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Argentine President Met Edward Snowden in Moscow

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Protesters supporting Edward Snowden, a contractor at the National Security Agency (NSA), hold a photo of Snowden during a demonstration.

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez held talks with U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden during a visit to Russia in April, Anthony Romero, director of the American Civil Liberties Union and one of Snowden's lawyers said on Thursday.

The two hour-long meeting took place after an Argentine TV channel, citing intelligence documents provided by Snowden, revealed Britain spied on Argentine military and political leaders from 2006 to 2011 to safeguard the security of the disputed Falkland Islands.

"She met with him toward the end of April," Romero told reporters in the Argentine capital Buenos Aires.

A spokesman for Anibal Fernandez, Argentina's cabinet chief, said he had no information about the meeting and referred Reuters to the president's spokesman, who was not available

for comment. Calls to a spokesman at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs went unanswered.

Fernandez traveled to Russia to deepen bilateral trade ties, signing energy cooperation documents, part of a drive by Moscow to strengthen ties with South America.

Romero said Snowden had informed him directly of the encounter, adding it was the ex U.S. spy agency contractor's first face-to-face talks with a head of state since he fled to Russia in 2013 after leaking details of the U.S. government's mass surveillance programs.

"They spoke about the National Security Agency's (NSA) electronic surveillance, its ramifications for world leaders and impact on the citizens of foreign countries," Romero said.

Romero, whose organization lobbies for civil liberties ranging from religious freedoms to immigrant rights and also provides legal counsel, said it was important world leaders supported Snowden.

The United States wants Snowden to stand trial and news of Fernandez's secret meeting is unlikely to help improve the already-chilly relations between Washington and Buenos Aires.

"My government considers him a criminal, which he isn't," said Romero, a U.S. citizen. "(The meeting) demonstrates the bravery, courage and independence of President Fernandez."

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