

# Newsfront

## Latin Hillary Win Could Warm U.S.-Argentina Relations

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**By:** Joachim Bamrud

Cristina Fernandez's victory in Argentina's presidential elections Sunday could help improve the Latin American nation's rapport with the U.S., especially if another first lady, Hillary Clinton, becomes U.S. president, experts predict.

The thaw would mark a vast departure from the foreign policies of Cristina's husband, current president Nestor Kirchner, a vocal anti-American with close ties to Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

"She is more sophisticated, more polished, well-traveled and politically more savvy than her husband," says Jerry Haar, a professor of management and international business at Florida International University. "Moreover, if Hillary Clinton is elected, a "synergy of sisterhood" may result. If the vibes are good, bilateral disagreements can be managed well."

Fernandez, from the center-left FV party, won 45percent of the vote, nearly double that of her nearest rival. Although she has not formally distanced herself from her husband's policies, some pundits believe Fernandez will be a marked improvement over the Kirchner administration.

She will likely reach an agreement with Argentina's creditors, something her husband was unable to do, according to Robert Shapiro, co-chair of the American Task Force for Argentina (ATFA). Argentina defaulted on its debt in 2001.

Otto Reich, president of Otto Reich Associates in Washington and a key advisor to President George W. Bush, says resolving Argentina's debt issue remains key to improved ties with the U.S.

"The future state of bilateral relations is almost entirely up to the next president of Argentina," Reich says. "Many of us hope that the errors of the past few years will be avoided, such as the discourteous treatment of our president at [the 2005 Summit of the Americas]."

Although Kirchner was the host of the 2005 summit, he let Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez lead anti-American protests parallel to the event,

while deliberately undermining U.S. efforts to reach a consensus on free trade.

“We further hope that the discourse of Argentina’s leaders will be reflective of the modern world, and not one of antiquated and failed ideologies,” Reich says, referring to Kirchner’s frequent attacks on foreign multinationals and other “profit-seekers.”

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