

WEEKLY ASADO

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Desafuero: De Vido

Julio De Vido, one of the most powerful ministers in the cabinets of both Kirchner presidents, was arrested on October 25 on charges of corruption stemming from his time as planning minister from 2003 to 2015. Mr. De Vido was elected to the Lower House in 2015, and had enjoyed immunity from prosecution. But last week, in an unprecedented move, lawmakers revoked his immunity in a 176-to-0 vote – four votes above the required two-thirds supermajority. The implications for former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner are immense, a dynamic we analyze in this week’s episode of the [Argentina Project podcast](#), as Ms. Fernández de Kirchner prepares to take a Senate seat December 10 that she had hoped would shield her from the multiple corruption investigations she faces. Mr. De Vido – who is being held in the high security Ezeiza prison – was known as the “super minister” for his Jared Kushner-style, expansive portfolio. But given her stature, it is unlikely that an investigation alone would be enough to prompt senators to revoke the former president’s immunity. Nevertheless, the De Vido vote has stripped Ms. Fernández de Kirchner of her seeming invulnerability.

Take a (rate) hike: #SturzeneggerCinica

Prior to the Oct. 22 midterms, Argentine Central Bank President Federico Sturzenegger was in Washington calming investors spooked by disappointing September inflation data. “*El proceso de desinflación no es un proceso lineal*,” he said at the time. “*Tiene altibajos*.” It turns out, he was more worried than he let on. At its October meeting, the Argentine central bank unexpectedly raised the monetary policy rate by 150 [basis points](#), to 27.75 percent. (For the record, the central bank [justified](#) the rate hike by citing at least one post-election development, the “*aumento en el precio de los combustibles superior al esperado*.”)

I’m the queen of nothing: I’m the king of the world

WORLD CLASSIFICATION									
Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	16.09.2013	80	49	61.3%	26.09.2011	26	10	38.5%
2	Bolivia	12.10.2014	130	69	53.1%	12.10.2014	36	17	47.2%
3	Cuba	03.02.2013	612	299	48.9%	---	---	---	---
4	Iceland	29.10.2016	63	30	47.6%	---	---	---	---
5	Nicaragua	06.11.2016	92	42	45.7%	---	---	---	---
6	Sweden	14.09.2014	349	152	43.6%	---	---	---	---
7	Mexico	07.06.2015	500	213	42.6%	01.07.2012	128	47	36.7%
8	Finland	19.04.2015	200	84	42.0%	---	---	---	---
*	South Africa ¹	07.05.2014	395	166	42.0%	21.05.2014	54	19	35.2%
10	Senegal	30.07.2017	165	69	41.8%	---	---	---	---
11	Namibia	29.11.2014	104	43	41.3%	08.12.2015	42	10	23.8%
12	Mozambique	15.10.2014	250	99	39.6%	---	---	---	---
*	Norway	09.09.2013	169	67	39.6%	---	---	---	---
14	Spain	26.06.2016	350	137	39.1%	26.06.2016	266	101	38.0%
15	France	11.06.2017	577	225	39.0%	28.09.2014	348	95	27.3%
16	Argentina	25.10.2015	257	100	38.9%	25.10.2015	72	30	41.7%

Argentina [ranked](#) 59 of 153 countries included in Georgetown’s new global Women, Peace and Security index, a measure of women’s wellbeing. Its score exceeded all of its neighbors: Uruguay ranked 60th, Bolivia 64th, Paraguay 71st and Brazil 82nd. Released October 26, the report looked at factors including Argentine women’s cellphone use (83 percent), male-to-female birth ratio (1.04) and the percentage of Argentine women who have experienced domestic violence (33 percent). In recent years, Argentina has struggled to bring down its relatively high levels of violence against women, as the remarkable [Ni Una Menos](#) campaign drew attention to that issue. But the country is also known for strides in gender equality. Under President Juan Perón, not only was Evita a beloved figure, but women gained the right to vote, in 1947, and by the mid-1950s, held more than one-fifth of seats in congress. During the “Dirty War,” women led the resistance, including the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who held weekly marches to protest the disappearance of their children at the hands of the state. In 1991, Argentina adopted the world’s first gender quota law, requiring political parties to nominate women for 30 percent of the positions on candidate lists. (Prior to the Oct. 22 midterms, women occupied 39 percent of Argentina’s Lower House seats – the [16th-highest level](#) worldwide – and 42 percent of Senate seats. The [Women in Public Service Project](#), at the Wilson Center, advocates for women to hold half of public leadership positions worldwide by 2050.) The last Argentine president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, was a woman, as is President Mauricio Macri’s vice president, Gabriela Michetti, and Argentina’s most popular politician, María Eugenia Vidal, the governor of Buenos Aires Province.

Send lawyers, guns and money: Gils Carbó resigns

Mr. De Vido is not the only Kirchnerite in legal trouble, Alejandra Gils Carbó, a Fernández de Kirchner appointee, resigned Monday as attorney general following her indictment on administrative fraud charges. Ms. Gils Carbó had been a thorn in the side of the Macri administration, accused of stonewalling investigations into her former political patrons. Mr. Macri had sought to force her out, but under the Argentine constitution, she was permitted to remain in her position until her 75th birthday or congressional impeachment – a faceoff we highlighted in an Oct. 20 [op-ed](#) in The Hill. Pressure on Ms. Gils Carbó intensified due to an investigation over her alleged misuse of public funds to purchase a government building, leading to her resignation.

The other cheek: Carter’s soft spot for Trump

Former President Jimmy Carter has apparently forgiven President Trump for the [snubbing](#) in April, when the White House discouraged Argentina from awarding Mr. Carter its highest honor, the Order of the Liberator General Martín. As CNN en Español reported at the time, Mr. Macri had planned to present the award to Mr. Carter during Mr. Macri’s visit to the United States, but Argentina received “*un pedido del gobierno de Donald Trump de que sería mejor demorarlo.*” (Argentina [announced](#) the award the next month.) Mr. Carter apparently does not hold a grudge; he recently expressed concerns over media coverage of Mr. Trump, and offered to help [reduce tensions](#) with North Korea. It is not clear Mr. Carter will get the diplomatic job, but he earned [warm words](#) from Mr. Trump, who tweeted on October 28, “Just read the nice remarks by President Jimmy Carter about me and how badly I am treated by the press (Fake News). Thank you Mr. President!”

Going, going, Gomez: Bentonville bound

Geographic Market	Retail	Wholesale	Other ⁽²⁾	Total
Africa ⁽³⁾	326	86	—	412
Argentina	107	—	—	107
Brazil	413	71	14	498
Canada	410	—	—	410
Central America ⁽⁴⁾	731	—	—	731
Chile	359	4	—	363
China	424	15	—	439
India	—	20	—	20
Japan	341	—	—	341
Mexico	2,241	160	10	2,411
United Kingdom	610	—	21	631
International total	5,962	356	45	6,363

Christian Gomez Jr., a Walmart senior manager and highly respected Latin America hand in Washington, is decamping for Bentonville, Ark., where Walmart is headquartered. Mr. Gomez, a graduate of Princeton, SAIS and Wharton, has handled Latin America issues at the Inter-American Dialogue, the Council of the Americas and USAID. Mr. Gomez works for J. Welby Leaman, a Walmart senior director and Council on Foreign Relations member who lives in Arkansas. Walmart operates in Mexico and Central America, as well as in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. By far, its biggest investment is in Mexico, where it runs 2,241 retail stores. But it also has a prominent presence in Argentina, with [108 retail outlets](#), branded as Changomas, Changomas Express, Walmart and Walmart Supermercado. Last year, Walmart [shuttered 115 stores](#) throughout Latin America.

A rose by any other name: Centro Capulet Cultural

Mr. Macri chose the ornate Centro Cultural Kirchner as the venue for his public address Monday unveiling post-midterms priorities. Despite being named for former opposition President Néstor Kirchner, Mr. Macri has not shied away from using the location for high-profile events, such as the state dinner in March 2016 for President Barack Obama. In the Casa Rosada, by contrast, Mr. Macri has had little tolerance for homages to leftist icons; after taking office, he immediately [removed paintings](#) of Mr. Kirchner and Hugo Chávez from the Galería de los Patriotas Latinoamericanos. Nevertheless, supporters of the Kirchners have found reason to complain about Mr. Macri's use of the cultural center – the old Buenos Aires post office building – including the dismantling of the Néstor Kirchner Room. (They should rest easy; after all, the former president's name [still adorns](#) 166 public spaces, including the Atucha II nuclear power plant.)

Bife de Dupont: Bottle of red



You can practically smell the chimichurri from the Argentine Embassy, so it's no surprise [Malbec](#) has become a hangout for Argentine diplomats out to a weekday lunch in Dupont. But the restaurant is also open for Sunday brunch, offering a mix of U.S. standards – including scrambled eggs and home fries – and Argentine specialties, such as chorizo, skirt steak and milanesa. True to its name, each table is adorned with a bottle of Malbec; it is not complimentary, but brunch entrees, all under \$20, come with a mimosa or bloody Mary.

Weekly Asado Explainer: Extraordinary congressional sessions



After Cambiemos's strong showing in the [Oct. 22 midterm elections](#), Mr. Macri wasted no time advancing his ambitious reform agenda. On Monday, he highlighted his priorities for the next congress, including labor reform and passing next year's budget. But Mr. Macri doesn't seem likely to wait until the normal legislative season, which starts March 1, 2018. Lawmakers are sworn-in December 10, but immediately start their summer recess. Under this timeline, the strengthened Cambiemos coalition – which picked up 21 seats in the Lower House and nine seats in the Senate – would have to wait three months to begin implementing its agenda. However, the Argentine constitution grants the president authority to convene special sessions of Congress, and to extend the length of sessions. Mr. Macri is expected to do just that, and convoke an extraordinary meeting of the congress in December, and potentially keep legislators working through New Year's. (A similar schedule is [under consideration](#) by U.S. congressional leaders.) This procedure is not uncommon. Ms. Fernández de Kirchner repeatedly called special sessions during her tenure, taking advantage of the rubber stamp congress. Though Mr. Macri has never enjoyed a congressional majority, he has also wielded this authority before; last year, he convened a special session from December 1-30 to pass the budget.

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