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ARGENTINA IN FOCUS

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Washington Monument in Washington DC.

A TALE OF TWO OBELISKS

Jorge Argüello, Ambassador of Argentina
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“Who’s in charge here?” asked an officer from the Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, D.C., amongst hundreds of people.

On Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022, the inhabitants of this

wonderful city were surprised with a crowd surrounding the Washington Memorial, wearing light blue and white attire, pins and flags.

The policeman, reasonably, appeared visibly concerned and was determined to maintain order in what looked like an event full of uncertainty and potential risks, as the masses continued multiplying, jumping, and chanting in a language other than English.



Once again, I share with you the latest edition of our Embassy Newsletter. In this issue you will find my thoughts on the coincidences between our democracies, two months after the celebrations on the obelisks of Buenos Aires and Washington, following Argentina's triumph in the World Cup in Qatar, published in The Hill.

In this edition we also include an article on Minister of Health, Carla Vizzotti's participation in the fourth and last virtual of the COVID-19 Global Action Plan Ministerial Meeting.

Finally, an article about the working meeting with Republican Representative of Georgia Earl “Buddy” Carter, that was an excellent opportunity to exchange our points of view on the political and commercial ties between the two nations..

Jorge Argüello
 Ambassador to the United States

IT IS LIKELY THAT MANY CULTURAL TRAITS OF THE ARGENTINE AND U.S. PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT. HOWEVER, THE COINCIDENCES ARE ALSO INNUMERABLE, AND OF A FUNDAMENTAL NATURE.

"It's not a protest, it's a celebration!" some participants clarified.

An Argentine citizen who was partaking in the celebrations quickly realized that there was no better way to explain the occasion than through images. Using his cell phone, he decided to show what was happening, simultaneously, more than 5,200 miles away. Indeed, near another obelisk, emblematic of the city of Buenos Aires, millions of Argentines were celebrating their win of a new World Cup (the third won by our national team, this time in Qatar).

It's not always easy for me to describe Argentine idiosyncrasy to those in the United States. For example, how and why soccer is so passionately lived. That mere question, in fact, has been the subject of hundreds of essays by academics and intellectuals. On this occasion, however, I don't wish to dwell on that. Argentines surely could have suffered and celebrated with the same passion at home, with their families or friends (I do love the whole Super Bowl experience in the U.S.). The question that became clear to me here, during my second period in which I have the honor of leading the Embassy in Washington, D.C. (and my third undertaking a representation in the United States), is how we take to the streets.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the first march

of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. During the bloodiest dictatorship in Argentine history, where 30,000 people were made to disappear, and the dictatorship ruled through terror and repression, a group of mothers decided to go out publicly to demand for their disappeared children. As gatherings of three or more people were forbidden, including any demonstrations, they chose to walk without stopping around the monument in front of the Government House. They took to the streets—and their bravery became a symbol of the struggle for human rights around the world.

Like the United States, we have learned to process and revisit our history through film. Some of the horror of the dictatorship can be seen in extraordinary Argentine films such as, "La Historia Oficial" (Official Story, Oscar winner of 1986) and "Argentina, 1985" (Oscar nominee this year), which tells the story of how our country became the only example of such a large scale trial and conviction through civilian courts, by a democratic government, against a former dictatorship.

Some highlights of that time surely contributed to the reinforcement of the relationship between Argentines with the public space, as a form of vindication. As a result, on the date of the beginning of that dictatorship, every March 24, we commemorate the National Day of Memory for Truth and Justice. On that day, each year, hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets. On March 24, 2023, we will be able to celebrate yet another international symbol, the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo (who searched for every child appropriated during the dictatorship, mostly children of the disappeared who were born in captivity), have found two more grandchildren this year, bringing the total to 132.

It is likely that many cultural traits of the Argentine and U.S. people are different. However, the coincidences are also innumerable, and of a fundamental nature. Both countries were born out of their struggles for independence from the domination of European metropolises. They

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200 years of bilateral relations. As on multiple occasions throughout our history, and like the magical day of the World Cup final, during this year the obelisks of both capitals will connect once more. And you will find us, once again, on the same side. ■

presented a notion of a power from below confronting power from above; distributed rather than concentrated, and deliberative as opposed to authoritarian. Moreover, it was decided that power would fundamentally reside in the people, regardless of birthright, inheritance, or title in perpetuity.

The current situation within our countries and across the globe presents enormous challenges. What's in question is the capacity of the national democratic systems and their international coordination to respond to the unmet needs and legitimate demands of our societies. I am confident that we will face them together because we have similar values and increasingly convergent interests.

As mentioned before, we Argentines appropriate the public space in almost every relevant occasion. We take to the streets when we demand change from the government, but also when we celebrate or give thanks as a country. The Argentine people manifest and express themselves in this way, autonomously and spontaneously.

I would like to take the opportunity, after this long introduction, to answer the police officer who did his job impeccably that December 18 at the Obelisk in the District of Columbia: I'm sorry—when Argentines take to the streets, there are no leaders. In the streets, the space that belongs to everyone. There we meet. Where we are all equal.

This 2023, Argentina and the United States will celebrate

ARGENTINA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COVID-19 GLOBAL ACTION PLAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

On Wednesday, February 8, the Minister of Health of Argentina, Carla Vizzotti, participated in the fourth and last virtual of the COVID-19 Global Action Plan Ministerial Meeting.

This U.S. initiative, launched more than a year ago, together with countries and organizations on all continents, aimed to enhance international coordination to end the acute phase of the pandemic and strengthen preparedness against future pandemic threats.

The last virtual ministerial meeting was chaired by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, accompanied by four other foreign ministers who served as co-chairs: Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi; the Minister of

Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Abdul Momen; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Annalena Baerbock; and the director general of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The foreign ministers of the Republic of Korea, the European Union, Oman, South Africa, Colombia, Maldives, Italy, Belize, Jamaica, Costa Rica, and representatives of India, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Norway, Spain, Israel, Canada, United Kingdom, Morocco, New Zealand and Senegal.

In her speech, Minister Vizzotti welcomed this initiative that was able to convene countries focused on placing health and strengthening health systems at the top of the

Ambassador Jorge Argüello and Minister Carla Vizzotti.



IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY ARE THE TWO CENTRAL PILLARS THAT WILL ENABLE US TO FACE FUTURE CHALLENGES AND PREPARE FOR ANOTHER EVENTUAL HEALTH EMERGENCY.

political agenda, with a perspective of equity and human rights. And she stressed that, after three years with the pandemic, and despite the availability of vaccines and therapies, vaccination rates in many countries remain below the goals set by the World Health Organization (WHO), especially in complex humanitarian settings.

The Health Minister stressed that in the current scenario cooperation and solidarity are the two central pillars that will enable us to face future challenges and prepare for another eventual health emergency. In this regard, she highlighted that Argentina has supported all regional and global initiatives aimed at facilitating universal, equitable, free or affordable access to strategic inputs such as vaccines, medicines and other technologies, especially among low- and middle-income countries.

Vizzotti also highlighted that at the multilateral level, our country participated in initiatives such as the WHO Solidarity Clinical Trials, the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, the COVAX Mechanism and Costa Rica's Solidarity Call to Action, as well as other regional initiatives.

Likewise, she pointed out that Argentina redoubled its efforts to expand research and development, and the production of critical inputs with the aim of strengthening global supply chains, selected by the WHO as a hub

for the production of messenger RNA (mRNA)-based vaccines in Latin America, with the purpose of promoting timely access to critical inputs in the region.

At the end of the meeting, Secretary Blinken thanked everyone for their collaboration throughout the year and highlighted that the GAP had produced a very positive outcome. ■



Representative Earl "Buddy" Carter (Left) and Ambassador Jorge Argüello (Right).

WORKING MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVE EARL "BUDDY" CARTER

On February 7th, Ambassador Jorge Argüello held a working meeting with Republican Representative of Georgia Earl "Buddy" Carter, in his offices at the Rayburn Building next to the Capitol.

The meeting was an excellent opportunity for both to exchange their points of view on the political and commercial ties between the two nations.

Carter is an elected representative for the 1st Congressional District of Georgia, which is predominantly coastal and includes the commercially important deepwater ports of Savannah and Brunswick.

During the meeting, Ambassador Argüello explained to Representative Carter the status of the bilateral agenda

from our country's perspective and emphasized that the year 2023 has a special symbolic relevance, since it celebrates the bicentennial of diplomatic relations between Buenos Aires and Washington, a milestone in which both Congresses, as central actors in their countries' political life, will also be major players.

Likewise, the Ambassador and the Congressman stressed the important role played by the respective Legislative Branches in foreign policy matters, as their relations are a necessary complement to the contacts established between the administrations of Presidents Alberto Fernández and Joseph Biden. They also stated that this is illustrated by the activities undertaken by the parliamentary friendship groups in the Congresses of Argentina and the United States. They are considered fundamental tools to

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achieve a concrete rapprochement between legislators of both countries, and this synergy usually generates ideas that strengthen and expand our bilateral cooperation.

Based on Representative Carter's interest in trade issues, as a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, in which he is part of the Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Minerals, during their conversation Argentina's prominent role as a lithium supplier to the United States was highlighted, as our country is the main supplier of this product in the local market.

In this context, Ambassador Arguello and the Congressman discussed the prospects for lithium production, mainly in northwestern Argentina, and the opportunities to encourage US investment in this strategic sector. ■