

Soccer Icon Diego Maradona Says Argentina 'On Its Knees' Thanks to Macri



Buenos Aires, June 27 (RHC)-- Legendary soccer star Diego Maradona criticized Argentinean President Mauricio Macri in an interview on the local Canal 5 Noticias, saying the South American country is "on its knees" in the face of neoliberal economic policies and censorship of the press just half a year into the new conservative government's mandate.

Maradona commented in a conversation with C5N's Victor Hugo Morales -- who narrated the soccer star's legendary goal against England in 1986 -- that Argentina finds itself in a situation "where everyone wants to go shopping but they can't."

Maradona also criticized Macri's move to gut the state's commitment to a free press, citing the president's decision to axe teleSUR from the air. The soccer star said: "Getting rid of teleSUR is a shame."

Last month, the country's inflation hit the highest rate seen since 2002 in the aftermath of the historic debt default that epitomized the South American country's economic crisis.

When Morales asked what the soccer hero thought about Macri's neoliberal economic policy and whether he sees potential for the situation to get better, Maradona argued that it's not likely. "I don't think anything can change," he said, mocking the fact that Macri had to "suspend his agenda" this week after injuring his knee playing a game of paddle as an example of the government's likely inability to get the country back on track.

The sports legend added that months after the election that brought Macri to power with a victory over progressive candidate Daniel Scioli, it seems the president has few supporters among those he meets. "I ask: 'Man, who did you vote for?' and they tell me Scioli," he said. "Today, nobody voted for Macri."

The comments come as part of an interview commemorating the 30th-anniversary of Maradona's historic winning goal for Argentina against England in the 1986 World Cup quarterfinal. The win, and the goal, led the South American country to win the championship that year and remains iconic decades later.

The Argentina versus England match was a kind of proxy rivalry between the two nations just years after they had gone to war over the Malvinas Islands in a territorial dispute that remains unsettled to this day after the British won the brief but bloody war.

Maradona's winning goal was a symbolic form of revenge for Argentina against colonial British power.

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