

The Andes-Atlantic Corridor and the US neocolonial offensive in Argentina

Pedro Dias

20 October 2026

On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in late September, the United States and Argentina announced a sweeping strategic cooperation agreement, dubbed the Andes-Atlantic Corridor. The initiative was presented by Argentine Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno and US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau.

The Argentine Foreign Ministry describes the character and aims of the agreement as follows:

[It is a] joint initiative to strengthen and modernize the infrastructure that connects Argentina's vital economic sectors to the main Atlantic ports and to the markets of the West. With this new economic corridor, Argentina and the United States take another step in line with their commitment to the security, protection and prosperity of the Western Hemisphere and its essential supply chains.

In the anodyne language of diplomacy, what the document describes is the subjugation of Argentina's mineral resources to US imperialism.

The initiative aims to expand the export of American capital to Argentina—through “tied” loans intended to remake the country's infrastructure—in exchange for guaranteed control over critical minerals and over the oil and gas of Vaca Muerta, which are crucial to the imperialist war machine.

To this end, the same document states:

Exports of minerals, oil and gas will increase through US and US-backed investment in railways, waterways, ports, pipelines and power generation and transmission infrastructure, built on trusted technology designed to ensure optimal efficiency and maximum cybersecurity.

“Trusted technology” is the label Washington has used since 2018-2019 to shut Huawei and other Chinese firms out of the networks of the US and its allies.

The significance of the Andes-Atlantic Corridor can only be

understood in light of US imperialism's historic decline. Far from fostering a harmonious new “multipolar” order, this crisis is driving Washington to try to restore its lost hegemony through escalating violence, whether in the military, economic or political sphere.

In this process, imperialism seeks to reduce Latin America to the status of a neo-colony and finds active assistance in the government of fascistic President Javier Milei. The most immediate objective of the agreement with Buenos Aires is to break China's current monopoly on the refining of so-called critical minerals, a stage of the global production chain more than 90 percent dominated by Beijing.

Argentina is one of the key territories in this struggle. Together with Chile and Bolivia, it forms Latin America's so-called “lithium triangle,” which holds more than half of the known reserves of this metal, essential for the production of electric vehicles, phones and electronic devices vital to the modern arms industry.

The historic loss of South American markets to China and the European powers over recent decades poses a serious threat to US imperialism and to the supply chains of its war industry. It is precisely this vulnerability that the Andes-Atlantic Corridor seeks to eliminate.

The Andes-Atlantic Corridor is not an isolated project. It is part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), created by the G7 with the declared aim of confronting China's New Silk Road. Under this umbrella, Washington and its allies have been promoting a series of “economic corridors”: the India–Middle East–Europe corridor, the Trans-Caspian route through Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Lobito corridor in Africa and the Luzon corridor in the Philippines. The Andes-Atlantic Corridor is the Latin American piece on this chessboard.

“A fat concession, or an order for guns”

The Export-Import Bank of the United States (Exim Bank) serves as the central instrument of this operation. On the same

occasion as the announcement of the corridor, Exim signed the “Build the Future” agreement with the Milei government. The agreement provides for up to \$7 billion in financing through 2027 for critical minerals, energy, digital infrastructure and space technologies. In parallel, the bank presented a proposal of up to \$6 billion, still subject to approval by its board, for the Argentina LNG liquefied natural gas project, led by the state-owned YPF in Vaca Muerta.

The export credit issued by Exim Bank is “tied”: it finances the purchase of US goods and services, so that the billions flow back to American companies. Exim’s own press release speaks of “the deployment of US equipment, technologies, mining expertise, and related infrastructure” in Argentine projects. The resulting debt is to be paid with the export of the same minerals and hydrocarbons that the credit helped extract and that the corridor will carry to the Atlantic ports.

This mechanism of imperialist subjugation was analyzed more than a century ago by Lenin in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Citing the German journal *Die Bank*, he recorded:

A number of states, from Spain to the Balkan states, from Russia to Argentina, Brazil and China, are openly or covertly coming into the big money market with demands, sometimes very persistent, for loans. [...] In these international transactions the creditor nearly always manages to secure some extra benefit: a favorable clause in a commercial treaty, a coaling station, a contract to construct a harbor, a fat concession, or an order for guns.

Further on, Lenin observes:

The most usual thing is to stipulate that part of the loan granted shall be spent on purchases in the creditor country, particularly on orders for war materials, or for ships, etc. (...) The export of capital thus becomes a means of encouraging the export of commodities.

The guns are no figure of speech. Argentina’s economic integration into American supply chains is advancing hand in hand with its military integration. In 2024, the Milei government announced, together with US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), the construction of an “integrated” naval base in Ushuaia, on the shores of the Beagle Channel. The channel is one of the passages between the Atlantic and the Pacific and a gateway to Antarctica.

The terms of this partnership were on display this week. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau and Assistant

Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Juan Pablo Segura arrived in Buenos Aires, after a stop in Asunción, to meet Milei, Quirno and business leaders to “build on the momentum” of the corridor’s launch and to prepare a visit by Vice President JD Vance in November.

They arrive in the middle of a pressure campaign against Milei’s own National Sovereignty Defense Law, sent to Congress on September 17 with great fanfare to punish companies involved in the Sea Lion offshore oil project in the waters around the Malvinas. Because the bill extends fines and bans on operating in Argentina to suppliers, partners, shareholders and financial intermediaries, US companies have taken their objections to the Chamber of Deputies. US officials, speaking anonymously to *Clarín*, said they want the bill frozen or rewritten to immunize American firms.

It would be a mistake, however, to treat this subjugation as the work of Milei and Trump alone. It expresses the cowardice and prostration of the Argentine national bourgeoisie as a whole before imperialism. The Peronist government of Alberto Fernández also received General Laura Richardson, then head of SOUTHCOM, and strengthened ties with Washington and with US and Canadian financial and extractive conglomerates. The same Peronists who today denounce Milei as a “traitor to the homeland” prepared the ground for him. It was the bankruptcy of Peronism, as well as that of the Boric government in Chile and of the MAS in Bolivia, that opened the way for the rise of far-right regimes in league with US imperialism in all three countries of the lithium triangle.

The Argentine working class has no interest whatsoever in seeing its country’s mineral resources feed the war machine of imperialism. Workers have the unquestionable right to expropriate these resources, today controlled by a parasitic and criminal capitalist caste, and to place them at the service of social needs, under the control of the workers themselves.

The only force capable of defeating imperialism is the international working class. The government in Washington, which seeks to turn Latin America into a neo-colony and a battlefield in its war against China, is the same one that is waging a war at home against democratic rights and the living conditions of workers in the United States. Latin American workers can win this struggle only by establishing their political independence from every faction of the bourgeoisie and uniting with workers in the US, China and throughout the world on the basis of the program of international socialist revolution.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact