

Iberoamerica Briefs

Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency Launched

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) nations are once again “thinking big.” On July 24, six CELAC nations officially establish the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency, during the CELAC Foreign Ministers summit in Mexico City. Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Costa Rica are the current signatories, but several more governments are expected to join when the CELAC heads of state meet in September.

Costa Rican Foreign Minister Rodolfo Solano declared that “in the case of Costa Rica, together with nations like Mexico, I find no more responsible way to celebrate 200 years of independent life than to think of the next 200 years, and see space as the frontier to be conquered.”

Paraguayan Foreign Minister Euclides Acevedo laughed at skeptics who dismiss poor nations moving towards space exploration: “We may not yet have satellites to place in orbit, but we are beginning to place in orbit those enemies of success, those apostles of failure, the mediocre and the resentful.”

Bolivian President: The Fight for ‘Scientific Bolivia’ Is a Fight for the Future’

Bolivia has begun construction of a nuclear research reactor, the third component of the state-of-the-art Nuclear Technology Research and Development Center (CIDTN) being built in the city of El Alto by the Bolivian Nuclear Energy Agency and the Russian state nuclear agency’s Rosatom Over-

seas. The other two components include a Radiopharmacology Cyclotron complex to produce isotopes for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients, and a Multipurpose Irradiation Plant, the construction of which is already underway and is scheduled to be completed by year’s end. The research reactor should be completed by 2024.

Bolivian President Luis Arce and Rosatom Deputy Director General Kirill Komarov presided over the July 26 ceremony inaugurating the reactor’s construction. CIDTN is the largest Russian-sponsored project in Ibero-America, and Komarov called it “a technological marvel that will put Bolivia on a par with the major countries of the world.”

President Arce said the project is dedicated to the future generations, who “will inherit and harvest what we do today in terms of technological advancement; they shall be the standard-bearers of scientific Bolivia, because a millenarian people with advanced technology is invincible.... As a national government, we have the firmest will and conviction to advance on the road to scientific development for Bolivians.... Our country needs highly-trained human resources in nuclear engineering, chemical engineering and biotechnology to advance toward a change from the pattern of accumulation to the transformation of our country’s productive matrix, which is moreover, a challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Sullivan Deploys to Brazil and Argentina To Counter China

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan led a high-level delegation to Brazil and Argentina on August 5-6, to threaten those countries to cut

back their ties to China, gear up the “green” climate boondoggle, and line up behind Washington’s regime-change “democracy” agenda. The main “carrot” offered was to help Argentina get more money from the bankrupt IMF, and Brazil to become closer to NATO, whose failure was just demonstrated in Afghanistan!

The Argentine government, in particular, is in the cross-hairs of the Washington crowd. President Alberto Fernández has said that he will sign an MOU with China for Argentina to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative. He and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador have also been collaborating closely on regional policy, including opposing U.S. sanctions against Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

In Argentina, Sullivan and his entourage were reported to have particularly targeted Huawei involvement in Argentine 5G development, and the alleged danger of possible Chinese investment in the southernmost port city of Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, because of its proximity to Antarctica. The delegation offered more vaccines, held out the possibility of a Fernández-Biden meeting, and transmitted the State Department’s political support for Argentina’s negotiations with the IMF on restructuring its \$45 billion debt to that institution.

Folha de São Paulo reported that in Brazil, Sullivan offered that the U.S. would help Brazil become a “global partner” of NATO and become a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), if it would exclude Huawei from the 5G bidding later this year. That was accompanied by the threat that should Huawei not be excluded, then Brazil would lose the opportunity to “deepen its defense and security cooperation with the U.S.”

The Brazilian military is reportedly divided about what such a partnership with NATO would entail and what benefits it might bring—if any.

Washington to Region: Forget the Belt and Road, Legalize Dope Instead

While Washington tells its southern neighbors that participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative will not be countenanced, no such message is being sent against legalizing drugs—not just consumption, but drug production.

Colombian President Iván Duque's July 23 announcement that he intends to turn Colombia into a “global pacemaker for the industrial production of cannabis” gives the game away.

Duque's administration is viewed region-wide as Washington-run, and Duque himself often repeats that his administration is “the leading strategic ally of the United States in the hemisphere.” He has dutifully backed off from mooting that Colombia would sign an MOU with China on the BRI, while issuing a decree designed to turn marijuana into “one of the motors of the export development of our country.” The nations of Uruguay, Peru and Mexico are also set to “play” in the growing global marijuana market, he said, but Colombia insists on being “number one.”

Grotesquely, Duque pushed marijuana plantation jobs as a great benefit for the youth of Colombia—who have taken to the streets *en masse* across the country for months to demand not this, but a future worthy of a creative human being.

Peru's New President and Drug Legalization

After a very tight June 6 presidential election and weeks of vote-count-

ing (and backroom wheeling and dealing), José Pedro Castillo was sworn in on July 28 as President of Peru. He is a teacher and leader of the SUTEP teachers' union, whose radical wing has well-documented links to the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) narco-terrorism. His strongest support is based in Peru's main cocaine-producing area. Castillo named as his Prime Minister Guido Bellido, who is under investigation by the Peruvian justice system for allegedly defending Shining Path. Long-time leftist sociologist and former guerrilla Héctor Béjar was appointed Foreign Minister—only to be forced to resign 17 days later when his earlier charges that the Navy and CIA created the Shining Path were aired. Much to the satisfaction of Wall Street and the City of London, Castillo named World Bank economist Pedro Francke as his Finance Minister.

Francke's appointment was key to “calming jittery investors and anxious Peruvians alike,” the UK daily *The Guardian* reported the next day. Francke had promised investors in June: “Private companies will continue to be private companies. Our economy will be market-oriented but with pro-poor policies.” And, “he ruled out nationalizations but said multinational mining companies would have to leave more money behind in the country.”

Throughout the election campaign, the U.S. State Department placed its hand on the scale on behalf of Castillo, given their dislike of his opponent Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of former President Alberto Fujimori. Her neoliberal economic policies were not what the State Department objected to; it was her last name, and the nationalist circles that supported her because of it.

Though Castillo's Presidency still has yet to be defined, Castillo has all the makings of a financiers' “Trojan

Horse” installed in the midst of continent-wide ferment against the economic collapse and COVID catastrophe, who is expected to promote the cause of drug legalization.

Former Chilean Diplomat Goads U.S.: Join China, Build Infrastructure!

Why is there broad support for the Belt and Road Initiative in Ibero-America, despite Washington's threats and pressures? In his short [study](#), *China's New Silk Road and the Logistic State in Latin America*, published in late July, former Chilean Ambassador to China, Jorge Heine, now a professor at Boston University's Pardee School of Global Studies, answers: the BRI “responds to Latin America's current economic needs, at a time when the region is undergoing its worst crisis in more than a century.”

Heine reminds readers that there is a dramatic infrastructure deficit in the region, yet only Sub-Saharan Africa spends less on infrastructure than Ibero-America. But U.S. construction companies are not involved in regional projects; U.S. telecoms are not bidding to build 5G technology; and the IMF and World Bank do not even lend for infrastructure.

Washington's policy of excluding Chinese companies from building infrastructure in the region is “both short-sighted and counterproductive, as many countries, particularly the larger South American ones, will ignore it.... Washington should consider the growth and expansion of Latin American infrastructure and connectivity as a win-win proposition,” he recommends. Why not welcome healthy competition among the region's main trade and investment partners, “rather than ... trying to exclude some of them from the shores of the Western Hemisphere?”