

Pentagon to begin producing weapons for Ukraine in Argentina

Rafael Azul
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As early as next month, the Pentagon is expected to take over several arms factories in Argentina to produce artillery, munitions and other weapons for the US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia, according to several Argentine media reports.

Pentagon officials have repeatedly warned that scaling up munition production remains a top challenge to US plans to escalate the war against Russia, as well as for war preparations in the Middle East and against China. Last December, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said the US was planning to “quadruple” artillery shell production, explaining at a military forum: “Ukraine’s high burn rate for artillery has hammered home the need to invest even more in munitions.”

Last month, a delegation from the US Defense Department traveled to the industrial city of Rio Tercero, to visit one of the five factories of the state-owned arms manufacturer Fabricaciones Militares (FM).

Currently, the fascist administration of President Javier Milei is in the process of turning numerous enterprises like FM into private corporations and selling them.

Becoming a NATO supplier is the latest step in the Milei administration’s campaign to make Argentina a NATO “global partner,” even as the US-led alliance moves closer to all-out world war that threatens the future of humanity.

Washington had so far unsuccessfully pressed governments in the region to arm Ukraine, but now Buenos Aires is negotiating the shipment of five Super Etendard fighters through France and the direct production of weapons for the US-NATO war.

In June, Argentina joined the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, a US-led alliance dedicated to

funneling arms and munitions into the war in Ukraine, while Milei has raised the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine. In addition to supporting NATO against Russia, Milei has also strongly supported Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

Milei justifies the new military relationship as the renewal of an alliance to defend “occidental civilization” and “western values.” These ties threaten to use Argentina’s military to open a new front against Latin American governments that don’t submit fully to US diktats. Milei is already using bellicose rhetoric to threaten the governments in Bolivia, Venezuela, Mexico and Chile, which he deems socialist and communist.

In the midst of brutal austerity policies against workers and retirees, the Milei administration has set out to increase the military budget.

The main concern of Washington is the explosive popular opposition to integrating Argentina into the growing global war. Accordingly, the Biden administration has demanded that Milei work with the union bureaucracy to suppress the class struggle.

Shortly before the US military delegation’s visit to Argentina’s military factories, the Biden administration’s Labor Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs hosted separate meetings with the foreign relations chief of the General Labor Confederation (CGT), Gerardo Martinez, and Milei’s Labor Secretary, Julio Cordero. These meetings delivered the same marching orders to, “promote social dialogue and recognize labor representatives,” according to *La Nación*. US officials have met several times with the Argentine unions this year.

FM workers belong to the Public Employees Union (ATE). While it usually strikes a more populist and nationalist pose than the CGT, the ATE has made clear

that it is open to privatization, as long as the price is right. “We are not going to give the company away,” declared an ATE leader. The rest of the union bureaucracy has remained equally passive.

The developing military alliance of Washington with Milei and the buildup of the armed forces are bound up with the preparation of police state measures against the working class and a dictatorship in Argentina.

Last Friday, Milei handed out swords to newly promoted military officials and promised them salary increases in 2025. He also promised to recognize the “historic debt” that Argentina allegedly owes its armed forces since the war for independence and the consolidation of Argentina as a nation-state.

Milei seeks to rehabilitate the legacy of military dictatorships that were a feature of Argentine society throughout the 20th century—initially on behalf of British imperialism and, after World War II, as an agency of US imperialism.

Milei’s defense of the murderous 1976-83 Videla dictatorship is well known. That dictatorship, responsible for the disappearance and murder of over 30,000 leftist workers and students, was also an important component of Operation Condor, which was organized and financed by the United States and involved the participation of every South American government (with the possible exception of Venezuela and Suriname). Tens of thousands of militants, union activists, journalists and socialists were kidnapped by secret squads in this operation, hundreds were transferred to clandestine prisons in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile.



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