

# Pretext for Regime Change in Argentina? The Politicization of the AMIA Investigation

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*History has a strange way of replicating itself. Argentina has been going through a process similar to the post-1999 years, after Boris Yeltsin stepped down and Vladimir Putin took his place in the Kremlin as the president of the Russian Federation. While it has been struggling to throw off the foreign yoke, the Argentine federal government in Buenos Aires has been consolidating its economic and political power.*

Buenos Aires, however, has been opposed by a cross-section of the old regime and oligarchs collaborating with the United States. These forces have opposed major national projects, the re-nationalization of large companies, and the strengthening of the executive branch of government. In this regard, Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's showdowns with her opponents are similar to Vladimir Putin's showdowns with Russian oligarchs and politicians that wanted to subordinate Russia to Wall Street and Washington, as well as Western Europe's capitals and financial hubs.

All opportunities are being used to weaken the Argentine government. President Fernández de Kirchner has even publicly accused her domestic opponents and the US of collaborating for regime change. When DAESH or the ISIL threatened to kill her in 2014 she alluded to the threat as really being Washington that was the entity that wanted to kill her and the one pulling the strings behind DAESH's terrorist brigades in Syria and Iraq. [1]

## **The Death of Alberto Nisman**

The latest chapter of the Argentine government's struggle started in January 2015. On the same day the Israeli's killed Iranian Revolutionary Guard Brigadier-General Mohammed Allahdadi inside Syria, former special prosecutor Alberto Nisman was found dead with a gunshot wound to the side of his head in the bathroom of his locked apartment on January 18, 2015. [2] Nisman had been investigating the 1994 bombing of a building belonging to the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina; AMIA) for ten years after. In 2003, he was appointed the task by President Nestor Kirchner, the dead husband of Argentina's current president.

A few days earlier, he had made claims against Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman, who himself is Jewish. In the words of the *New York Times*, Nisman «had leveled serious accusations.» [3] He claimed «that Iranian officials had planned and financed the attack; that Hezbollah, Iran's ally in Lebanon, had carried it out; and that the president of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, and her top aides had conspired to cover up Iran's involvement as part of a deal to supply Iranian oil

to Argentina.» [4]

The Jewish journalist Damian Pachter, who fled Argentina after Nisman's death, has added fuel to the fire from inside Israel and even written a widely quoted, but unsupported, article for *Haaretz* that uses polemics against Argentina's government. Pachter's article makes Argentina appear like it is moving in the shadows of Nazi Germany or some fascist regime. Here are some of his comments:

- I have no idea when I'll be back in Argentina; I don't even know if I want to. What I do know is that the country where I was born is not the happy place my Jewish grandparents used to tell me stories about.
- Argentina has become a dark place led by a corrupt political system. I still haven't figured out everything that has happened to me over the past 48 hours. I never imagined my return to Israel would be like this. [5]

Before moving forward, it should be added that in the ten years of Alberto Nisman's investigation, he could not indict Iran or Hezbollah. Additionally, it has been revealed that Nisman consulted the US frequently about the AMIA case and that he was accused by Roland Noble, the former head of International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), of being a liar about a lot of the accusations he had made about the AMIA case. [6]

Alberto Nisman's death was reported as a suicide. The timing of Nisman's death, however, was very suspicious. He died merely a matter of hours before he was due to give a testimony to the Argentinean Congress. The Argentina government has said that his death was a murder aimed at hurting the government. [7] This claim is correct and has come into fruition as Alberto Nisman's death is being used for political ammunition demanding the removal of the Argentine government.

### **The Fifth Column in Argentina**

*The Guardian* published an article on January 27, 2015, which reported that Alberto Nisman's death «follows a protracted struggle» between the Argentinean government and Argentina's key «intelligence agency that has come to light after the suspicious death of Nisman, which the president blames on rogue spies who are trying to undermine her.» [8] Some key points to be noted from the report include the following:

- Government officials have pointed the finger of blame at spies whom they say were working with Nisman and feeding him wiretap information.
- Chief among them is Antonio Stiuso, who until last month was the general director of operations and eavesdropped on the president's political opponents. He was fired when Fernández discovered he was working with Nisman to build a case against her. He is believed to be in the US.
- In her televised address - which she made in a wheelchair after a recent accident - Fernández also criticised Diego Lagomarsino, who was charged on Monday with illegally lending a firearm to Nisman. [9]

What the above points allude to is that Argentine internal security and intelligence operatives have been working to topple their own government. Additionally, as mentioned above, Antonio Stiuso and Nisman were secretly working on establishing a case to remove

Kirchner from power.

A fifth column exists in Argentina. It should be noted that some of the individuals involved in this case are leftover elements from the period of the military dictatorship in Argentina that collaborated closely with the US. This could explain why Antonio Stiuso is believed to have fled to the US. Moreover, this is why the Argentine government has begun an investigation into the activities of several federal police agents that were monitoring Nisman and why it has decided to replace the Secretariate of Intelligence (SI; formerly the Secretariate of State Intelligence or SIDE) with a new federal intelligence agency. [10] «This led me to the decision to remove agents that had been there since before the coming of democracy», Kirchner commented herself. [11]

«We must start to work on a project to reform the Argentine intelligence system, in order to clear up a system that has not served national interests», President Kirchner has declared about the reforms. [12] Kirchner has revealed that the SI was working to undermine her government and to annul the deal that Argentina had made with Iran. The *Buenos Aires Herald* has written that President Kirchner has «asserted that from the moment the Memorandum of Understanding with Iran over the AMIA bombings in 1994 was signed, ‘you could see that the agreement was being bombarded from the [Secretariate of Intelligence].» [13]

### **AMIA is a Pretext and Argentina is a Front in a Global Multi-Spectrum War**

The AMIA case has been politicized on two fronts. One front is a domestic struggle and the other is in the realm of international relations. A group of Argentinean oligarchs are using the AMIA case to regain control over the country, while the US is using the AMIA case as another tool—like the vulture funds case against Argentina—to put pressure on the Argentine government and interfere in Argentina’s internal affairs.

Opinions are being galvanized inside Argentina as the lines are being hardened. Alberto Nisman’s death is being used by the Argentine government’s political opponents to demonize it. The opposition is even referring to Nisman as a martyr in a fight for democracy and liberty in a country run by an increasingly authoritarian regime.

The political jockeying in Argentina over the AMIA attack and its investigation reflects something much bigger. Iran is not the only target in the polarization of the AMIA case. Nor is the case really about seeking justice for the victims of the AMIA bombing. China, Russia, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and a series of different independent countries are also targets in what is really a global struggle between the US and a coalition of independent states that are resisting US influence.

The ultimate objectives of the US are to regain its lost influence in Argentina, to redirect Argentinean trade relations, and to control its foreign policy. This includes ending the measures Buenos Aires has started taking to regain control of the Malvinas (Falklands) from the British, which is situated in an energy-rich area in the South Atlantic.

In addition to a resource war that includes energy reserves, the multi-spectrum war being waged by the US against its rivals has been preparing for an agricultural assault that will result in destabilizing food prices and even creating starvation. Aside from its untapped oil and natural gas reserves, Argentina is a major agricultural power. Controlling Buenos Aires would be useful to the US.

## NOTES

- [1] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, «Eagles of Empire and economic terrorism: Are vulture funds instruments of US policy?» RT, October 24, 2014.
- [2] Almudena Calatrava, «Supporters doubt Argentine prosecutor killed self», Associated Press, January 20, 2015; Jonathan Watts, «Argentinian government moves to dissolve domestic intelligence agency», *Guardian*, January 27, 2015.
- [3-4] Isabel Kershner, «Journalist Who Reported on Argentine Prosecutor's Death Flees to Israel», *New York Times*, January 26, 2015.
- [5] Damian Pachter, «Why I fled Argentina after breaking the story of Alberto Nisman's death», *Haaretz*, January 25, 2015.
- [6] «Ex Interpol head Roland Noble: What prosecutor Nisman says is false», *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 18, 2015.
- [7-10] Jonathan Watts, «Argentinian governments moves», *op. cit.*
- [11-13] «CFK announces plan to dissolve SI intelligence service», *Buenos Aires Herald*, January 26, 2015.

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