



CHINA'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

May 2021

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on China's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in May 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.



- State media reports Cuba thanked the Chinese government for donating 5,000 photovoltaic solar energy systems to benefit rural families. Cuba's consulate in Guangzhou (south) extended its gratitude to China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, considering this donation as a sign of successful cooperation between both socialist nations in confronting climate change. - [Prensa Latina on 25-MAY](#)
- Brazil has the capacity to export a greater range of goods – and more of them – to China, according to the country's minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Tereza Cristina. - [Macao News on 24-MAY](#)

- China is using Covid-19 vaccines to push its political and trade agenda across Latin America and the Caribbean, and the U.S. risks losing influence in the region without prompt action, lawmakers and experts say. - [NBC on 23-MAY](#)
- Bukele's diplomacy: the United States, China and the game of rudeness. The president of El Salvador increasingly strains his relationship with Washington and is committed to a rapprochement with Beijing that could cost the country much more than he acknowledges. - [El País on 22-MAY \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- On March 31, Chilean regulators unconditionally approved the \$3 billion sale of Chile's Compañía General de Electricidad (CGE) to the Chinese state-owned electric utility company State Grid. The deal follows China Southern Power Grid's 2018 purchase of a 27.7 percent interest in Transelec for \$1.3 billion; China Water and Electric (CWE)'s purchase of Atiaia Energy and State Grid's \$2.23 billion acquisition of Chilquinta Energia, giving Chinese companies control of 57 percent of total electricity transmission in the country. - [Jamestown Foundation on 21-MAY](#)
- In an interview with CGTN, the Chinese state run media, Uruguayan President Luis Lacalle Pou expressed his positive relationship with China and his country's reliance on the Chinese-made vaccine. - [CGTN on 21-MAY](#)
- As the world continues to struggle with the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, an expert warns that China is using the access to vaccines to influence Latin America, which may harm the region as well as U.S. interest in the region. - [NTD on 20-MAY](#)
- Venezuela's state-owned PdV is scrambling to load crude cargoes before China imposes a new import tax that has blindsided management in Caracas, Argus has learned. - [Argus Media on 20-MAY](#)
- Major Chinese lithium producer Ganfeng Lithium has signed a memorandum of understanding with Argentina's Mining Ministry and Jujuy provincial state for the development of a lithium-ion battery factory in the north of the country, Argentina's government announced on Friday, May 14. - [Fast Markets on 17-MAY](#)
- State media reports China's top legislator Li Zhanshu held talks with Sergio Massa, president of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, via video link. Both sides pledged to enhance exchanges between legislative bodies. - [China People's Daily on 15-MAY](#)
- Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said the Central American nation, a long-standing diplomatic ally of Taiwan, could open a trade office in China in a bid to acquire coronavirus vaccines. Honduras does not have formal relations with China and is one of a group of Latin American nations with strong diplomatic ties to Taiwan, which Beijing considers part of its territory. - [Reuters on 11-MAY](#)
- A top-ranking delegation from China's National Aero-Technology import-export corporation, CATIC, is currently in Argentina to discuss defense cooperation and with the

proposal to offer the Argentine Air Force supersonic capable aircraft, according to InfoDefensa.ar, an Argentine site which specializes in defense industry issues. - [MercoPress on 08-MAY](#)

- China's Ambassador in Montevideo, Wang Gang, underlined his country's "open attitude" towards a trade agreement "either bilateral or en bloc" with Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay) "when Uruguay or the bloc as a whole are ready." - [MercoPress on 07-MAY](#)
- Brazil's Foreign Minister Carlos França expressed his country's intentions to expand and diversify its economic and trade relations with China, which has grown to become its largest trading partner. In a hearing before the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, França highlighted that ties with the Asian country were among the Brazilian government's priorities regarding foreign affairs. - [MercoPress on 07-MAY](#)
- State media reports Chinese President Xi Jinping said that under the new circumstances, he is ready to work with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel to strengthen the guidance of the development direction of China-Cuba relations. Xi told Diaz-Canel in a telephone conversation that he is willing to consolidate and develop friendly relations between the two countries, and jointly open up new horizons and make new contributions to the cause of socialism. - [China.org on 07-MAY](#)
- El Salvador is still negotiating with the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral organizations to secure a loan deal, and is not talking to China about the possibility, Finance Minister Alejandro Zelaya said. In an interview with Reuters, Zelaya said El Salvador was not seeking to secure an agreement with any non-traditional partners of the Central American country. - [Reuters on 06-MAY](#)
- In a new attack on China, President Jair Bolsonaro suggested that the Asian country benefited economically from the pandemic and said that Covid might have been created in a laboratory. - [Folha de S.Paulo on 06-MAY](#)
- State media reports the Communist Party of China (CPC), commemorating its 100th anniversary this year, has blazed a specific trail with Chinese characteristics and achieved incredible feats in social development, environmental conservation and public governance, a Panamanian politician has said. - [China People's Daily on 05-MAY](#)
- Former Brazilian President Michel Temer has outscored the importance of his country's connections with China, which is their main export destination. Temer also admitted all-around cooperation between the two countries is progressing steadily with vast potentials, adding that there is a broad prospect for further development of bilateral ties and Chinese investments in Brazil are expected to grow continuously. - [MercoPress on 03-MAY](#)

- State media reports China's achievements are an excellent example of what can be accomplished when a party is in step with the times and pursues high ideals in service to humanity, said Alberto Moreno, president of the Communist Party of Peru (Red Fatherland). "The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics that the Communist Party of China (CPC) follows is original and responds to the demands of today's world, as well as to the conditions of China," Moreno said in a recent interview with Xinhua. - [China People's Daily on 02-MAY](#)
- A man was sentenced to 14 years in prison for having drug proceeds picked up in Chicago and laundering them through China to have them sent to drug traffickers in Mexico. Prosecutors said Xianbing Gan schemed in 2018 to have about \$534,206 in narcotics proceeds picked up in Chicago and then transferred to various bank accounts in China – with the money ultimately intended for the drug traffickers in Mexico. - [CBS Chicago on 27-APR](#)
- State media reports China's top legislator, Li Zhanshu, held talks with the president of Venezuela's national assembly Jorge Rodriguez via video link, and the two sides agreed to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between legislative bodies. - [China.org on 27-APR](#)
- State media reports the President of Bolivia, Luis Arce, highlighted the strengthening of commercial ties with China and the support of the Asian giant in the process of lithium industrialization. On his Twitter profile, the president highlighted that the company Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos sold 530 tons of lithium carbonate to the Chinese company Ganfeng Lithium, one of the largest in the world in the industry, achieving an income of 24 million bolivianos (almost three and a half million dollars). - [TeleSUR on 23-APR](#)