



Friday, February 23, 2018

Plains to Pampas: Texas love for the Southern Cone

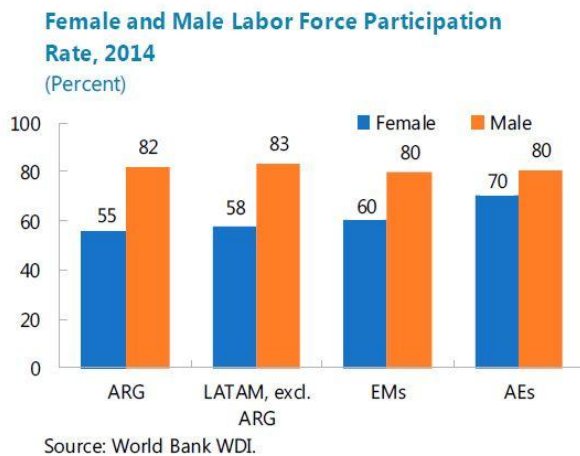


U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson struck a serious tone during much of his trip to Latin America, as he discussed North Korea, Russian and Chinese influence in the region, drug policy and the crisis in Venezuela. But during a February 3 stop in Bariloche, Mr. Tillerson was laid back, almost giddy. After trading his formalwear for cowboy boots, jeans and a State Department baseball cap, he jumped on a horse and rode up to the summit of Cerro Campanario mountain in the Nahuel Huapi National Park. Gazing at the landscape, Mr. Tillerson reportedly remarked to a colleague, “If you are not smiling, it is your own fault.”

At first blush, Patagonia seemed like an odd destination for Mr. Tillerson. Oil company executives are not known to be conservationists, and under the Trump administration, the United States has raised fees for U.S. national parks, reduced the size of national monuments and opened Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. But then again, Texans like to be outdoors, and they appear particularly fond of South America’s open spaces and ranchlands. Mr. Tillerson’s Patagonia excursion evoked another prominent Texan’s visit to the Southern Cone: In 2007, President George W. Bush surprised observers by establishing a chummy rapport with Uruguay’s socialist president, Tabaré Vázquez, who invited Mr. Bush to see the cows, goats and horses at the Uruguayan president’s sprawling, pastoral retreat. That geographical affinity also extends to Chile, where in 2008, the armed forces established a formal partnership with the Texas National Guard.

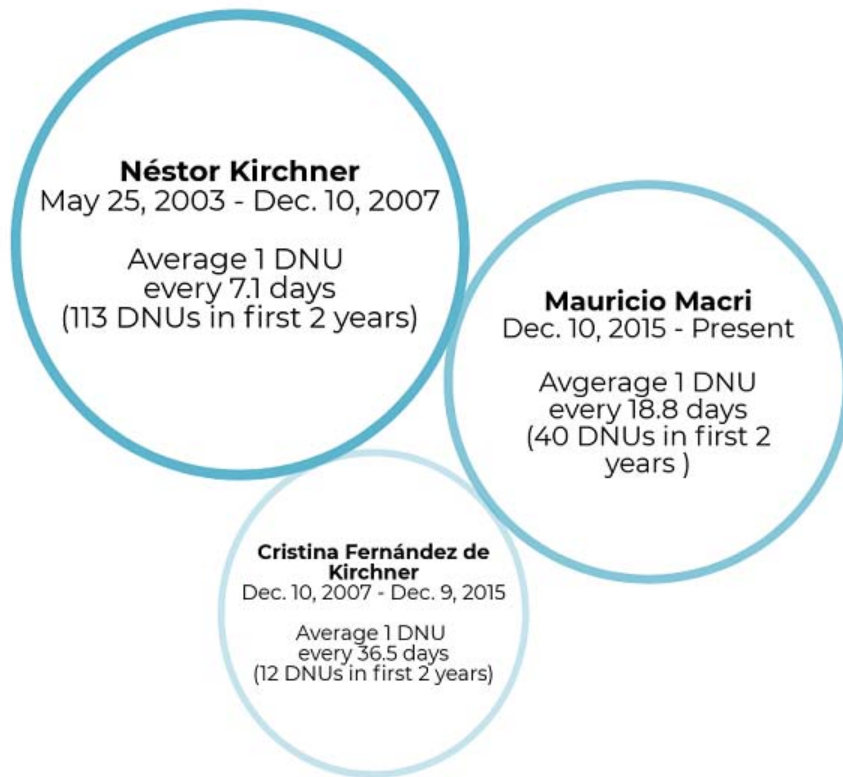
President Trump might be banking on this cultural connection with his pick for U.S. ambassador to Argentina: Judge Edward Prado, who has no diplomatic experience but is a Texan through and through, born and raised in San Antonio, with a Bachelor’s and law degree from the University of Texas, Austin.

Gender parity: Only a trickle trickling down



Argentina has been at the forefront of Latin American efforts to increase female representation in government. By law, women will make up *half* of political party candidate lists by 2019. Already, women have held some of the country's highest government positions, including the presidency, vice presidency and governorship of Buenos Aires Province. But a recent New York Times [op-ed](#), by Occidental College Assistant Professor Jennifer Piscopo, argues that gender parity laws, like the one Argentina [passed](#) last November to great fanfare, are not enough to bring about broader gender equality. Indeed, rising female participation in Argentine politics has not guaranteed gender equality in the country's workforce. While Argentina [ranks](#) high on indices of overall gender equality, the World Economic Forum ranks its gender pay gap as one of the worst in the world – *126th out of 135 countries*. (Argentina's gender pay gap is 24 percent, according to International Monetary Fund estimates.) Compounding the problem is Argentina's low rate of female participation in the formal economy; at [47 percent](#), Argentina's female participation rate is far below regional leaders like Peru (69 percent) and Uruguay (56 percent).

Argentine Presidential Decrees
Decretos de Necesidad y Urgencia
(DNUs)



Robed criticism: With friends like these



It is usually a source of pride when a country's citizens go on to leadership roles in international institutions, and Argentina is no different. Argentines still light up when discussing Pope Francis's local roots. They rooted for former Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra's candidacy for United Nations secretary general in 2016. The next year, the

government helped Argentine Manuel Otero campaign for director general of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture at the Organization of American States.

But now, in an unusual campaign against a prominent Argentine, the governing Cambiemos coalition is seeking to remove Judge Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, where he is one of seven judges elected by the OAS General Assembly. Judge Zaffaroni, a former member of the Argentine Supreme Court (2003 to 2014), was elected to a six-year term in 2015 before President Mauricio Macri's election. Though Judge Zaffaroni, 78, has had little opportunity to weigh in on Argentina from the bench, his extracurricular interest in his homeland has won him few friends in the new government. Recently, the judge provoked controversy by supporting Mr. Macri's early exit from the Casa Rosada, saying his departure "*lo antes posible*" would minimize the country's debt hangover.

Given Argentine history, critics say the judge's *golpista* musings should not be ignored. After all, no non-Peronist president in Argentina has completed his term in office since 1928. In a petition advocating the judge's removal, his critics said he had "*violado estas claras y mínimas obligaciones de ética judicial comprometiendo su autoridad moral e indirectamente la del tribunal.*"

Full House Argentina Caucus Expands

Co-Chairman
Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas)



Rep. Paul Cook (R-Calif.)



Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.)



Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.)



Rep. Albio Sires (D-N.J.)



Co-Chairman
Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.)



Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.)



Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.)



Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.)



Rep. Steve Womak (R-Ark.)



Ed Royce (R-Calif.), the House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman, has joined the newly established House Argentina Caucus. The Argentina Project, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, organized the caucus [launch](#) in January, when its co-chairs, Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas) and Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), announced the initiative alongside a delegation of four Argentine [lawmakers](#). At the launch, Mr. Engel spoke of the “untapped potential of the U.S.-Argentina relationship,” and Mr. McCaul emphasized the

“critical role Argentina plays in Latin America,” despite a topsy-turvy relationship with the United States that “has not always been sunshine and rainbows.” The caucus will not have long to enjoy Mr. Royce’s company; in January, he announced his planned retirement from Congress, where he has served since 1992. But the caucus now also includes Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), a ten-term congressman and the co-chairman of a separate House caucus focused on the Organization of American States.

CLALS: La lucha por el pasado



LA LUCHA POR EL PASADO

cómo construimos la memoria social

Argentine sociologist [Elizabeth Jelin](#) will be at American University on Monday, at the Center for Latin American & Latino Studies, to discuss her [latest book](#), “*La lucha por el pasado: Cómo construimos la memoria social*,” which looks at the role of human rights groups in the “*construcción de las memorias del pasado reciente*.”

Subscribe to the Weekly Asado
and read past issues

Listen to our podcast

Donate to the Argentina Project

Wilson Center
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027
T 202-691-4000



wilsoncenter.org/argentina

© Copyright 2018. Wilson Center.
All rights reserved.

Your email preferences are set to receive our updates.

unsubscribe.