

International Briefs

Argentina Is First Nation in Ibero-America To Produce Sputnik V Vaccine

In an April 20 [press release](#), the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), Russia's sovereign wealth fund, announced that its partner, Argentina's Laboratorios Richmond, had produced a test batch of 21,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccine, the first Ibero-American nation to do so. Samples will be sent to Russia's Gamaleya National Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology, which first developed Sputnik V, where they will undergo quality control tests. Once the tests are completed, Richmond plans to gear up for mass production by June, if all goes well.

RDIF CEO Kirill Dmitriev, quoted in the press release, said that Argentina was the first Ibero-American nation to approve emergency use authorization of Sputnik V, and now, thanks to technology transfer to Richmond labs from RDIF and its partners, production has begun. "The vaccine produced in Argentina can then be exported to other nations of Central and South America," he said. In remarks to Télam news agency, government sources urged caution on expectations of immediate success, given that it is a biological process, and said that next steps in the production process will be "complex and challenging."

Russia, Iran Help To Break Wheat and Fuel Blockade of Syria, Say Reports

Various Southwest Asia media reported April 20 that Iran, Russia,

and Syria have set up an operations room to ensure Syria is supplied with enough wheat and fuel oil for its people to survive in the immediate period ahead. U.S. and European Union economic sanctions, combined with U.S. seizure of Syrian oil fields and theft of Syrian wheat from its northeast breadbasket region, have reduced 90% of the Syrian people to poverty and led to widespread hunger.

Russian ships are reported to be transporting large quantities of wheat to Syria and will continue to do so until the end of June, under previously existing contracts. That should secure Syria's flour needs until the middle of 2022, putting an end to the current horrendous bread crisis, according to this report. The horrendous conditions in Syria are due to a decade of sanctions which have culminated in the brutal 2020 Caesar Sanctions Act, which should be immediately repealed.

Mexico's UN Ambassador Denounces Indifference to Crime of World Hunger

Juan Ramón de la Fuente, Mexico's Ambassador to the United Nations, published an [op-ed](#) in the April 19 edition of *El Universal* under the headline, "The Specter of Hunger Haunts the Planet," in which he denounces the "indifference" of most people to this gravest of problems, which he suggests should be considered a crime against humanity.

After blaming the rise of hunger on wars, the pandemic and climate

change, De La Fuente declares: "I don't know what is more alarming: the magnitude of the suffering which hunger causes in the world today, or the indifference with which those of us who don't go hungry react to it ... [Hunger] is something that is happening in real time in many places. If deliberately denying people access to food constitutes a crime against humanity, the simple idea of children dying of hunger anywhere should, at the least, weigh heavily on our conscience. The numbers available in the reports I have mentioned lead me to conclude that no, we are not dealing with a specter. We are dealing with an implacable reality."

'Depriving the Poor of Energy Is Bad Climate Policy,' Lomborg Warns

The President of the Copenhagen Consensus, Bjørn Lomborg, penned an [op-ed](#) published by *China Daily* April 19, which pays lip service to the green paradigm but also insists that those policies cannot possibly be imposed on the developing sector. Some quotes from Lomborg:

"To tackle climate change, rich countries are promising to end fossil fuel use in 29 years. As this becomes excruciatingly costly, the G7 is now thinking about making the world's poor pay for it. That will go badly...."

Lomborg continues: "Six billion not-rich people also want access to plentiful and cheap energy, lifting

them out of hunger, sickness and poverty. They are more concerned about economic growth that will create welfare and resilience against disease and even climate change.... The main effect of carbon tariffs is to shift the economic burden of developed-world climate policies to the developing world ... [provoking] profound resentment with a rich world that claims to implement climate policies to help, but in reality, shifts the costs onto the world's poor.... Depriving the world's poor of the twin drivers of development, abundant energy and free trade, is unacceptable."

Indian Situation Dire: Modi Says COVID Second Wave 'Hit Us Like a Hurricane'

India is struggling to handle the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic which, in an April 20 speech on national television, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "hit us like a hurricane." There are an estimated 250,000 new cases a day, with 270,000 the day before his address. If infections continue to increase at the current rate, this figure could reach 500,000 per day within a month, according to University of Michigan biostatistician Brahamar Mukherjee, the *Washington Post* reported. Six states and Delhi account for about two-thirds of new cases.

In New Delhi the situation is dire—the health delivery system is on the verge of collapse, including an acute shortage of oxygen, which is now being trucked in from other states. There are very few—often zero—available beds, especially ICU or critical care beds. On April 19, the government imposed a week-long lockdown in Delhi and also announced that as of May 1, it will begin vaccinating everyone over the

age of 18.

In his TV address, Modi also emphasized that a nationwide lockdown should be avoided; states should instead focus on creating "micro containment zones."

U.S. Aggravates Taiwan Flashpoint Against China

In the Western Pacific, Taiwan is serving as the same kind of flashpoint vis-à-vis China as Ukraine is with regards to Russia. Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu told reporters April 7 that U.S. policymakers "clearly see the danger of the possibility of China launching an attack against Taiwan." He vowed that if China were to attack, "We will defend ourselves to the very last day." At the State Department, spokesman Ned Price said later, "Our commitment to Taiwan is rock solid. We think and we know that it contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and within the region as well. We have, of course, taken note with great concern of the pattern of ongoing P.R.C. efforts and attempts to intimidate in the region, including in the context of Taiwan."

Marc Chesney Warns Of Financial Blowout, Argues for Glass-Steagall

Marc Chesney, Head of Department of Banking and Finance at the University of Zurich, warned of a coming blowout of the financial system and called for re-introduction of bank separation (Glass-Steagall). Chesney was [interviewed](#) on April 3 by the Swiss daily *Tagesanzeiger* on the Credit Suisse crisis. Professor Chesney is a frequent speaker at events organized by Im-

pulsquelle, friends of the Schiller Institute in Switzerland.

Credit Suisse's current troubles are, he said, "a new episode of the permanent crisis of the financial gambling casino. There are more and less acute phases, and then such episodes occur as if out of nothing. It is very opaque, but we, the citizens, should know what is going on. Credit Suisse is systemically relevant, and therefore it has a responsibility to the taxpayer.

"The mixture of high debt and derivatives is the recipe for acute crises; it was so in 2008, and it is still the case, regularly."

Chesney goes on to say that a "separation between pure deposit banks and investment banks" is needed and indicates the looming crisis: "A blowout is probable. The main indicators are in red: environment, pandemics, instability on the financial markets, social injustice, poverty."

Last Year's Hyped Story, 'Russian Bounties to Kill Americans,' Bites the Dust

Of all the fakery invoked by President Joe Biden to justify the new sanctions he announced against Russia on April 15, the story of alleged Russian bounty payments to the Taliban to kill U.S. troops in Afghanistan was apparently too fake to fly. A senior administration official explained on a conference call that U.S. intelligence had "low to moderate confidence" in the reporting on bounties because "it's based in part on detainee reporting and because of the difficult operating environment in Afghanistan." That is, someone who wanted to get out of his cell had reason to say what he thought his captors wanted to hear.