



CHINA'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

April 2021

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on China's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in April 2021. This is not a complete list of media reports on China's activities in Latin America but are some of the most relevant articles and reports selected by SFS researchers and fellows. The monitor does source a limited amount of media reports from state-owned or -controlled media outlets, which are carefully selected and solely intended to report on news that is not reported on by other media and is relevant for understanding VRIC influence in the region. This report is produced as part of our VRIC Monitor published monthly by the Center for a Secure Free Society (SFS), a non-profit, national security think tank based in Washington D.C.



- The Southwest Atlantic Ocean attracts fishing fleets from all over the world due to rich marine life that swims beyond national waters. But despite concerns of overfishing, the region lacks the kind of fishing management organisation or governance system present in many other regions of the world. Uruguay, with a new government since last year, is seeking to change this. - [Diálogo China on 13-APR](#)
- Chile has awarded China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC) a build-concession contract to upgrade and operate a 195km toll highway - the Talca-Chillán section of Route 5. - [ITS International on 12-APR](#)

- State media reports State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi had a phone conversation with Brazilian new Foreign Minister Carlos Alberto Franco França. França said that Brazil-China relations are of strategic significance. Both countries have maintained sound cooperation in various fields. Brazil hopes to deepen the harmonious relations with China, and expects long-term cooperation. - [Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the U.S. on 10-APR](#)
- On April 8, BYD ushered in a new milestone, as its Bahia SkyRail vehicle rolled off the production line in Shenzhen. The Bahia SkyRail, located in the city of Salvador, Bahia State, Brazil, is the world's first SkyRail line to be partially built above the sea. - [Asia One on 10-APR](#)
- U.S.-sanctioned Venezuela managed to ship more crude in March directly to China, its main export destination, even as overall shipments dipped modestly last month, according to internal documents and Refinitiv Eikon data. - [Reuters on 06-APR](#)
- Paraguay's 63-year-old alliance with Taiwan — forged when both were run by right-wing authoritarians — means the government can't directly buy from China's vaccine makers that have supplied other Latin American nations. Officials say they've been approached to switch to Beijing to get the doses. - [Bloomberg on 31-MAR](#)
- China wants to create stronger trade and investment ties with Brazil, and expects South America's largest economy to ensure a "non-discriminatory business environment" for its companies, according to the Chinese ambassador to Brasilia. - [The Macao News on 29-MAR](#)
- Paraguay said its government had been approached by unofficial brokers claiming to offer access to Chinese-manufactured batches of Covid-19 vaccine in return for cutting diplomatic ties with Taiwan, although Beijing has denounced the claim as "malicious disinformation". - [The Guardian on 24-MAR](#)
- The U.S. should consider leading a multilateral coalition with South American nations to push back against China's illegal fishing and trade practices, a U.S. intelligence agency has recommended in a document obtained by Axios. - [Axios on 23-MAR](#)
- Chile says it will buy 5G kit from either the U.S. or China, as it sets out a timetable for a 5G rollout that promises to be blistering, at least compared to those of its Latin American neighbors. And so long as companies meet set technical standards for cybersecurity, Chile will dictate neither "the supply chain nor the nationality" of the suppliers it contracts to build the network, says Pamela Gidi, its telecommunications undersecretary. - [Light Reading on 23-MAR](#)
- State media reports Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs Felipe Sola has recently had a working session with the ambassadors of ASEAN member states to the country, namely Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia, to discuss cooperation with the bloc. Speaking at the meeting, Sola affirmed ASEAN's important role in Argentina's

strategy for cooperation expansion via the South American trade bloc Mercosur (comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela). - [Vietnam Plus on 20-MAR](#)

- Cuba, joined by 63 other countries including China, called on the U.S. and other nations to “stop interfering in China’s internal affairs by manipulating Xinjiang-related issues, (and) refrain from making unfounded allegations against China out of political motivations.” The joint statement claimed Xinjiang is “an inseparable part of China.” - [The Federalist on 16-MAR](#)
- China is using “mask and vaccine diplomacy” to undercut U.S. influence in Latin America by offering coronavirus pandemic support tied to a push for Chinese telecommunications investments in the region, Southern Command chief Adm. Craig Fallor warned Congress. - [McClatchy DC on 16-MAR](#)

ILLEGAL FISHING

- Uruguay to work with neighbours to protect migratory fish: The government wants to form a regional front to tackle overfishing by foreign fleets on the borders of national waters. - [Dialogo Chino on 13-APR](#)