

On Nov. 17, Menem will speak before a large Peronist gathering in Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo, in an effort to reassert his leadership of the Peronist movement and appeal for unity behind his government's program. Prior to that event, Menem will meet with labor leaders from both the Ubaldinista and Menemista factions for further discussion. On Nov. 15, he also met privately with Ubaldini, at the latter's request.

Consensus for what?

Some analysts speculate that the Peronist President's appeal to the Peronist party leadership, attempts to unify the labor movement, and even opening channels of dialogue to Alfonsín and his Radical Civic Union (UCR) represent an attempt to broaden the political and social consensus for his government's structural reforms.

It will take more than conciliatory speeches to resolve the conflicts in Argentine society, however. A demonstration by 2,000 workers in Córdoba in early October, over plans to privatize their state-run company, offers a hint of what kind of social protest might be expected on a broader scale if economic conditions fail to improve.

It remains to be seen how Menem will deal with a brewing military crisis, in which the fate of the popular and respected Colonel Seineldín is a key issue. Following his announced retirement, the colonel reportedly addressed a letter to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Isidro Cáceres challenging him not to violate the terms of Menem's pardon by arbitrarily imposing administrative sanctions on those officers who benefited from it.

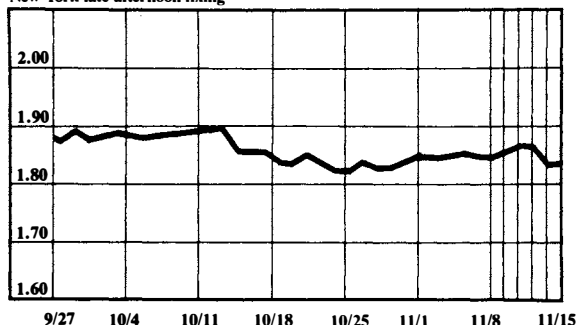
Reports have circulated that, despite the high command's decision, Menem might name Seineldín to head up an elite commando force to combat subversion and drug trafficking. As reported in the Nov. 16 *Cronista Comercial*, Justice Undersecretary César Arias announced that a decision on the group's formation would be announced within the following 10 days, adding that Seineldín's nomination had not been ruled out. The Nov. 8 edition of *Somos* magazine indicated, however, that the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires is pressuring the government not to name "that colonel" to any such post. The Army high command is similarly opposed, as is Defense Minister Italo Luder and Interior Minister Bauzá, according to this report.

On Nov. 11, speculation heightened when Colonel Seineldín and a group of 500 officers, many of them nationalists recently forced out of the military, participated in a high-profile two-hour jogging and exercise session in Buenos Aires' Palermo Park. Journalists present received no response to their questions on whether this group might form the core of the rumored "special forces" contemplated by Menem. The President has characterized the session as a "provocation" to the Army high command, although reportedly the same officers intend to congregate regularly each Saturday morning.

Currency Rates

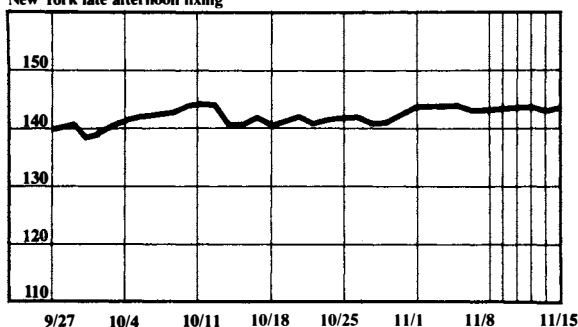
The dollar in deutschmarks

New York late afternoon fixing



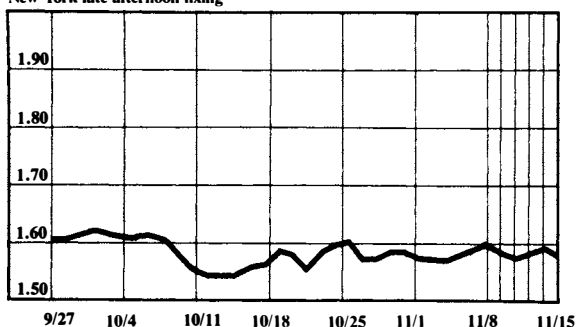
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

