Disclaimer: The VRIC Monitor does source a limited amount of media reports from state-owned or -controlled media outlets from VRIC nations. These media reports are carefully selected and solely intended to report on cultural, diplomatic, economic, or military activities that are not reported on by other media and relevant for understanding VRIC influence in the region. Given the inevitability that state propaganda will be mixed into these articles, we ensure that reporting from state-media outlets is no more than 20 percent of the overall VRIC Monitor and exclude any opinion pieces or anti-US (anti-West) declarations of any kind.

OVERVIEW

As the COVID-19 pandemic took center stage, the Venezuela conflict, and its long stalemate, was left on the back burner. That is, until early May, when a group of Venezuelan military defectors and two former American Green Berets were apprehended by the Maduro regime as they attempted to insert into one of the country's most crowded ports just north of Caracas. Maduro is using this botched raid as an opportunity to accuse the United States and Juan Guaidó of conspiring against him, while distracting from troubling reports of regular flights from Iran to the northernmost point in Venezuela, the Paraguana Peninsula. In April, the Islamic Republic became an increasingly visible player in Venezuela adding to Cuba, China, and Russia's external support to the Maduro regime. Appointing Tareck El Aissami to take charge of Venezuela's largest commodity, its oil sector, illustrates the Maduro regime's increasing infrastructure management from the Middle East. This infrastructure, often in the shadows, rose to the forefront when the Quds Force's dedicated airline, Mahan Air, began regular flights to Venezuela on April 22nd, the same day Iran launched its first satellite into space.

In the face of intense U.S. economic pressure, the VRIC seems to be shifting from a sanctions-evasion to a sanctions-resistance strategy, leveraging its weight in the United Nations Security Council. While Russia proposes "green zones" for sanctions-free transport routes, China unveils its long awaited digital currency in four cities. Meanwhile, Iran becomes the latest VRIC member to receive gold from Venezuela's cash strapped Central Bank.

Venezuela is far from the only country in the region with VRIC presence. Its ally Cuba continues to team with China in a worldwide effort to regain legitimacy through medical diplomacy. Many nations, however, are starting to renounce this support as China's medical supplies and test kits prove faulty and Cuban doctors are expensive. This medical diplomacy is coupled with a robust disinformation campaign by the VRIC that falsely accuses the U.S.

of manipulating the coronavirus as a bioweapon, while positioning China as the solution to COVID-19. This propaganda has become increasingly active in Spanish, Portuguese, and other native languages in Latin America.

Tensions between the VRIC and the U.S. are heating up elsewhere in the world. Iran continues to attack U.S. military forces in the Middle East, China increases its aggression in the South China Sea, and the U.S. recently sent Naval ships to the Arctic to counter Russian and Chinese presence. Closer to home, President Donald Trump activated members of the Select Reserve to augment the U.S. Navy's counter-narcotics operation in the Caribbean. A mission that could quickly become a military deterrent if the VRIC continues to escalate in Central and South America.

MUST READS

- Combatting China, Cuba and Venezuela's COVID-19 Propaganda War in Latin America by Joseph Humire, *Gatestone Institute*
- The Role of Iran's Psychologic and Information Warfare in Pandemic Times: "Fake News" by Magdalena Defort, *Rogue Review*
- China to the rescue: 'Mask diplomacy' aims to win allies in Latin America by Frederic Puglie, *Washington Times*
- Russia paid a heavy price to end the oil price war by Evgenia Pismeninaya, Ilya Arkhipov, and Henry Meyer, *World Oil*
- HispanTV: Iran's Attempts To Influence The Spanish Speaking World by Tereza Dvorakova, *Radio Farda*
- Iran Is Airlifting Supplies to Venezuela. The Trump Administration Should Move to Block It by Emanuele Ottolenghi, *The Dispatch*
- Venezuela dictator Nicolás Maduro pays Iran in gold to help prolong his hold on power by Ilan Berman, *Washington Times*
- Colombia in the sights of Hezbollah with the support of Venezuela by *Semana Magazine* in Colombia (content in Spanish)
- Iran's lucrative crime-terrorism nexus with Venezuela continues amid coronavirus by Jose Pelayo, *Al Arabiya*
- Publication of a Fact Sheet on the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance and Trade to Combat COVID-19 press release by the U.S. Department of Treasury

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ON VENEZUELA

- STATEMENT from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo denouncing Iranian airline overflights to Venezuela on April 30, 2020

- HUDSON INSTITUTE held a virtual event titled “The Future of Venezuela: A Conversation with Special Representative Elliott Abrams” on April 30, 2020
- PRESS RELEASE: Commerce Tightens Restrictions on Technology Exports to Combat Chinese, Russian and Venezuelan Military Circumvention Efforts from the U.S. Department of Commerce, April 27, 2020
- PRESS BRIEFING: with Admiral Craig Faller, Commander, U.S. Southern Command on April 17, 2020
- HERITAGE FOUNDATION held a virtual event with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cuba and Venezuela, Carrie Filipetti, called “Examining the Trump Administration’s Recent Actions on Venezuela” on April 15, 2020
- CSIS TRANSCRIPT of a virtual event with the U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela Elliott Abrams by the Center for Strategic and International Studies on April 8, 2020



The morning of May 3rd, the so-called “Operation Gedeón” brought three boats and dozens of exiled Venezuelan military defectors, and two former Green Berets, to the port of La Guaira, only a few miles north of Caracas. According to the former U.S. Special Forces Soldier, Jordan Goudreau, who has claimed responsibility for the raid, the operation is ongoing and is aimed at sparking an internal military uprising against the Maduro regime. Meanwhile, Nicolás Maduro is using the botched raid as an opportunity to blame the United States, while preparing to take the case of “Operation Gedeón” to the International Criminal Court in the Hague. This state of affairs has taken attention from more than a dozen flights to Venezuela from Mahan Air, the dedicated airline of Iran’s feared clerical army, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which continues to fly to the Paraguana Peninsula and return to Tehran with more than a billion dollars in gold bars. The appointment of Iran’s man in Caracas, Tareck El Aissami, as Minister of Petroleum signals Iran and Syria’s non-aligned strategy in Venezuela, as other flights have also arrived from Libya and Algeria.

As the U.S. 'Max Pressure' strategy increased in March, Nicolás Maduro turned, once again, to his extra-regional allies. Holding high-level calls in April with Hassan Rouhani of Iran and Vladimir Putin of Russia, the Maduro regime uses the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext for a victimization and sanctions resistance strategy. With increased calls for the U.S. to remove sanctions on Iran and Venezuela, Russia pushed for a UN Security Council measure to implement "green zones" that establish "sanctions-free" transport routes.

Whether it's the virus or the botched mercenary mission in Venezuela, the Bolivarian Network has amplified its propaganda in Latin America. Recently, Bolivia's Evo Morales declared that "China won World War 3 without firing a shot" in a recent interview in Argentina, referring to the coronavirus pandemic. Directing efforts from Argentina, Morales is also stroking tension inside Bolivia by proclaiming elections must be held in 90 days, complemented by a legislative proposal by the MAS political party that controls two thirds of the Bolivian Congress. This puts President Jeanine Añez in a precarious position- balancing the pressure to hold elections in Bolivia at a time when the country is still in quarantine because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The video begins with Jordan Goudreau posing confidently, flanked by a man wearing an armour plate and a Venezuela flag wrapped around his shoulder. Goudreau begins to speak with the terseness of a battle-hardened warrior as he confirms that an amphibious operation into Venezuela is underway. – Bellingcat on 05-MAY
- Nicolás Maduro said authorities arrested two U.S. citizens among a group of "mercenaries," a day after a beach raid purportedly aimed at capturing the leader that authorities say they foiled. – AP News on 05-MAY
- Nicolás Maduro said his regime captured two American "mercenaries" in a murky operation allegedly intended to infiltrate Venezuela, incite rebellion, and apprehend its leaders, adding a fresh complication to escalating tensions between Washington and Caracas. Maduro said the plan was to kill him. – Washington Post on 04-MAY
- A former Green Beret has taken responsibility for what he claimed was a failed attack May 3rd aimed at overthrowing Nicolás Maduro and that his regime said ended with eight dead. – AP News on 03-MAY
- Alarms went off and criticism was immediate when María Iris Varela Rangel released 382 prisoners from the Tocuyito Penitentiary Center in Carabobo state last week. – Infobae on 30-APR (content in Spanish)
- Venezuela is asking the Bank of England to sell part of the South American nation's gold reserves held in its coffers and send the proceeds to the United Nations to help with the country's coronavirus-fighting efforts. – WTVB on 29-APR
- Nicolás Maduro named a powerful ally declared by the U.S. as a drug kingpin and the

cousin of the late socialist leader Hugo Chávez to revamp Venezuela's oil industry amid massive gasoline shortages. – Fox News on 28-APR
- The Trump administration has ordered Chevron Corp. to "wind down" operations in Venezuela by December 1st. Chevron is the last major U.S. oil company to do business in the crisis-wracked country, investing an estimated value of $2.6 billion, which analysts say Maduro will likely take over. – Fox Business on 22-APR
- Venezuelan migrants leave Ecuador as coronavirus hits the economy. – Reuters on 21-APR
- India Martínez, niece of Emilio "Chichi" Martínez, the alleged narco of the state Falcón, revealed details about the operation carried out by officials of the National Drug Enforcement Office before the Paraguaná cartel. – El Nacional on 23-APR (content in Spanish)
- Venezuela is illegally mining and trading in gold, and Switzerland could be one of its clients, according to Swiss media reports. – Swissinfo.ch on 20-APR
- IRC warns Venezuela's fuel shortages and quarantine measures risk dire hunger and insecurity across the country. – International Rescue Committee on 20-APR
- Brazil airlifted its diplomatic staff from Venezuela following tense negotiations with Maduro, who had initially denied authorization for a Brazilian air force plane to land in Caracas. – Yahoo News on 17-APR
- Shocking videos of large crowds congregating in Carabobo, Venezuela to purchase limited supplies of gasoline surfaced on social media. Nicolás Maduro has imposed a mandatory national quarantine, but few Venezuelans are following it. – Breitbart on 15-APR

THE BOLIVARIAN NETWORK

- The United States government is prepared to step up pressure on the administration of Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega and applauds sanctions announced a day earlier by the European Union against six government officials. – AP News on 05-MAY
- An audio recording circulating revealed MAS plans to generate chaos in the country after the prolongation of quarantine. – EjuTV on 01-MAY (content in Spanish)
- Bolivian President Jeanine Añez denounced MAS's call for elections and the shortening deadlines despite the coronavirus pandemic, remarking it is a very serious attack on the health of Bolivians. – EjuTV on 01-MAY (content in Spanish)
- In Chile, Carabineros anniversary day was met with clashes with the police and attacks on police stations. Two noncommissioned officers were discharged for shooting at protesters while under the influence of alcohol. – La Tercera on 28-APR (content in Spanish)

- Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele ordered a 24-hour lockdown of prisons containing gang members and said their leaders would be sent into solitary confinement after a sudden spike in homicides during the day. – The Guardian on 25-APR
- Bolivian science and technology ambassador, Mohammed Mostajo-Radji, reported the national pandemic strategy calls for the implementation of at least one laboratory in each department. However, in the Beni department, three laboratories were set up, in order to decentralize the analysis of tests. – Bolivian Ministry of Communication Press Release on 23-APR (content in Spanish)
- Statement by the High Representative/Vice President of the EU on the situation on human rights and democracy in Nicaragua. – European External Action Service on 23-APR
- On April 16, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, for the third time in 10 days, publicly dismissed Supreme Court rulings to respect fundamental rights while enforcing quarantine regulations, according to the Human Rights Watch. – Relief Web on 17-APR
- Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega re-appeared after 34 days in which he was not seen in public. – Daily Mail on 15-APR
- Evo Morales, who served as president of Bolivia for nearly 14 years before resigning in November, called the Chinese coronavirus pandemic a “biological war” and implied the United States had unleashed the pathogen to kill seniors and other “burdens” on society. – Breitbart on 14-APR

CUBA’S MEDICAL DIPLOMACY

- Infographic map on Cuba’s medical diplomacy throughout the world. – Cuba’s Health Ministry on Twitter on 05-MAY
- State media reports on Sunday, April 19, a group of 20 medical collaborators, including six physicians, 10 bachelors in nursing, and four experts, arrived in Honduras to help the country fight the pandemic. – Prensa Latina on 20-APR
- State media reports Cuba has sent medical staff to Qatar amid the coronavirus pandemic. – Andalou Agency on 16-APR
- Despite U.S. warnings, Cuba’s medical diplomacy triumphs in the Caribbean during pandemic. – The Miami Herald on 15-APR



Iran has stepped out of the shadows to publicly demonstrate its commitment to the Maduro regime in Venezuela. In various phone calls last month, President Hassan Rouhani engaged VRIC members, espousing solidarity with Venezuela over U.S. sanctions and supporting Russia's proposal for "green zones." Iran's forward-facing moves are mirrored in Venezuela where Maduro appointed Tareck El Aissami as Minister of Petroleum and the late Hugo Chavez's nephew, Asdrúbal Chávez, as the new head of Venezuela's state oil conglomerate, PDVSA. These internal changes reveal Caracas' alliance with Tehran, while demonstrating Iran's use of Venezuela's energy sector as a potential cover for a military network.

Iran's military industrial footprint in Venezuela has existed for more than a decade, however, recent flights from Mahan Air, the infamous airline dedicated to the Qods Force, has raised red flags about Iran's presence in Latin America. Mahan Air, under U.S. sanctions since 2011, has historically provided critical support to Bashar Al Assad in Syria and the Houthi Rebels in Yemen, and now appears to extend an air bridge to Venezuela. Tehran says that the 16 Mahan Air flights to Venezuela since April 22nd, are to help Maduro restart the Amuay and Punta Cordon refineries at the Paraguana Refinery Complex, the third largest in the world. This effort to help the Maduro regime continue producing gasoline to mitigate a national shortage in Venezuela, could have a military dimension given the IRGC's use of its favorite airline.

The Mahan Air flights began on the same day that Iran launched its first military satellite into orbit, raising concerns from the Pentagon. The nature of the Mahan Air flights and its contents are unknown, however, some suggest that this is the return of "Aero Terror," referencing a similar route from Tehran-Damascus-Caracas almost a decade ago. What is known is that the planning for this specific Mahan Air route to Venezuela took place in April 2019 and Iranian pilots flew this February to Caracas in a Conviasa flight that also landed in Uruguay, Panama, and Nicaragua.

- An indicted financier accused by the U.S. of developing Venezuela's gold-for-food trade with Turkey is helping orchestrate a similar swap with Iran involving gold for gasoline products. – Bloomberg on 08-MAY
- A bizarre invasion of Venezuela that involved U.S. Green Berets appeared to end in disaster. One of them was then shown on television making a forced confession. The report has been seized on by Iranian media to humiliate the United States and show that Venezuela's regime, a key Iranian ally, can browbeat the Americans. – The Jerusalem Post on 07-MAY
- State media reports Iranian Ambassador to Brasilia called for drawing a long-term framework for economic relations with Brazil based on institutionalizing, diversifying, and balancing bilateral trade relations. – IRNA on 06-MAY
- The nation's top military officer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Gen. Mark Milley, said Iran's recent military satellite launch, the first for the rogue regime, is a concerning feat. – CNBC on 05-MAY
- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused the leaders of Maduro's regime of stealing nine tons of gold from the country's reserve and shipping the bars to longtime ally Iran. – The Epoch Times on 03-MAY
- The newly appointed Minister of Petroleum under the Maduro regime, Tareck El Aissami, led the negotiations with the high government of Iran to hand over control of the Amuay Refinery, in exchange for the Iranians financing the reactivation of that refinery complex for produce gasoline, sources familiar with the negotiations said. – Venezuela al Dia on 30-APR (content in Spanish)
- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on countries to deny overflight rights to Mahan Air, an Iranian airline under U.S. sanctions, which he said recently delivered cargoes of "unknown support" to the Venezuelan government. – Reuters on 29-APR
- State news reports during a video conference between Iran's Vice-minister of Health Mohsen Asadi Lari and Venezuela's Vice-minister of Comprehensive Health María Gabriela Miquilareno the two sides exchanged experiences, clinical protocols and COVID-19 preventive measures. – Mehr News on 26-APR
- Venezuela has received refining materials via plane shipment from Iran to help it start the catalytic cracking unit at the 310,000 barrel-per-day Cardon refinery, which is necessary to produce gasoline, an official said. – The Financial Post on 23-APR
- Sanctioned Tehran-based carrier Mahan Air has been flying aircraft to Venezuela's northern coast to deliver gasoline blendstock, as well as transport technicians and spare parts to help repair one of the world's largest refineries, PDVSA's Amuay plant. Maduro's regime is also considering buying cargo of finished gasoline from the Islamic Republic via intermediaries. – Bloomberg on 23-APR
- State media reports on April 13, Maduro and Hassan Rouhani of Iran agreed to

strengthen the historic comprehensive ties of cooperation in the face of the challenges of the pandemic, including "criminal sanctions that the United States applies to both peoples," and its consequences for the global economy. – TeleSUR on 22-APR (content in Spanish)

- Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Arreaza said on Twitter that Maduro and Rouhani encouraged Venezuelan and Iran health teams to exchange experiences and protocols of action against COVID-19, considering the "criminal" sanctions that the U.S. has in place against both countries. – Jorge Arreaza on Twitter on 22-APR (content in Spanish)
- State media reports Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia, Hassan Rohani of Iran, and Racep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, discussed a partnership to tackle COVID-19 during a telephone meeting. Putin and Rohani discussed the importance of creating green zones during the health crisis to facilitate the supply of medicines, equipment, and technologies. – TeleSUR on 22-APR
- State media reports the Iranian petroleum minister says Iran, Libya, and Venezuela are exempt from cutting oil output as they are under sanctions. – Iran Front Page News on 13-APR
- State media reports according to Iran's Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology, Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and Brazilian São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) have signed an MOU to increase scientific cooperation between the two countries in various fields. – Mehr News on -8-APR

HEZBOLLAH

- From Hezbollah to the Taliban to Brazil's gangs- Terrorists, militants and criminals join the COVID-19 fight as weak pandemic responses from governments creates an opportunity for violent groups to earn legitimacy in the eyes of the public. – The Print on 19-APR
- Iran's primary surrogate in Latin America, Argentine Suhail Assad, who serves as a Shi'a cultural guide to the region, holds an apocalypse webinar titled, "Imam Mahdi and the end of the world." – Segundo Paso on 14-APR (content in Spanish)

AZERBAIJAN

- The virtual summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (MNOAL), convened by the organization's "pro tempore" president, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, concluded May 4th with a clear message: greater multilateralism and cooperation to defeat COVID-19 and more support for the World Health Organization. – Infobae on 04-MAY (content in Spanish)

LIBYA

- The private jet of Khalifa Haftar, commander of the LNA in Libya, landed in Caracas overnight. There is no confirmation of who was onboard. – Venezuela Live UA Map on 24-APR
- According to the Ministry of Health, Haftar's private jet brought medical supplies to Venezuela. The aircraft came from Libya, which is in the middle of a civil war. – CNW on Twitter on 24-APR

PALESTINE

- State media reports a new photo released this week showed Palestinian activists unveiling a mural in honor of the Venezuelan "spirit of resistance." – AMN News on 16-APR

TURKEY

- State media reports Turkey is a key player in Colombia's battle against COVID-19. Besides the delivery of 250 hospital beds to Bogota, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) also supports various projects in other regions of Latin America such as Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru. – Andalou Agency on 22-APR



Despite recent U.S. action to deter Russian collaboration with Venezuela, Moscow has made it clear that it will not abandon the Maduro regime. The U.S. continues to sanction Russian entities that conduct business with Venezuela, as the Kremlin takes to the UN Security Council to propose the creation of "green corridors" that allow the transport of food, medicine, equipment, and technology, free of sanctions and tariffs. These "green zones" would provide advantageous transport routes for Russia and China, and transition the VRIC from a sanctions evasion to a sanctions resistance strategy. In the meantime, Russia

assisted in transporting 8,000 doses of the alleged Cuban “wonder drug,” Interferon Alpha-2B, to Nicaragua.

Russia’s recent agreement to cut production and end the oil price war with Saudi Arabia proves the devastation caused to its economy. Since triggering the price war in February with Saudi Arabia, oil overproduction flooded the market and caused oil prices to severely drop. Russia was forced to comply with production cuts, reverting back to the low levels of production seen in 2003, while sustaining blows to its currency. The self-sabotaging nature of this oil price war begs the question if Moscow has ulterior motives.

- At 9:50 a.m. on May 8th, a Russian plane from Azur Air landed in Maiquetía, Venezuela amidst flight restrictions throughout the country. – Javier Mayorca on Twitter on 08-MAY (content in Spanish)
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned in a statement that “mercenary actions deserve punishment without palliatives.” Venezuela’s government said it had arrested two American citizens on suspicion of plotting to oust the Maduro regime. – Express on 07-MAY
- State media reports Russia plans to ship more than 40 tonnes of medicine to Venezuela to fight against coronavirus, Russia’s Ambassador to Caracas Sergei Melik-Bagdasarov said. – Sputnik on 26-APR
- State media reports Venezuela’s Maduro thanked his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin for his cooperation and medical aid amid the coronavirus outbreak. Putin also “guaranteed new shipments of health supplies” to Venezuela and expressed a “greater” need of joint efforts between two countries, to handle the pandemic. – Andalou Agency on 20-APR
- State media reports in a phone call between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Nicolás Maduro, the two discussed coronavirus aid to Venezuela, “green corridors,” and Venezuela’s internal dispute. – Kremlin Press Release in 20-APR
- Behind a Saudi-Russian truce to stabilise oil markets, players are still seeing the two production heavyweights trading blows in the physical market. It is here, rather than in the world of futures prices, that a long-standing battle for market share carries on. – Haaretz on 20-APR
- The novel coronavirus has penetrated more deeply into Moscow’s population than official data show, private testing results among people without symptoms suggest. – Reuters on 20-APR
- In sanctioned and crisis-torn Venezuela, a little-known company led by former executives at Moscow-based Gazprom PJSC is taking an outsized role for embattled leader Nicolás Maduro, as many of his main foreign partners in the oilfields scale back

or leave. – Bloomberg on 15-APR

- Cuba's State media reports Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov condemned the U.S. blockade against Cuba and praised Cuban doctors' solidarity as the COVID-19 pandemic strikes the world. – Prensa Latina on 14-APR
- State media reports Russia assisted in delivery of 8,000 doses of the Interferon Alpha-2B – a drug planned for use to fight the coronavirus infection – to Nicaragua, the Federal Biomedical Agency's Saint Petersburg Scientific Research Institute of Vaccines and Serums (SPbSRVIS) said. – TASS on 10-APR



While the world deals with the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. and China have heightened tensions in militarized zones such as, the South China Sea, the Arctic, and in cyberspace. These tensions are now reaching Latin America, where China aggressively attempts to reassert its legitimacy through medical diplomacy. Ecuador, Cuba, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Argentina, are just a few of the countries China has courted in April to supposedly help with the pandemic. While many countries have restricted travel to and from China, Argentina has established its first direct flight to Beijing to facilitate medical aid.

Far from a success, however, many nations worldwide are now renouncing China's medical aid as faulty in combating the virus. Turkey, Australia, Nepal, Czech Republic, India, Spain, and the Netherlands have all recently rejected or returned some of China's medical supplies and testing kits. This is a sign of what's to come in Latin America for countries becoming overly reliant on China's medical support in this time of pandemic.

Beijing's manipulation of their virus data and its lack of transparency, make it increasingly difficult for the region to trust China as a medical partner. Adding to this, China's overt support to Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro fans further speculation that it is using the pandemic to gain ground in Latin America. Maduro just announced an upcoming trip to Beijing to meet with Xi Jinping in the near future.

- Nicolás Maduro, announced that he will soon provide a working visit to China, to further strengthen strategic cooperation in various areas. – Ultimas Noticias on 06-MAY (content in Spanish)
- Cuban state media reports China condemned the recent attack with an assault rifle on the Cuban Embassy in the United States, a frustrated invasion of Venezuela, and all interfering maneuvers against any country's sovereignty. – Prensa Latina on 06-MAY
- After several years of anticipation, China's government released a timeline for rolling out its new digital currency in four cities. To some experts, the digital currency could represent a serious threat to an American asset that has reigned unchallenged for decades: the U.S. dollar. – Voice of America on 25-APR
- The United States announced a $12.1 million economic aid package for Greenland aimed at strengthening mutual ties and boosting a renewed U.S. push for a greater military presence in the Arctic to counter Russian and Chinese presence in the region. – Reuters on 23-APR
- China might be secretly conducting nuclear tests with very low explosive power despite Beijing's assertions that it is strictly adhering to an international accord banning all nuclear tests, according to a new arms-control report to be made public by the State Department. – The Wall Street Journal on 15-APR
- Eight Chinese medical and scientific experts were granted the second level of the Order of Francisco de Miranda by the Maduro regime for their contributions in the fight against COVID-19 in the Latin American country. – CGTN on 12-APR
- Chinese state media reports President Xi Jinping said China stands ready to boost cooperation with Venezuela in COVID-19 prevention and control and continue to help the Latin American country combat the coronavirus disease. – Xinhua on 10-APR
- Brazilian Health Minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta said that China is shipping very few of the ventilators Brazil ordered for victims of coronavirus, so bids from Brazilian companies are now being solicited to build the machines. – Breitbart on 09-APR

CHINA'S MEDICAL DIPLOMACY

- State media reports a batch of 31 mechanical ventilators from China arrived in Peru and will serve to give assisted breathing to COVID-19 patients in intensive care units (ICU). – Prensa Latina on 08-MAY
- State media reports a new donation of bio-safety supplies from China allows Ecuador to increase the care of frontline personnel in fight against the COVID-19. – Prensa Latina on 23-APR
- The Chinese-Taiwan ambassador, Jaime Chin Mu Wu, gave the Nicaraguan-based Taiwanese company Chia Fong & Cia a significant donation of 500 digital infrared

thermometers to the Ministry of Health. – Viva Nicaragua Channel 13 on 21-APR (content in Spanish)
- State media reports a fresh batch of medical supplies donated by the Chinese people arrived at Chile's Embassy in Beijing. The donations include goggles, surgical masks, and gloves, valued at $6,300 dollars. – CGTN on 17-APR
- State media reports China's Yutong Bus company confirmed the preparation of a second batch of medical supplies to donate it to Cuba to fight the novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. – Prensa Latina on 17-APR
- Aerolíneas Argentinas announced that the first in a series of flights to China had departed Buenos Aires, as part of a search for medical supplies to help tackle the coronavirus pandemic. – Buenos Aires Times on 16-APR
- State media reports a shipment of 11 tons of medical supplies arrived in Mexico from China to help the country address the COVID-19 pandemic. – People's China Daily on 12-APR
- State media reports more than 40 companies and institutions in China have prepared donations of medical supplies to help Cuba strengthen its capacity to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. – Prensa Latina on 15-APR

RENOUNCED CHINESE MEDICAL AID

- Spain's Health Ministry said the order of 640,000 antigen coronavirus tests were canceled after health officials once again found the tests were not sensitive enough to detect the virus. – Fox News on 24-APR
- India imported almost one million kits from China to ramp up testing. Now the country's main medical research organization has asked states to pause the use of rapid testing kits over concerns that they are faulty. – BBC on 22-APR
- Facing a global scramble for materials, British officials bought $20 million worth of unproven kits from China in a gamble that became an embarrassment. – The New York Times on 16-APR
- Up to 80 percent of the 150,000 rapid coronavirus test kits China delivered to the Czech Republic in March were faulty and less accurate than other tests, forcing the Czech Republic to continue to rely on conventional laboratory tests. – Fox News on 03-APR
- Nepal purchased coronavirus testing kits worth millions of Nepalese rupees from China but soon discovered that many countries using the same kits are showing unreliable and controversial results. – WION on 02-APR
- Australian Border Force (ABF) officers have intercepted several deliveries of personal protective equipment (PPE) that have been found to be counterfeit or otherwise faulty.

One law enforcement official estimated the ABF had already seized 800,000 masks with a combined value of more than $1.2 million on the Australian market. – ABC Australia on 01-APR

- The Dutch government has recalled over half a million face masks it imported from China after discovering that they were faulty. – Business Insider on 29-MAR
- In Turkey, the government said it found a number of antigen test kits sent from China to be substandard, causing it to reject them before they were used on any patients. – Financial Times on 29-MAR

NORTH KOREA

- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his first public appearance in 20 days as he celebrated the completion of a fertilizer factory near Pyongyang, ending an absence that had triggered global rumors that he may be seriously ill. – AP News on 01-MAY