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# Ibero-America Briefs

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## López Obrador Nails Financiers Behind ‘Ecologism’

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has now said publicly what most developing sector world leaders know, but are afraid to say: that the ecologist and human rights mafias are run by the financiers to block their nations’ sovereign development.

AMLO was in Mexico’s Southeast to review progress on the construction of the Yucatan peninsula “Mayan Train.” That project is designed as an intercity rail line to promote tourism in the five Mexican states where the ancient Mayan civilization developed, while facilitating freight and residential travel within the region.

Countless legal suits and media-gearred protests have been deployed in the name of protecting “ecology” and “Indian rights” to cancel the project, yet a recent poll found that 87% of the people of the region support it. Asked by a reporter on Oct. 29 about reports that “people from outside the region” were behind the opposition to the railway, AMLO suggested people look to “those who devised the neoliberal policy” for the answer.

“The international agencies that supported the neoliberal model, which is a model of pillage where corporations grab national property, the property of the people—these same corporations financed, and continue to finance environmental groups, defenders of ‘liberty’,” he responded. “One of the things they promoted in the world, in order to loot at ease, was ... the so-called new rights. So, feminism, ecologism, the defense of human rights, the

protection of animals was much promoted, including by them.

“All these causes are very noble, but the intent was to create or boost all these new causes ... so that we don’t turn around and see that they were looting the world, so the subject of economic and social inequality would be kept out of the center of debate,” he explained. He added that many people signing the manifestos against the Mayan Train know nothing about this region, which had been so abandoned that many of its people did not even have access to clean water.

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## Mexican, Russian Space Agencies To Cooperate

Russia’s space agency, Roscosmos, and the Mexican Space Agency (AEM) signed an agreement to cooperate in “the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes” on Sept. 25, during the visit of a broader Russian economic delegation to Mexico City. The agreement identifies a wide range of areas for potential cooperation between the two space agencies over the medium and long term: space science and exploration, including astrophysics, planetary studies, space materials and biology, remote sensing of Earth, satellite communications and navigation, space meteorology, launching services, and, importantly, manned space flight.

The agreement emphasizes the development of Mexican youth, as well as Mexican scientists and technological experts, “in order to build national capabilities in Mexico.”

The AEM was formed in 2010, under the Ministry of Communications

and Transport, but until recently it has limited its ambitions to educational programs.

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## Bolivia’s Drive to Industrialize Advances

Industrial and scientific projects crucial to Bolivia’s determination to become a fully industrialized nation are moving forward again, reversing the damage done by the neoliberal coup government of Nov. 2019 to Nov. 2020.

The new urea (fertilizer) plant at the petrochemical complex in Cochabamba is now functioning at 70% capacity and producing 1,500 tons of urea a day, the state oil firm YPFB announced on Oct. 23. Of the daily production, 7% will go to the internal market at a subsidized price, and the rest will be exported.

The large Mutún steel industry complex being built near the country’s huge iron ore and manganese deposits in Santa Cruz near the Brazilian border, is now about 40% complete, Mining and Metallurgy Minister Ramiro Villavicencio Nino de Guzman reported two days later. The coup government had shut this project down, launched in 2017 with China under Evo Morales’s government, leaving its equipment to rot. Not long after taking office, President Luis Arce signed a new agreement with China, and Minister Villavicencio now reports that 100 trailers of state-of-the-art machinery and equipment will be arriving from China, Germany and Mexico in the coming weeks. The first steel production in Bolivia’s history is to become a reality by mid-2023.

Likewise, a four-day International

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Atomic Energy Agency inspection of construction on Bolivia's Nuclear Technology Research and Development Center (CIDTN) concluded on Oct. 1 with high praise for the "splendid" quality of work and professionalism found at the site.

The CIDTN is a joint project of the Bolivian Nuclear Energy Agency and Russia's Rosatom nuclear power agency. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Bolivia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rogelio Mayta, met in Moscow on Oct. 22 to discuss a broader "roadmap for trade and economic cooperation" between their countries, including prospects for investment and collaboration in industry, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, medical equipment, and aircraft technology.

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## Haiti Stands 'at the Gates of Hell'

The above headline, from the Oct. 26 edition of the Haitian online daily *Haiti Libre*, captures the situation in Haiti's cities, under attack by gangs on top of the already horrendous lack of basic services.

Successive U.S. administrations have wittingly abandoned Haiti to the international drug traffickers. The result: armed gangs, far better armed than the police, now function as a quasi-state, in the absence of a functioning state or functioning state institutions.

Since the end of October, gangs have been blocking access to the main Varreux petroleum storage facility for Port-au-Prince, holding hostage 25,000 barrels of gasoline and 50,000 barrels of diesel fuel needed for gas stations, hospitals, communications companies, state water and electricity companies, et al. Most hospitals in Port-au-Prince have closed, except for perhaps a skeleton crew of a few doctors and nurses or a couple of medical students, because there is no electricity for operat-

ing rooms or oxygen tanks. Cancer treatment has ended. Mobile telecommunications services and the supply of potable water are among the basic services threatened by the lack of power.

The resulting flood of Haitians into the neighboring Dominican Republic has raised tensions to a dangerous level. Dominican President Luis Abinadar cancelled his trip to COP26, citing the serious security situation in Haiti and fear that a further increase in gang activity could threaten the Dominican Republic. Tougher actions against undocumented Haitians trying to enter or already in the country are underway, including prohibiting their access to any public Dominican hospital. Twelve thousand Dominican soldiers have been mobilized at or near the border with Haiti; rumors on social media of imminent military action—of what nature and by whom never made clear—are being circulating in both countries.

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## Blinken Gives a Nod and a Wink to Drug Legalization

People in the region noticed that Secretary of State Tony Blinken pushed "harm reduction"—a formulation invented by the George Soros legalization lobby for moving towards drug legalization—in his public remarks during his Oct. 8 security dialogue in Mexico and Oct. 20-22 trip to Ecuador and Colombia.

Colombia's Caracol TV asked Blinken point blank on Oct. 22: Is the Biden administration considering drug legalization?

Blinken did not answer, slithering around instead on how "we also have to give people a choice, an option, an opportunity, because if they feel that their only possibility is to engage in illegal activity, or they have so much to spare in their lives that they themselves look to drugs, then yes, it is lost. But..."

His refusal to answer is the broad-

est signal yet that drug legalization is being prepared for the Biden administration's agenda.

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## Regional Vaccine Production Planned

Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) Director Dr. Clarisse Etienne reported on Sept. 29, that initial plans for expanding vaccine manufacturing capacity in the region in order to "build a more sustainable and dependable supply of vaccines and medical technologies" had been mapped out at the Sept. 20-24 annual meeting of the PAHO Directing Council, attended by health ministers and authorities throughout the Americas. A regional platform for vaccine clinical trials is planned, and a PAHO-led "regional platform to accelerate development and production of advanced mRNA vaccines" locally has been established, with two centers in Argentina and Brazil selected to develop COVID-19 vaccines using this advanced technology.

This is a strategic initiative, Dr. Etienne emphasized, "because mRNA technology can also be used to develop other virus vaccines for relevant public health problems in our region such as Zika, dengue fever, and others." PAHO is "inviting public and private pharmaceutical manufacturers that can develop and produce essential components for mRNA vaccines to become a part of its regional platform."

Leaders and professionals in the region are angry, because Ibero-America and the Caribbean is the developing sector region most affected by the COVID pandemic, with 44.8 million confirmed cases and 1.4 million deaths, yet only 35% of the people in the region have been fully vaccinated, and 10 countries and territories have yet to reach 20% of their populations. Haiti has fewer than 1% of its people protected.