

## **Argentina is the first step**

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Businessman Mauricio Macri, the right-wing mayor of Buenos Aires since 2007 who represented the opposition coalition's called "Cambiemos" ("Let's Change") in national elections, [won the second round of voting](#) yesterday and in so doing banished "Frente para la Victoria" (FPV) from the presidency. FPV, which translates as Front for Victory, is the political party founded by Nestor Kirchner and wife Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, who have collectively held power for the last twelve years. Mr. Macri's victory comes after nearly fifteen years of political and economic crises that has shaken the country.

Over the last four years, Argentina has been a leader of the ALBA (Latin American Bolivarian Alliance), a left-wing bloc in the region. During this time, populist policies reigned and economic growth has been stagnant, inflation has been high and a controlled exchange rate has led to a black market for the dollar. In his campaign, Mr. Macri promised to address these economic problems by moving the region's third largest economy towards a free-market system and changing Argentina's roll in the ALBA from one that protects regimes like Venezuela to one that seeks democratic reforms across the region to reorient the region towards the U.S. and Europe. He has also promised to suspend Argentina's controversial Memorandum of Understanding with Iran, which has been used to tie up the investigation of the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires and keep it from producing any real results.

With yesterday's triumph, Mr. Macri needs to focus not only in tidying up the economy, professionalizing and streamlining the state, eradicating drug trafficking and reducing crime rates; he also needs to reestablish Argentina's role in the world and bring it back to the democratic sphere. To this end, Mr. Macri has the opportunity to begin establishing a pro-Israel political bloc in Latin America with Paraguay and potentially Peru, depending on the outcome of its April 2016 elections. As far-fetched as this may sound, the value of a relationship with Israel has not escaped his Western-oriented worldview. The election results in Argentina could signal a shift in the geopolitics of Argentina and Latin America.