](#)

Polytetrafluoroethylene: Popular ahead of midterms

Former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has used Mr. Maldonado's disappearance to undermine support for President Mauricio Macri. But so far, he remains popular. Thanks to an *espaldarazo* from the midterm primaries, Poliarquía reports that Mr. Macri's approval rating jumped seven points in August, to 52 percent. Consumer confidence also rose, despite troubling inflation figures. (Itaú forecasts 16 percent inflation next year, compared to the government target of 8-12 percent.) The favorable trends have led Amherst Prof. Javier Corrales to predict the former president's political comeuppance, which he calls a [blow](#) to regional "neocaudillismo." (CFK is no Juan Manuel de Rosas, but for Prof. Corrales, "mientras menos alternabilidad, menos democracia.")

Laura Alonso: Home to roost

Speaking at the CAF conference Wednesday, Argentina's top anti-corruption watchdog, former lawmaker Laura Alonso, offered a blunt assessment of the last administration. The Kirchners, she said, had operated a "kleptocracy," and the story of Ms. Fernández de Kirchner – who ran the Argentine government as an organized crime syndicate, according to Alonso – is now being told in Argentine courthouses.



Exxon: Stepping on the gas

Exxon Mobile announced Friday an additional \$200 million investment in Argentina's Vaca Muerta shale region, hoping to production of natural gas. The company is seeking a 35-year from the authorities in Neuquén Province. Exxon CEO Darren met Mr. Macri in Buenos Aires August 31. (The first reply to Macri's tweet on the meeting: "¿Dónde está Santiago Maldonado?")



boost
lease
Woods
Mr.

del Potro: ‘Lovable spoiler’

Argentine tennis star Juan Martín del Potro, 28, upset Roger Federer on Wednesday in four sets (7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (8), 6-4). Today, he faces top-seed Rafael Nadal in the U.S. Open semi-finals in New York. Though del Potro won the 2009 U.S. Open – beating Nadal in the semi-finals, and Federer in the finals – he was not expected to advance this far in this tournament. But the cheering crowd clearly [forgave](#) the ‘lovable spoiler’ for depriving fans of a Federer-Nadal showdown. Delpo is from Tandil, west of Mar del Plata in Buenos Aires Province and the hometown of Mr. Macri (and of a former Argentine political counselor in Washington, Josefina Martínez Gramuglia, who was known to serve Tandil’s *exquisitos quesos* at her rooftop asados). On Monday, former U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Noah Mamet – whose house in Buenos Aires, the Palacio Bosch, had popular tennis courts – joined del Potro at the U.S. Open.



Transandino: Good transmission lines make good neighbors

Chile and Argentina are increasing [energy cooperation](#), with plans to build new transmission lines to facilitate the movement of natural gas and electricity in both directions across the 3,300-mile, mountainous border. Chile is a major supplier of electricity and natural gas to Argentina. In the past, the energy trade mostly went in the other direction, until local shortages prompted Argentina to cut supplies to its Southern Cone neighbor. Now, Argentina dreams of ramping up energy exports again, thanks to the development of its unconventional oil and gas resources. The energy cooperation reflects strong relations between the countries, which has not always been the case. In the 1970s, for example, there was nearly an armed conflict involving a dispute over the Beagle Channel, in Tierra del Fuego. In the Falklands War, in 1982, Chile cooperated with the British.

Timber: Small bites, long lines

Bon Appétit has named the Timber Pizza Co. – on Upshur St. NW in Petworth – as one of the 50 [best](#) new restaurants in the United States. The magazine recommends the “Green Monster,” “Julia” and “Pretty in Pepperoni” pies. It should also have flagged the wood-fired, slow-roasted pork empanadas, an edition to the menu by Timber’s Argentine executive chef, [Dani Moreira](#). The empanadas were absent from Timber’s original location (a popular food truck) and introduced on Upshur by Moreira, a Culinary Institute of America graduate who learned to make empanadas at her family’s campground in Córdoba. (She says she hopes to open a South American Timber outpost there one day.) For more hidden Argentine food in DC, try Bourbon Steak, at the [Four Seasons](#) in Georgetown, where senior cook [Nicolas Beatove](#), from Patagonia, occasionally serves up an Argentine asado. (The last time, his \$245 “Argentine Spring” feast included 40 ounces of ribeye and pickled eggplant.)