

came before borders.”

In additional comments reported in *La Nación* Jan. 15, after the protocols were signed, Meilán insisted that Chilean and Argentine miners working at these projects will not require special immigration status or paperwork. He further elaborated that the treaty removes all previously existing restrictions on individuals from either country wishing to invest in the other country’s border region. Foreign companies, Meilán said, “will be treated on either side of the Andes as if they were national firms.”

A Chilean ally?

As the map shows, there are eight mining regions along the 5,300 kilometer Chile-Argentine border identified as being of “common interest” to both nations. Many of the 46 foreign mining companies from British Commonwealth countries which operate in Argentina, are involved in the border region.

To facilitate their operations, Argentina has already begun shutting down its military installations along the border, located there originally to defend the nation’s sovereignty. Chile, which has historically served British geopolitical interests in the region and, coincidentally, has bought up many of Argentina’s privatized companies, especially in the strategically important energy sector, will now be Argentina’s “friend.” The presence of Chilean billionaire Adronico Luksic Avaroa on Barrick’s International Advisory Board is of interest here. The Luksic Group has bought up banking, agricultural, and industrial entities throughout Ibero-America. One of its most recent projects was to set up a continent-wide banking consortium together with Dope, Inc.’s Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and Spain’s Banco Central Hispanoamericano.

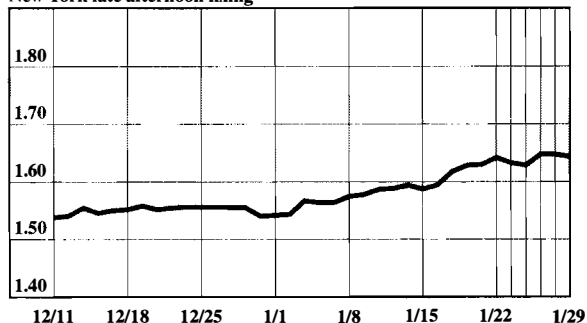
Given Chile’s role as a stalking horse for the British, and the history of relations between the two countries, few Argentines swallow the Chilean “friendship” line. A columnist for the La Plata daily *Hoy* charged last December that Chile’s involvement in these deals had more to do with the fact that its own mineral resources were exhausted, and that the richest and closest veins “are in Argentine territory.”

President Menem is nonetheless frenetically organizing to cement this alliance via passage of the controversial Continental Glaciers Treaty, which will presumably resolve a territorial dispute with Chile on the border of the Patagonian province of Neuquén. Menem claims the treaty is necessary to assure foreign investors that there is no possibility of a military conflict between the two. The treaty is viable, he adds, because the two nations are now “democracies,” and those who oppose it want to return to the days of “arms races” and militarism. Reportedly, \$2.5 billion in foreign mining investment is contingent on the treaty’s approval. According to a former Argentine ambassador to Chile, beginning in Neuquén and going north, “there are immense mineral reserves, especially gold.”

Currency Rates

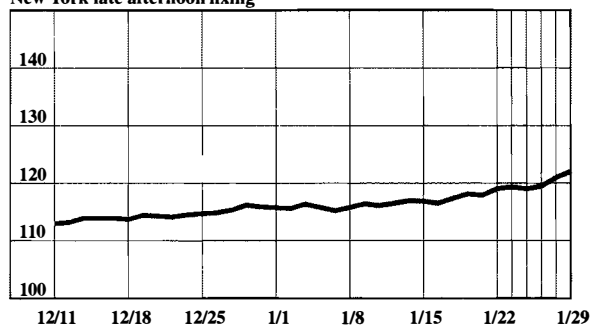
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



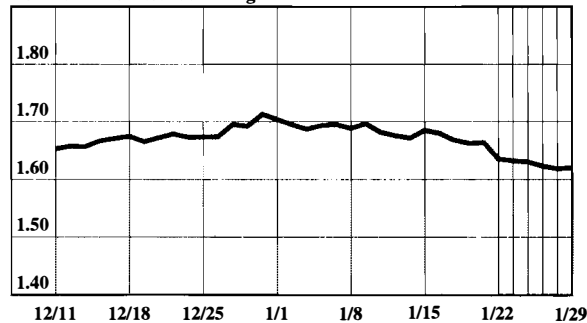
The dollar in yen

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

