

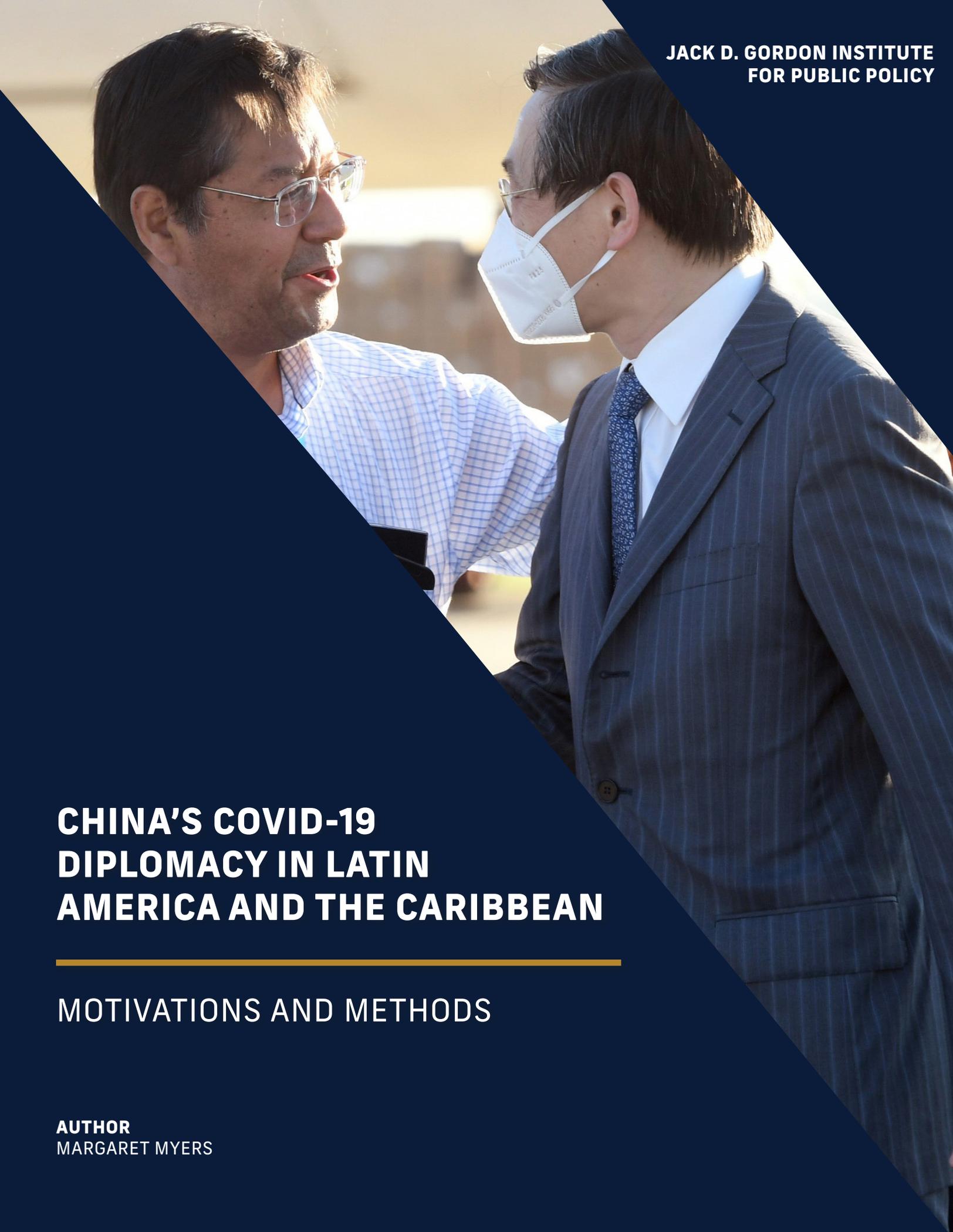
8-2021

China's COVID-19 Diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean: Motivations and Methods

Margaret Myers

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A photograph of two men in conversation. The man on the left is wearing glasses and a light blue checkered shirt. The man on the right is wearing a grey pinstriped suit, a white shirt, a patterned tie, and a white face mask. They are standing outdoors, and the background is slightly blurred. The image is overlaid with a dark blue diagonal shape that contains the text.

**JACK D. GORDON INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY**

CHINA'S COVID-19 DIPLOMACY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

MOTIVATIONS AND METHODS

AUTHOR
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AUGUST 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in February 2020, China's diplomatic community, together with Chinese provincial and municipal governments, businesses, and media outlets, set forth to shape opinions of China in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, when many in the region had mixed views of China and its relationship with COVID-19. Over the next few months, China engaged not only in the delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) and, more recently, vaccines to LAC countries but also launched an extensive messaging campaign, carried out through traditional and social media by Chinese embassies and media outlets across the region.

This report considers China's varied interests, whether humanitarian, commercial, or political, when engaging with LAC during the pandemic. Through a review of international media coverage and Chinese embassy reports, it also provides some observations on the nature of Chinese PPE and vaccine-related outreach in LAC over the past year, and of trends in Chinese messaging in social and traditional media. Finally, it employs methods such as Twitter mining and sentiment weight analysis to consider the possible effects of Beijing's wide-reaching COVID-19 diplomacy on China's interests in the region and on LAC views of China.

China's COVID-19 diplomacy in LAC was successful in advancing at least some of China's interests. China was relatively successful, for the time being, in using its role as a provider of vaccines to the region to quell criticism of China and to influence Taiwan-related policymaking. Recent efforts to isolate Taiwan mark a clearer than ever departure in LAC from China's long-standing policy of noninterference. China's decentralized aid campaign also achieved multiple aims. By leveraging wide-ranging actors and on-the-ground networks, China ensured extensive LAC and international media coverage of its assistance. This relatively targeted and flexible approach also allowed for often-impromptu donations to hard-hit communities, as well as deliveries to organizations and individuals with some influence over China's commercial and political interests in LAC.

China's engagement additionally seemingly helped it avoid an image crisis at the onset

of the pandemic, according to Inter-American Dialogue analysis of LAC tweets about China pre- and post-pandemic. As measured by the language used in China-related posts by LAC Twitter users from February 2020 to April 2021, views of China did not measurably worsen as a result of the pandemic. Nor did region's overall views of China noticeably improve during the pandemic, however, despite China's widespread donations, sales, and media outreach. Assertive and defensive messaging by Chinese embassies, characteristic of its so-called "wolf warrior" diplomacy, featured among China's communications but did little to garner support for China in the region. Among LAC's Twitter users, at least, views of China, its medical deliveries, and its broader influence remain mixed.

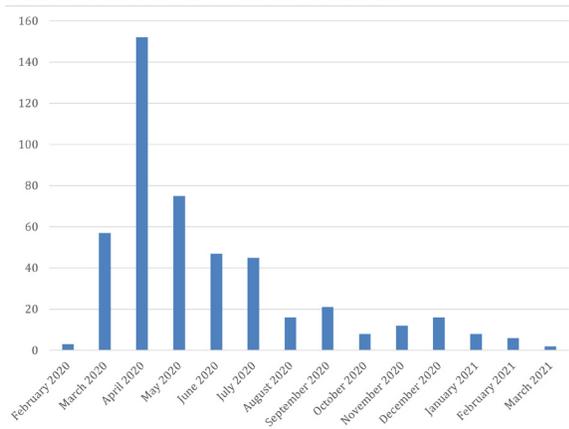
METHODS AND MOTIVATIONS

China's engagement with LAC during the global pandemic can be divided into two distinct phases. The first was evident from February 2020 to around September 2020 and consisted of sales and donations of medical equipment and other forms of cooperation and assistance, such as advisory services and consultations between medical professionals from China and LAC nations and cooperation on vaccine testing and development.¹ As a manufacturer of much of the world's PPE, China was well-positioned to deliver its supply to LAC and other regions, especially as COVID-19 cases dwindled at home.²

Based on a review of 470 announcements of Chinese PPE deliveries announced in Chinese, Latin American, and other media sources and Chinese embassy Twitter accounts,³ the pace of PPE deliveries slowed considerably after summer 2020 (Figure 1), as China focused more extensively on vaccine development and distribution—the second phase in its COVID-19 outreach. Despite an initially slow start in vaccine production and distribution,⁴ China reportedly distributed 300 million doses of its three vaccines—Sinovac, Sinopharm, and CanSino—by May 2020, as part of what Chinese President Xi Jinping described at the 2021 Global Health Summit as a "large-scale global humanitarian action."⁵ These doses have so far been sold or donated to 13 LAC countries. As in the distribution of PPE, China was also well positioned to engage in large-scale vaccine dissemination,

given sizable Chinese government support for vaccine development and production⁶ and an ability to delay mass vaccination at home.⁷

FIGURE 1. TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MENTIONS OF CHINA'S PPE DELIVERIES TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, FEBRUARY 2020–MARCH 2021



Source: Media coverage and Chinese embassy reporting; author compilation

China's prominence in the delivery of COVID-19 assistance to the region—whether through PPE or vaccine delivery—was the product of more than just supply-related considerations. The severity of the coronavirus outbreaks in the region shaped some of China's early engagement, for instance. China's international vaccine shipment has mostly been based on negotiated contracts with recipient nations, but Chinese actors often funneled medical supplies to those countries most affected by COVID-19. According to the Pontifical University of Chile's Francisco Urdínez, the number of donations that each country received was, in general, positively associated with mortality rates during the first wave of the pandemic.⁸

In addition to humanitarian motives, frequently underscored by Chinese officials and supported at home by the Chinese public,⁹ China's pandemic aid and broader economic outreach have also sought to reinforce and strengthen bilateral ties throughout the region—to ensure, above all, that China emerges from the pandemic with its image generally intact, and to simultaneously advance some of China's commercial objectives and policy interests, including the political isolation of Taiwan.

Shaping China's Image

China's initial "aid blitz," carried out by Chinese companies, embassies, overseas communities, the Chinese Red Cross, and other actors, occurred at a pivotal moment for global opinion on China and COVID-19. Critical commentary was evident in LAC and international media in the early months of the pandemic, focused on China's handling of its outbreak in Wuhan. Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa noted in a March 2020 column for Spain's *El País* that the virus had originated in China and that China censored at least one of the doctors who had originally detected the virus.¹⁰ French economist and political scientist Guy Sorman suggested in an August 2020 interview with Argentina's *La Nación* that "[i]t is ethical and legal to consider the Chinese regime as directly responsible for this pandemic."¹¹ Sorman made similar remarks to Chile's *El Mercurio*.¹² By April, anti-China banners appeared in Brasilia reading "China Lied, People Died," and "China Virus," as reported by the *Financial Times*.¹³ Amid mounting criticism and accusations, China sought to position itself in LAC and other regions as a responsible actor and proponent of cooperation at a moment of global crisis.¹⁴

Much of this work fell to China's embassies, which, in addition to coordinating donations and sales of PPE and vaccines, labored throughout the pandemic to convey approved messages about China's experience with COVID-19 and its pandemic outreach. This was accomplished through various outlets, including embassy communiqués, television interviews, press conferences, op-eds authored by Chinese ambassadors and published in local media outlets, and Twitter posts. In fact, at the request of Beijing, Chinese embassies in Argentina, the Bahamas, Cuba, and Peru set up new Twitter accounts in the early months of the outbreak to communicate key messages directly to local publics.¹⁵

Beginning in early January 2020, several Chinese embassies and ambassadors took to traditional and social media to mostly defend China against damaging allegations. They communicated confidence in China's handling of the outbreak and underscored China's commitment to transparency and information sharing. In a February 14, 2020 interview with *Estadão*, a daily newspaper published in São Paulo, Chinese Ambassador Yang Wanming sought to reassure

Brazilian audiences about China's control of the outbreak, the country's commitment to cooperation with LAC nations, and China's "interest in conducting international cooperation in an open, transparent, and responsible manner."¹⁶ Embassies also tweeted that China was not to blame for the pandemic,¹⁷ and some published articles lamenting the extent of "prejudice" and "ignorance" evident in China-related commentary.¹⁸ (See Appendix 1 for examples of Chinese embassy and other government messaging in January and February 2020.)

By spring 2020, Chinese embassies were still largely committed to damage control, addressing continued critiques of China's COVID-19 response (e.g., that China tried to cover up infections or that China's lockdown in Wuhan violated its citizens' human rights) and conveying Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)-produced talking points. China's Embassy in Ecuador was especially dedicated to this approach, using hashtags like "#LaVerdad" (#TheTruth) when countering specific claims about China and COVID-19.¹⁹ Embassies also emphasized China's interest in cooperation and friendship, highlighting donations and sales of PPE by Chinese actors. In May, Chinese ambassadors penned op-eds with such titles as "Defeating COVID-19 through Solidarity and Cooperation,"²⁰ "Solidariedade e cooperação: armas mais poderosas para derrotar a pandemia" ("Solidarity and cooperation: more powerful weapons to defeat the pandemic")²¹ and "Pompeo: El Mentiroso ("Pompeo: The Liar").

A spike in Caribbean-directed messaging was evident in April 2020, when Chinese embassies addressed allegations by Human Rights Watch²² and former Barbados diplomat Mohammed Iqbal Degia that the Chinese city of Guangzhou had targeted its African communities, forcibly testing them for COVID-19 and ordering them to self-isolate. Reports also surfaced at the time of evictions of African residents. Chinese embassies in Barbados and Dominica published statements refuting these claims, citing China's history of cooperation with African nations.²³ Degia's op-ed on the topic appears to have been removed from the *NationNews* website where it was first published, likely at the request of the Barbados government, as one interviewee noted.²⁴

By summer 2020, embassy messaging expand-

ed to address international criticism of China's human rights record, whether regarding Hong Kong, Xinjiang, or China's domestic response to COVID-19. On Xinjiang, op-eds and statements by embassy officials deflected international condemnations of China's treatment of the Uighur population, instead pointing to social issues in the United States. Some noted a lack of protection in the United States of ethnic minorities' human rights and fundamental freedoms, referencing death rates among Black Americans during the pandemic.

On the topic of human rights, Chinese embassies in Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Uruguay used their websites, social media, and interviews to comment on China's rights-related achievements, employing language from a July 2020 MOFA article titled "What's False and What's True on China-related Human Rights Matters."²⁵ In August 2020, another article, "Fact check: Pompeo's fact-twisting China speech versus the truth," was circulated by Chinese embassies in LAC.²⁶ Both articles argued that China's successes in containing COVID-19 demonstrated its unfailing commitment to human rights.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi further promoted China's "people-centered" definition of human rights during the 46th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2021. There he noted that a government's focus on "people's sense of gains, happiness and security" is the "the fundamental pursuit of human rights." According to this formulation, as *The Diplomat* editor Shannon Tiezzi has noted, economic prosperity tops the list of priorities, and the concept of "happiness" replaces more concrete markers like racial and gender equality or freedom of religion. Security is also elevated to a human rights priority.²⁷

Isolating Taiwan

The political isolation of Taiwan was yet another objective of China's COVID-19 outreach over the past year, as China sought to curry favor with Taiwan's allies and reinforce ties to countries such as Guyana, where Taiwan had made diplomatic overtures. China's efforts in this area marked a clear departure from its foreign policy claims of noninterference.

In most cases, China's pandemic-era influence on Taiwan's allies has been indirect. Throughout the pandemic, Chinese PPE donations and vaccine sales were directed nearly exclusively to countries with diplomatic ties to China. This led some in the region to question their political allegiances. According to the *Financial Times*, Carlos Alberto Madero, Honduras's chief cabinet coordinator, said that access to vaccines was "much more urgent than anything else," including a continued alliance with Taiwan.²⁸ Others sought a "diplomatic bridge" to Beijing—a prerequisite for vaccine sales.²⁹ In May 2021, Honduras reported that the government of El Salvador might assist in vaccine negotiations with China.³⁰ A Paraguayan industry group known as the Agricultural Coordinator requested help from Beijing in mid-April through a series of letters to China's MOFA and the Chinese ambassador in Brazil.³¹

In other cases, vaccines have seemingly been used to reward or discourage government decision-making on Taiwan and other matters. The timing of a vaccine donation to Guyana led some to speculate that the Caribbean nation was rewarded with the doses after deciding to close a new Taiwanese commercial office.³² And in Brazil, China reportedly halted the shipment of raw materials necessary for the São Paulo-based Butantan Institute to produce China's CoronaVac vaccine³³ after Brazilian President Bolsonaro suggested that China disseminated COVID-19 as a tactic of biological warfare.³⁴

Commercial Objectives

Many Chinese companies, from large tech conglomerates to smaller-scale construction firms, assisted LAC during the pandemic. For the many companies involved in China's international outreach, the pandemic, while problematic for their global operations, was also an opportunity to showcase their capabilities to foreign audiences or demonstrate their commitment to the countries and communities where they work. Indeed, instances of PPE donations by Chinese companies were most extensive in those countries where Chinese companies maintain a far-reaching presence, where ties need reinforcement, or where Chinese firms have sought to establish a more prominent footprint.

Donation announcements by Chinese companies were most evident in Panama, which

arguably falls into all three categories. Panama has been a priority destination for Chinese companies for more than a decade, having been featured in Chinese Ministry of Commerce "going-out" guides since 2010. It received renewed attention from Chinese investors after cutting ties with Taiwan in 2017, but some Chinese projects have been suspended under the Laurentino Cortizo government—the product of enhanced legal scrutiny, problems associated with project contracts, and the adverse effects of the pandemic, according to China-Latin America relations expert Evan Ellis.³⁵ Amid the pandemic and persistent political uncertainties, Chinese companies have underscored their commitment to the country through donations and other forms of assistance. Huawei alone made at least seven different donations of various sizes to Panamanian government offices and communities between March and September 2020.

Argentina was also a primary recipient of Chinese company donations, at a moment when China-Argentina economic and political ties are strengthening. Several new projects have been announced in Argentina under the Alberto Fernández government, including China Machinery Engineering Corporation's investment in a train car production facility in Santa Fe, Argentina; the approval of Phases 4 and 5 of its Cauchari Solar project; and talk of a China-financed gas pipeline running from the Vaca Muerta shale field in Argentina to Brazil. With current and future operations in mind, the following Chinese companies donated to Argentina early in the pandemic: construction firm Gezhouba, which is partially responsible for building the Condor Cliff and Barrancosa dams in Santa Cruz; Bank of China and ICBC; Huawei; China Railway Engineering Corporation and China Railway Construction Corporation, which are upgrading the Belgrano Cargas and other rail networks; and Alibaba.

Chinese companies were also active in PPE distribution in Brazil, where China's economic interests are extensive and growing. Firms such as Gree Electric, which sells electronic appliances in the country; Trip.com, a Chinese travel website; and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, which provided finance for the Port San Luis expansion and Jupia and Ilha Solteira acquisitions, made donations to Brazil

amid the pandemic.³⁶ In the case of Brazil, Chinese companies may see value in highlighting their commitment to Brazilian communities at a moment of relative volatility in China-Brazil relations. Some donations to Brazil through sister cities/provinces networks made explicit reference to the countries' strained relations—they arrived in boxes labeled “[w]e stay together through storms and tensions.”³⁷

For China's tech firms, the pandemic also provided an opportunity to showcase new biomedical technologies and artificial intelligence-enabled diagnostic capabilities. LAC and other developing regions are critical markets for China's major tech and telecommunications companies, especially as Huawei and others face obstacles in Australia, Europe, and the United States. Huawei, in particular, has sought to diversify its offerings in LAC, including in the area of medical technologies, in anticipation of possible obstacles to 5G equipment sales.³⁸ During the pandemic, Huawei donated computerized imaging solutions to the Dominican Republic,³⁹ and Huawei and Huiying Medical Technology Co., Ltd. offered AI-enabled auxiliary diagnostic systems to hospitals in Ecuador.⁴⁰ The former vice-president of Ecuador, Otto Sonnenholzner, thanked Huawei on Twitter in March 2020, noting that Ecuador had become the first country in Latin America to have AI-enabled diagnostics in two local hospitals.⁴¹

The pandemic has also amounted to something of an international debut for China's pharmaceutical companies. In addition to co-producing some vaccines and treatments and holding trials in LAC and other regions, China's three vaccine manufacturers became household names in LAC as Chinese vaccines were administered across the region. Regional views of China's biomedical capability will largely be determined by the efficacy of its vaccines, but the linkages developed between Chinese and Latin American pharmaceutical companies will be productive beyond the pandemic. Vaccine trials and research were conducted with Fundación Huésped in Argentina and the Butantan Institute in Brazil. In addition, Interferon Alfa-2B, an antiviral treatment produced by Cuban-Chinese joint venture Changheber, was among the medicines selected by the Chinese National Health Commission to fight COVID-19 infections in China.⁴²

“WOLF WARRIORS” IN LAC?

“Wolf warrior” diplomacy, a term derived from a top-grossing Chinese film franchise of the same name, refers to an aggressive style of diplomacy adopted by Chinese diplomats in recent years. Sharp-edged messaging from Chinese diplomats featured prominently in China's global communications in the early months of the pandemic, with examples evident in the LAC region. The use of razor-sharp, defensive messaging in LAC was more extensive in some countries than others, however. Some ambassadors engaged in heated exchanges on Twitter and other social media platforms, while others avoided confrontations.

To better understand the nature and extent of wolf warrior-type messaging in LAC, our team of researchers developed a database of posts from Chinese embassy Twitter accounts in LAC from February 2020 to March 2021. Chinese embassies in LAC posted about 11,000 tweets during the pandemic, approximately 1,635 of which directly referenced COVID-19. Each of the covid-specific tweets was reviewed and divided into five categories:

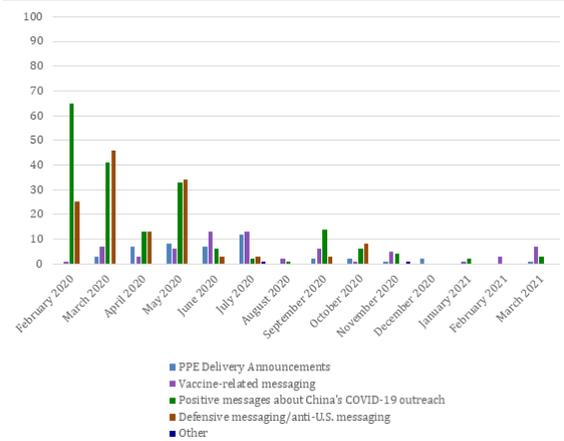
- (1) PPE delivery announcements.
- (2) Vaccine-specific commentary.
- (3) Tweets conveying positive messages about China's engagement with the region amid the pandemic, such as noting China's commitment to cooperation with LAC, Beijing's effective response to the pandemic, or China's dedication to addressing the region's pandemic-related challenges.
- (4) Wolf warrior-type messaging, strongly countering criticism of China or expressing critical views of the United States or other nations' pandemic responses and outreach.
- (5) Other COVID-19 related announcements and messages, including statistics about China's outbreaks.

Once the pandemic-related tweets were categorized, we examined the frequency of the five types of messaging in three LAC nations—Brazil, Ecuador, and Grenada—where China's broader economic and covid-era relations varied considerably.

In general, the embassies' total promotional tweets exceeded their negative or defensive ones or those that condemned other countries' practices. But spikes in negative and assertive messaging were nevertheless evident in all three countries. Negative tweets were generally posted in response to international criticisms of China or as a reaction to claims made by public figures in LAC nations. They also occasionally followed strongly worded, official statements by high-ranking Chinese diplomats or officials about China's COVID-19 response, with diplomats echoing Beijing's key points in their host countries. Chinese diplomats' most combative rhetoric was also evident at a moment in time (spring-summer 2020) when China's so-called "wolf warrior" diplomats were reportedly given some leeway to defend China aggressively and even propagate conspiracy theories through media platforms.⁴³

Of the three countries studied—Brazil, Ecuador, and Grenada—wolf warrior-type messaging appeared most frequently in Brazil. There, spikes in hard-hitting messaging, as evident in March 2020 (Figure 2), mostly followed critical comments made by Brazilian public officials. For example, when Eduardo Bolsonaro, Brazilian federal deputy and son of President Jair Bolsonaro, blamed China and its model of government for the pandemic in a March tweet,⁴⁴ the Chinese embassy in Brasilia took to Twitter to suggest the younger Bolsonaro had contracted a "mental virus" during a trip to the United States. The increase in defensive messaging in May 2020 corresponded with a speech by Wang Yi that noted China's commitment to addressing the pandemic while also referencing U.S. efforts to politicize COVID-19.⁴⁵ The embassy tweeted strongly-worded snippets from Wang's address. That month, the Chinese Embassy in Brazil also published op-eds defending China against allegations that COVID-19 originated in a lab in Wuhan and that China was not transparent when handling its domestic outbreak.

FIGURE 2. TYPES OF PANDEMIC-ERA MESSAGING BY CHINA'S EMBASSY IN BRAZIL, FEBRUARY 2020-MARCH 2021



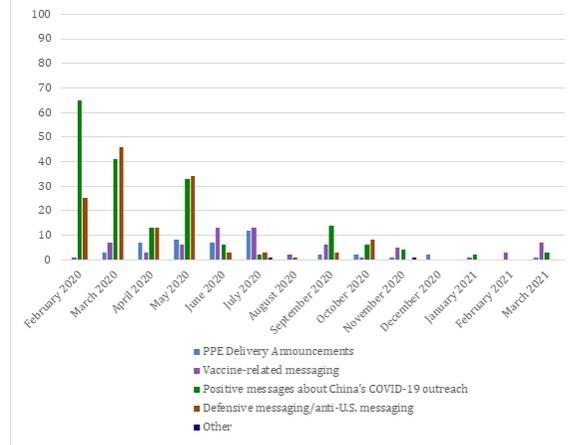
Source: Chinese embassy Twitter accounts; author compilation

Positive and promotional tweets from the Chinese embassy in Ecuador far exceeded negative ones, but spikes in negative and defensive tweets were nevertheless evident in May and June 2020 (Figure 3). Nearly every day in May and June, Ecuador's diplomats addressed what they labeled false claims about China's handling of COVID-19, using the hashtag #LaVerdad. They addressed rumors about Chinese people eating bats, allegations that Wuhan ophthalmologist Li Wenliang had denounced China's actions and was arrested, reports that China was reopening its wet markets, and claims that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was the source of the virus. Other messaging in May focused on defending the World Health Organization (WHO), following U.S. doubts about its political neutrality. China's embassy in Ecuador tweeted, "In the face of the virus, those who harass and blackmail the WHO lack a minimum human spirit, and will be rejected by the international community."⁴⁶

A defensive December 2020 post from the Chinese Embassy in Ecuador regarded an official communiqué issued by Ecuador's Ministry of Foreign Relations and Human Mobility. The communiqué strongly refuted a *Global Times* claim that the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan may have resulted from cold food chain deliveries from Ecuador and other countries.⁴⁷

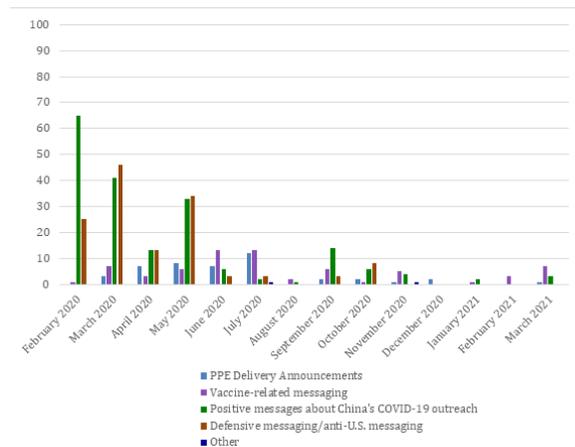
The Chinese Embassy responded with its own communiqué and tweeted the following: “#IMPORTANT | We publish our Official Communiqué on the traceability of COVID-19; since, only scientific research will demonstrate the transmission route of the coronavirus to prevent future risks and ensure global health.”⁴⁸

FIGURE 3. TYPES OF PANDEMIC-ERA MESSAGING BY CHINA'S EMBASSY IN ECUADOR,



Source: Chinese embassy Twitter accounts; author compilation

FIGURE 4. TYPES OF PANDEMIC-ERA MESSAGING BY CHINA'S EMBASSY IN GRENADA, FEBRUARY 2020-MARCH 2021



Source: Chinese embassy Twitter accounts; author compilation

Efforts to (sometimes forcefully) defend China on Twitter were also evident in other parts of the region. Even in Peru, where bilateral relations are generally strong, Chinese diplomats traded barbs with Vargas Llosa after the Nobel Prize-winning writer published his previously referenced *El País* op-ed. In the article, Vargas Llosa suggested the coronavirus had originated in China and noted that a free and democratic society would have handled the crisis differently. The Chinese Embassy in Lima responded on the Chinese social media platform WeChat, reducing Vargas Llosa’s analysis to a “smear” campaign, which, according to the post, reflected “a lack of understanding and serious prejudice against China.”⁴⁹ The author’s books were also reportedly removed from major Chinese e-book platforms.⁵⁰ In other cases, China and allies in LAC have endorsed each other’s critiques of third parties. For example, through English-language media outlets and Twitter, Chinese media and Cuban officials blamed U.S. sanctions for delays in shipments of Chinese supplies to Havana.⁵¹

Embassies’ defensive tweets also varied in tone, suggesting that the embassies and ambassadors were afforded a degree of flexibility when delivering messages. The embassy and ambassador collectively issued fewer critical tweets in Grenada, but the embassy’s tone was nevertheless harsher than in Brazil and Ecuador. The Chinese Embassy of Grenada’s defensive messaging in March was mostly aimed at refuting claims of mistreatment of African migrants in Guangzhou (Figure 4), but diplomats also labeled former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo a politician committed to “slandering diplomacy,” quoting MOFA spokesperson and emblematic wolf warrior Zhao Lijian’s remarks about U.S. efforts to lift restrictions on official contact with Taiwan.⁵²

Ambassador to Grenada Zhao Yongchan’s tweets also used particularly strong language. They read as far more critical than Ambassador Yang Wanming’s in Brazil, for example, despite the prevalence of derogatory statements about China in Brazil, often coming from Jair Bolsonaro himself. Ambassador Zhao noted, for instance, that “[t]he West is containing China, awakening China’s memory of enslaving China by imperialists for 100 yrs,”⁵³ and, in September 2020, that China defeated the pandemic in three months, but the United States was

not able to do so after nine.⁵⁴ In Ecuador, by contrast, Ambassador Chen Guoyou refrained from tweeting, though Ecuador embassy tweets frequently referenced his public commentary.

In all three countries, China's Twitter-based condemnations were accompanied by a proportionate increase in positive messaging, with China evidently seeking to balance its more assertive outreach with positive information on Chinese cooperation.

China's more aggressive posts had tapered off by summer 2020, lending some credence to Bates Gill's summer 2020 claim that China's diplomats were reined in as the party understood it had overreached with many audiences around the world.⁵⁵ More recently, in a June 2021 speech to the Politburo study session, Xi signaled a possible throttling of wolf warrior-type outbursts, calling on the country's leaders to engender a "trustworthy, lovable, and respectable" image for China.⁵⁶ *Xinhua* later suggested that the country adopt a "humble" approach in relations with the outside world.⁵⁷ The party may very well have noted, as a Yale University study did, that the aggressive messaging associated with wolf warrior diplomacy was not as effective as promotional messaging in moving public opinion on China.⁵⁸

Whether China's wolf warrior diplomacy persists or not, its embassies in LAC now appear committed to delivering a message of solidarity, multilateralism, and cooperation, referencing China's commitment to COVID-19 collaboration. At the time of this report's publication, Chinese embassy Twitter accounts in the region mostly were conveying vaccine-related information and positive or promotional messages.

DECENTRALIZED DIPLOMACY

Much of China's COVID-19 diplomacy was carried out at the central government level through "cloud diplomacy" or virtual meetings with heads of state or other high-level officials. These virtual communications were lauded by Wang Yi as the "biggest highlight in China's foreign relations,"⁵⁹ noting that, in 2020, Xi Jinping's "cloud diplomacy" included 87 meetings and phone calls with foreign leaders and heads of international organizations, along with vir-

tual attendance in 22 bilateral or multilateral events.⁶⁰

Except for some provincial level and other collaboration, including vaccine production efforts in São Paulo state, China's vaccine diplomacy has also mainly been carried out at the central government level through contracts negotiated by Chinese vaccine companies and LAC health ministries,⁶¹ or through donations to LAC governments. Venezuela's government received 500,000 donated vaccines from China in March 2021, for instance.⁶²

By contrast, China's early-stage (February 2020-September 2020) pandemic outreach was notably decentralized. It entailed loosely coordinated engagement by wide-ranging Chinese actors, including embassies, companies, provincial government authorities, networks of overseas Chinese communities, and quasi-governmental organizations, such as the Chinese Red Cross (see Table 1). The latter donated US\$100,000 worth of supplies to Colombia, gave US\$100,000 in cash to Cuba,⁶³ and provided some hurricane and pandemic-related assistance to El Salvador. These actors operated in broad support of China's diplomatic objectives and engaged the region through distinct and sometimes ad hoc channels. As Ur-dinez described it, China's mask diplomacy was "a hodgepodge of actions by a diverse cast of Chinese donors rather than the centralized outgrowth of a unitary national policy."⁶⁴

TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF CHINESE ACTORS INVOLVED IN CHINA'S COVID-19 DIPLOMACY IN LAC

Provincial/Municipal Governments	Quasi-Governmental/United Front	Companies
Chengdu city government	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade	Alibaba
Guangdong provincial government		Bank of China
Guangzhou city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	Beijing Dajia Information Technology Company
Guizhou provincial government		
Guiyang city government	Chinese Red Cross	CCCC
Fengtai city government		Chery
Fujian provincial government	CPC International Department	China SDIC
Fuzhou city government		Trade
Gansu provincial government	China Journalist Association	China Three Gorges
Hangzhou city government		CITIC
Jiangmen city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	CMOC Brazil
Jiangsu provincial government		CNPC
Nanchang city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	COSCO
Nanjing city government		CREC
Meizhou city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	CRCC
Ningxia provincial government		Didi Chuxing
Shanghai city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	Gezhoubu
Shanxi provincial government		Gree Electric
Shenzhen city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	Huawei
Sichuan provincial government		Hikvision
Suzhou city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	ICBC
Xiamen city government		Microport
Xi'an city government	China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	Nuctech Panama
Zhongshan city government		PetroChina
		Qingyuan
		Sinograin
		State Grid Brazil
		TikTok
		Tencent
		Trip.com
		Wanhuida
		XCMG
		Yili
		Yutong
		Zhuhai Enterprise
		ZTE

Source: Chinese embassy Twitter accounts; author compilation

China's largest companies, state-owned and private, were among the first Chinese actors to deliver PPE in parts of the region, often in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, where Chinese companies have considerable commercial interests (see the *Commercial Objectives* section). These companies managed localized campaigns in many cases, donating various items to different authorities and organizations in other LAC countries. Chinese tech conglomerate Alibaba and telecommunications

giant Huawei made frequent donations to LAC national governments. Chinese multinational Alibaba and founder Jack Ma's private foundation donated five ventilators to Peru,⁶⁵ 15,000 test kits and 30,000 face masks to Antigua and Barbuda,⁶⁶ and respirators and other equipment to Argentina, for example. Huawei donated 150,000 face masks to Colombia in March. These companies operated in broad support of Chinese government objectives but with considerable autonomy.

Chinese companies have also delivered supplies directly to LAC cities and provinces, prioritizing areas with high rates of COVID-19 infection or those where they operate. Huawei Brazil's donation of 30 ventilators to communities in Brazil's Amazon region was clearly need-based—the Amazon was especially hard-hit in the country's second covid wave.⁶⁷ Porto São Luis, managed by China Communications Construction Company, donated 10,000 surgical masks to the Maranhão State Department of Public Health.⁶⁸ State Grid Brazil, which owns much of Brazil's electricity grid, donated 264 hospital beds to Rio de Janeiro.⁶⁹ And in Argentina, Chinese companies Gezhoubu, China Railway, and Shandong Gold Group donated to Argentine provinces where they have existing operations, such as Santa Cruz, San Luis, and San Juan.⁷⁰

With hundreds of "touch points," this decentralized approach to PPE donation ensured considerable coverage of China's efforts in LAC. By employing on-the-ground networks, China was also able to engage quickly and directly with hard-hit communities. China's strategy of PPE distribution may additionally strengthen or solidify Chinese ties to select organizations and influential individuals in LAC. Chinese entities donated not only to first responders but also to those in a position to advance China's commercial (or other) interests in the region. According to one interviewee, customs officials in Panama were the direct recipients of PPE deliveries,⁷¹ just as free trade agreement negotiations between the two countries stalled.⁷² The International Liaison Department of the Chinese Communist Party also donated directly to Panama's Democratic Revolutionary Party in July 2020.⁷³ In Bolivia, PPE was provided to the Bolivian military.⁷⁴ In Peru and Ecuador, donations were made to police forces. China Communications Construction, COFCO Argentina, and Bank of China in Argentina donated supplies to police

forces.⁷⁵ Donations, including a telecommunications platform, were also made by Huawei and the Chinese embassy to Peru's Ministry of the Interior.⁷⁶ In addition to overseeing police and other frontline workers, LAC interior ministries frequently sign off on the importation of Chinese security systems.⁷⁷

Although many Chinese actors were engaged in China's early outreach, Chinese embassies refereed much of China's initial COVID-19 aid in LAC while also documenting China's engagement on their websites and social media accounts. The Chinese embassy coordinated nearly all the donations tracked in Grenada (see "*Wolf Warriors in LAC?*" section), and in most other Caribbean nations, except for the Bahamas, Barbados, and Cuba, where Chinese municipal governments, overseas Chinese communities, student networks, and companies also played a central role. Donations from Jack Ma and the Alibaba Foundation were also especially prominent in Caribbean. Embassies also played a critical coordinating role elsewhere in the region. The Chinese embassy managed four separate deliveries and donations to Bolivia between September 2020 and February 2021. China's embassy in Colombia was also responsible for several donations, though it appeared to focus its efforts on local communities, sending 2.4 tons of food to vulnerable families in La Guajira.⁷⁸

The role of Chinese embassies as hubs for deliveries was less evident in Chile, as Urdinez noted.⁷⁹ Urdinez found that donations from China to Chile from February 11, 2020, to June 10, 2020, were channeled through three main hubs, reflecting the sometimes ad hoc nature of China's early outreach. Almost 98 percent arrived through the Chilean Embassy in Beijing, including donations from Chinese companies and foundations. Meanwhile, Chinese provinces and city-to-city donations made up just 2 percent of the total donations (Figure 4). The Chinese Embassy in Santiago was the least-used channel, responsible for just 0.5 percent of total Chinese donations to Chile.⁸⁰ In fact, Urdinez argued that in the case of Chile, "the relationship between the Chinese Embassy in Santiago and the Chilean government ended up being more of an obstacle than a boost to the success of China's mask diplomacy in Chile."⁸¹ This was the result of miscommunication and ensuing controversy (termed "ventilator-gate")

about ventilator deliveries between the Chinese and the Chilean Ministry of Health. As a result of the incident, China's Ambassador to Chile, Xu Bu, stepped down in October 2020.

Sister city and province linkages, which have been exceedingly productive avenues for Chinese commercial and cooperative engagement with LAC,⁸² were also used amid the pandemic, facilitating the delivery of medical supplies from China to LAC. Fuzhou and Dongguan, China, both sister cities of Campinas, Brazil, donated 80,000 face masks to Campinas in April 2020,⁸³ China's Guizhou province, linked to Argentina's Jujuy province since 2017, sent 9,000 face masks to Jujuy before July 2020.⁸⁴ In other cases, cities and provinces in China have shipped equipment to Chinese embassies in LAC or directly to LAC governments (sometimes through LAC embassies in China, as Urdinez noted) for broader distribution. For example, Chongqing in central China delivered 1,000 protective suits, 1,000 surgical suits, and 5,400 N95 masks to Ecuador in early April, according to China's embassy there. Suzhou, in China's Jiangsu province, donated 20,000 face masks and 200 hazmat suits to Panama's government later that same month. And Nanjing donated 30,000 face masks to Colombia.⁸⁵

Overseas Chinese communities and associations also facilitated PPE distribution in LAC countries. Their activities were reflective of the decentralized but still semi-coordinated nature of China's early outreach. The Chinatown community in Bogotá reportedly donated food to needy families. Members of El Salvador's Chinese community contributed 3,000 face masks and other supplies to the country's national police, according to a Twitter post from the local Chinese embassy.⁸⁶ The Chinese community in Venezuela also donated equipment to certain Venezuelan localities in mid-April. The Chinese media reported that alumni from Cuban universities donated more than 58,000 face masks to the Cuban people.⁸⁷ Some of these activities were likely planned by the communities themselves, without the Chinese government's involvement. Others received support from local Chinese missions, with embassies highlighting these efforts as part of their media outreach.⁸⁸ Some Chinese civil society organizations in LAC are closely linked to China. Jin Jiachi, president of the Zhonghua Business Association in Mexico, organized the delivery

of 15,000 face masks to the Mexican government in April 2020.⁸⁹ Jin was one of four Chinese individuals in Mexico named in 2018 as members of the 10th Committee of the Chinese Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese.⁹⁰

THE EFFECTS OF CHINA'S PANDEMIC-ERA OUTREACH

Of interest at this point in the pandemic is the effect of China's approach to coronavirus outreach on LAC infection rates as the virus continues to surge in parts of the region, on views of China, and on China's political and commercial objectives (as outlined in previous sections).

The effect of China's early donations and sales of medical equipment on COVID-19 outcomes in the region is still difficult to discern. Chinese supplies benefitted certain countries, communities, and targeted individuals but ranged considerably in scale and importance, with some countries receiving high-tech equipment, such as ventilators, and others receiving basic protective attire. China's vaccine-related outreach could have a far more profound effect on COVID-19 outcomes in the region, despite some variation in efficacy rates among the country's three vaccines and the possibility that new variants will render China's vaccines less effective. A Chinese mRNA vaccine that had a late-stage human trial in Mexico in May could prove more effective than China's existing vaccines in preventing serious illness.⁹¹

LAC views of China and its coronavirus outreach are also difficult to gauge, given the pandemic's limitations on public opinion polling. One Caribbean-based interviewee suggested that China's media outreach has had little effect on regional views of China. And a Mexican interviewee with ties to local media suggested that Chinese ambassador op-eds, whether about COVID-19 or other topics are barely read at all.⁹² Indeed, most Chinese embassy Twitter accounts have few followers. China's medical outreach has likely been more impactful on the region's overall views of China. China's vaccine sales were critical for many countries in the region, especially considering that access to U.S. vaccines was still relatively limited at the time of this report's publication. And China's timely deliveries were regarded positively by most in

LAC, although concerns about the efficacy of Chinese vaccines could complicate the region's vaccination plans.⁹³

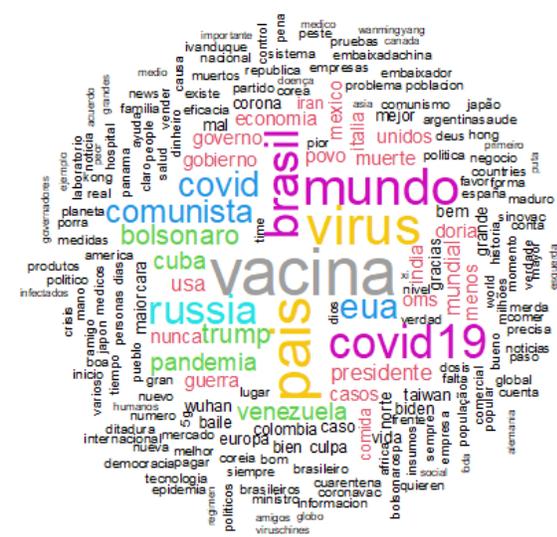
China's PPE deliveries were also met with gratitude, although some in the region indicated concern about the quality and cost of Chinese PPE shipments. Mexican officials noted that much of the equipment they purchased from China was the same equipment they had sold to China early in the pandemic and that Mexico repurchased the equipment at a much higher price.⁹⁴ In Argentina, some diagnostic tests for COVID-19 were deemed ineffective by the country's Ministry of Science.⁹⁵

Based solely on analysis of LAC Twitter posts, China's wide-reaching medical outreach does not appear to have significantly impacted overall views of China in the region, however. To assess LAC views of China during the pandemic, Inter-American Dialogue researchers used R-based data mining⁹⁶ to gather tweets within a 2,500-mile radius from the coordinates -15.6006, -56.1004, which correspond to Cuiabá, Brazil, an approximate geographic center of South America, encompassing Twitter users from across Latin America and the Caribbean. A search for tweets posted from February 2020 to April 2021 including the word "China" was run using these parameters. We then applied Julia Silge and David Robinson's text mining tools⁹⁷ to parse tweets into monograms (single words) and generated a list of the top 200 most frequently-used words. The 200 words represented in the word cloud below (Figure 3), and are weighted according to the frequency with which LAC Twitter users employed them. To determine possible shifts in views of China among Twitter users pre- and post-pandemic, we performed the same search for tweets posted between October 2018 and January 2020 or the 14 months preceding the pandemic (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. TERMS THAT APPEARED WITH GREATEST FREQUENCY IN LAC TWEETS REFERENCING “CHINA,” OCTOBER 2018–FEBRUARY 2020 (PRE-COVID-19)



FIGURE 3. TERMS THAT APPEARED WITH GREATEST FREQUENCY IN LAC TWEETS REFERENCING “CHINA,” FEBRUARY 2020–APRIL 2021 (AMID THE PANDEMIC)



We noted a substantial overall increase in LAC tweets about China amid the pandemic, perhaps suggesting that the region’s Twitter users viewed China as having a more substantial impact on LAC affairs during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, 41,098 geo-referenced tweets mentioned China. More than three times as many (144,181 tweets) referenced China during the pandemic, though many came from official Chinese sources and possibly also from bots.

However, it is difficult to know whether LAC Twitter users viewed China especially positively or negatively. The terms used in these tweets were fairly neutral—not strongly positively or negatively weighted, according to the Technical University of Denmark’s AFINN Lexicon Dictionary and the NRC Word-Association Lexicon, published by Saif Mohammad and Peter Turney.⁹⁸

Unsurprisingly, tweets referencing China during the pandemic focused to a considerable degree on COVID-19 and China’s vaccines, whereas tweets posted before the pandemic focused more extensively on the U.S.-China trade war, presumably, with the “U.S.” (*EUA*), “Trump,” and “war” (*guerra*) featuring among the top ten most used words. Communist (*comunista*) also featured among the leading 15 words in both data sets. It was used more than 1,000 times in geo-referenced tweets about China pre-covid and more than 5,000 times in tweets posted during the pandemic.

To gauge views of Chinese vaccines, we also mined Twitter for posts using the words “*vacuna china*” and “*vacuna chinesa*” between February 2020 and April 2021. Spanish-language tweets about “*vacuna china*” were not strongly emotionally weighted—positively or negatively. However, some negatively-weighted words, such as “shit,” “guinea pigs,” and “fear,” featured among the top 200 words used in Portuguese-language tweets about Chinese vaccines (Figure 4). São Paulo Governor João Dória was also mentioned with considerable frequency—more than 600 times from February 2020 to April 2021, reflecting domestic political tensions in Brazil’s vaccine-related planning and acquisition. Dória was responsible for coordinating much of the country’s vaccine-related cooperation with China.

ic opinions, as evident in 2019 Pew Research Center findings.¹⁰⁰

China's approach was also occasionally problematic. Urdinez noted the challenges of coordinating China's decentralized method, including occasional miscommunications and diplomatic blunders.¹⁰¹ In Chile, poor coordination among Chinese actors resulted in a serious misunderstanding with Chilean officials.¹⁰² Courting LAC officials with PPE kits and vaccines is also a problematic and potentially corruption-inducing practice. China's experiment with "wolf warrior"-type messaging may additionally have had unintended effects, as Yale University's Daniel C. Mattingly and James Sundquist have noted. Wolf warrior diplomacy, they say, has backfired on numerous occasions.¹⁰³

Ultimately, this exercise has been an experimental one for China, whether through the use of an impromptu and often decentralized aid campaign, the development of new medical technologies, or by employing novel approaches to communications with the region. China's approach has supported numerous objectives, whether economic or diplomatic, but wide-ranging factors will determine the overall impact of Chinese outreach. These include the effectiveness of Chinese vaccines and the extent of commitments by partner nations during the pandemic and after, as LAC prepares for a period of prolonged economic and social recovery.

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF MESSAGING BY CHINESE EMBASSIES IN LAC IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2020

1/7/2020	Panama	Ambassador to Panama published op-ed noting China's international cooperation	H.E. Mr. Wei Qiang
1/10/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T published a statement from the police department expressing gratitude for China's donations and cooperation in security matters	Chinese embassy
1/11/2020	Panama	Ambassador to Panama attends interview with CGTV promoting cooperation with Panama	H.E. Mr. Wei Qiang
1/26/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T hosted a conference, "Human Rights in Xinjiang: Development and Progress"	Chinese embassy
1/29/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T published newsletter about China's COVID-19 response	Chinese embassy
1/31/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in C5N interview	Wang Xiaolin
1/31/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia assured public of China's ability to control its outbreak in interview	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
1/31/2020	El Salvador	Representative of Embassy attended press conference in El Salvador assuring China's ability to handle its outbreak	Huang Kunyu
1/31/2020	Peru	Embassy in Peru published statement defending China against allegations	Chinese embassy
1/31/2020	Peru	Ambassador to Peru visited hospital and assured public of China's ability to control its outbreak	H.E. Mr. Liang Yu
1/31/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T published newsletter about China's control of its outbreak	Chinese embassy
1/31/2020	Uruguay	Ambassador to Uruguay published op-ed, "Arriba Wuhan," supporting Wuhan and assuring China's ability to control its outbreak	H.E. Mr. Wang Gang
1/31/2020	Uruguay	Embassy in Uruguay published statement defending China against allegations made by U.S. politicians regarding 5G and the Belt and Road Initiative	H.E. Mr. Wang Gang
2/1/2020	Antigua and Barbuda (A&B)	Chinese ambassador to A&B wrote op-ed in <i>The Observer</i> about China's response to COVID-19	H.E. Mr. Sun Ang
2/1/2020	Dominican Republic	Ambassador to DR assured of China's ability to control its outbreak in op-ed	H.E. Mr. Zhang Run
2/1/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T published newsletter about China's control of its outbreak	Chinese embassy
2/1/2020	Uruguay	Embassy in Uruguay published Shanghai think tank article, "Fighting COVID 19: Progress and Insight"	Chinese embassy
2/2/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia assured China's ability to control its outbreak in op-ed	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/3/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/3/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in C5N interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/3/2020	Colombia	Embassy in Colombia published article, "Don't believe these lies about COVID" in <i>El Tiempo</i>	Chinese government

2/3/2020	Peru	Ambassador to Peru attended interview about China's investment in Latin America	H.E. Mr. Liang Yu
2/4/2020	Bolivia	Ambassador to Bolivia held press conference about COVID-19 response	H.E. Huang Yazhong
2/4/2020	Brazil	Ambassador to Brazil reassured Brazilian media of China's control over its COVID-19 outbreak	H.E. Mr. Yang Wan-ming
2/4/2020	Mexico	Ambassador to Mexico published op-ed assuring China's ability to control its outbreak, "China toma medidas energicas para combaitr brote de nuevo coronavirus"	H.E. Mr. Zhu Qingqiao
2/4/2020	Mexico	Ambassador to Mexico appeared in a television interview assuring China's control of its outbreak and defending China against various allegations	H.E. Mr. Zhu Qingqiao
2/4/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T published newsletter referencing China's control of its outbreak	Chinese embassy
2/5/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in C5N interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/5/2020	Argentina	Embassy in Argentina published statement defending China	Chinese embassy
2/5/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia defended China against allegations and assured China's ability to control its outbreak in interview	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/5/2020	Ecuador	Embassy in Ecuador described China's COVID-19 response in press conference	Chinese government
2/5/2020	Guyana	Embassy in Guyana published an article about China's ability to control its outbreak	Chinese embassy
2/5/2020	Panama	Ambassador to Panama attended television interview assuring China's ability to control its outbreak	H.E. Mr. Wei Qiang
2/5/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Embassy in T&T published newsletter about China's ability to control its outbreak	Chinese embassy
2/6/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in television interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/6/2020	Brazil	Ambassador to Brazil reassured Brazilian representatives regarding China's ability to control its COVID-19 outbreak	H.E. Mr. Yang Wan-ming
2/6/2020	Dominican Republic	Ambassador to DR assured China's ability to control its outbreak in interview	H.E. Mr. Zhang Run
2/6/2020	El Salvador	Representative of Embassy attended press conference in El Salvador supporting China's handling of the pandemic and urging people not to blame China	Huang Kunyu
2/6/2020	Grenada	Ambassador to Grenada hosted press conference ensuring China's ability to control its outbreak and its commitment to transparency	H.E. Mr. Yongchen Zhao
2/6/2020	Uruguay	Embassy in Uruguay published article accusing the United States of sabotaging relations with Uruguay, "China acusa EEUU de 'sabotear' su relacion con Uruguay"	Chinese embassy
2/7/2020	Costa Rica	Ambassador to Costa Rica supported China's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in <i>La Nación</i> and <i>La Opinión</i>	H.E. Mr. Tang Heng

2/7/2020	Ecuador	Ambassador to Ecuador published op-ed regarding China's control of the pandemic	H.E. Mr. Chen Guoyou
2/7/2020	Guyana	Ambassador to Guyana attended interview supporting China's control of its outbreak and addressing any risk to Guyana	H.E. Mr. Cui Jian-chun
2/7/2020	Peru	Ambassador to Peru attended interview assuring China's ability to control its outbreak	H.E. Mr. Liang Yu
2/8/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/8/2020	Argentina	Ambassador to Argentina defended China in op-ed for <i>El Mundo</i>	H.E. Mr. Zou Xiaoli
2/8/2020	Bolivia	Ambassador to Bolivia pleaded for support from Bolivia in newspaper interview	H.E. Huang Yazhong
2/8/2020	Dominican Republic	Ambassador to DR assured China's ability to control the pandemic and urged the public not to believe in press conference rumors	H.E. Mr. Zhang Run
2/8/2020	Venezuela	Ambassador to Venezuela published op-ed assuring China's ability to control the pandemic, "China conseguira la victoria contra el coronavirus"	H.E. Mr. Li Baorong
2/9/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in TN interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/9/2020	Venezuela	Ambassador to Venezuela published op-ed celebrating Chinese New Year and COVID-19 cooperation	H.E. Mr. Li Baorong
2/10/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in C5N interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/10/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in <i>Telam</i> interview	Wang Xiaolin
2/10/2020	Bolivia	Embassy in Bolivia announced solidarity with Chinese covid victims	Chinese government
2/10/2020	Dominican Republic	Embassy in DR forwarded op-ed responding to allegations against China	Chinese government
2/10/2020	Trinidad and Tobago	Ambassador to T&T attended television interview, assuring China's ability to control outbreak and noting prospects for economic recovery	H.E. Mr. Song Yumin
2/11/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia assured China's ability to control the pandemic in interview	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/11/2020	Dominica	Ambassador to Dominica praised China's friendship with Dominica in the fight against COVID-19	H.E. Mr. Lu Kun
2/11/2020	Grenada	Ambassador to Grenada publishes op-ed, "Don't be afraid, please trust China's ability to overcome the pandemic"	H.E. Mr. Yongchen Zhao
2/12/2020	Suriname	Embassy in Suriname published statement to thank overseas Chinese for donating PPE and noting China's full control of its outbreak	Chinese embassy
2/12/2020	Suriname	Ambassador to Suriname published an op-ed assuring China's control of the pandemic, "China confident to overcome the battle against Covid"	H.E. Mr. Liu Quan

2/13/2020	Costa Rica	Ambassador to Costa explained China's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in an interview	H.E. Mr. Tang Heng
2/13/2020	Grenada	Ambassador to Grenada published an article noting China's control of its outbreak, "Panic unnecessary, China will prevail over the epidemic"	H.E. Mr. Yongchen Zhao
2/13/2020	Panama	Ambassador to Panama assured China's ability to control its outbreak in television interview	H.E. Mr. Wei Qiang
2/14/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia assured China's ability to control the pandemic in interview	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/14/2020	Panama	Spokesperson to Embassy to Panama participated in television interview about China's experience with COVID-19	Chinese embassy
2/14/2020	Peru	Ambassador to Peru attended television interview noting that China's economic outlook was not affected by the pandemic	H.E. Mr. Liang Yu
2/17/2020	Brazil	Ambassador to Brazil defended China from allegations in interview with São Paulo newspaper	H.E. Mr. Yang Wan-ming
2/17/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia noted China's control of the pandemic in an interview	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/17/2020	Mexico	Ambassador to Mexico appeared in a television interview assuring China's ability to control the pandemic and defending China against various allegations	H.E. Mr. Zhu Qin-gqiao
2/19/2020	Antigua and Barbuda	Chinese ambassador to A&B wrote an op-ed in <i>The Observer</i>	H.E. Mr. Sun Ang
2/19/2020	Barbados	Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, a Chinese think tank, published an article on China's COVID-19 response and prospects	Chinese think tank
2/20/2020	Colombia	Chinese ambassador to Colombia participated in an interview, assuring the Colombian public of China's ability to control the pandemic	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/20/2020	Panama	Embassy in Panama published letters of support from Panama-China friendship associations	Chinese embassy
2/20/2020	Panama	Ambassador to Panama attended television interview assuring China's ability to control the pandemic and remarking on its economic recovery	H.E. Mr. Wei Qiang
2/21/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina interviewed by <i>Good Morning Argentina</i> regarding China's response to COVID-19	Wang Xiaolin
2/21/2020	Uruguay	Ambassador to Uruguay referenced China's control of the pandemic and its economic cooperation with Uruguay in interview	H.E. Mr. Wang Gang
2/23/2020	Peru	Ambassador to Peru took part in a television interview about China's economic recovery	H.E. Mr. Liang Yu
2/25/2020	Argentina	Counselor to Argentina defended China in interview with FM 95.5	Wang Xiaolin
2/26/2020	Panama	Embassy in Panama published op-ed citing Julio Yao Villalaz's defense of China against claims that COVID-19 originated there	Chinese embassy
2/26/2020	Peru	Ambassador to Peru attended television interview and underscored China's economic cooperation with LAC amid the pandemic	H.E. Mr. Liang Yu

2/27/2020	Argentina	Ambassador to Argentina wrote op-ed in <i>La Nación</i> about China's COVID-19 recovery	H.E. Mr Zou Xiaoli
2/27/2020	Mexico	Embassy in Mexico hosted press conference assuring China's ability to control its outbreak and answered questions	Chinese embassy
2/28/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia defended China against allegations in television interview	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu
2/28/2020	Panama	Ambassador to Panama attended conference of supporters and defended China against "lies from certain politicians"	H.E. Mr. Wei Qiang
2/29/2020	Argentina	Ambassador to Argentina wrote op-ed in <i>El Cronista</i> regarding China's COVID-19 response	H.E. Mr Zou Xiaoli
2/29/2020	Colombia	Ambassador to Colombia assured China's ability to control the pandemic in <i>El Tiempo</i>	H.E. Mr. Lan Hu

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