

China Deepening Cooperation in Latin America's Sizeable Lithium Sector



Lithium mines in Jujuy Province, Argentina.

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By Ryan Berg
OE Watch Commentary

The price of lithium, a key ingredient in battery technology, has skyrocketed amid the rush for critical minerals. Lithium can be found in abundance throughout South America's so-called "Lithium Triangle," which comprises Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile and contains approximately 55 percent of the world's known lithium deposits.¹ Mexico also has known lithium deposits. Collectively, Latin America's lithium reserves has attracted global attention, especially from China. According to the first excerpted article

from China's state-run *Global Times*, Chile's Consul General in Chengdu vowed to increase the country's cooperation with China to stabilize the global supply and price of lithium. In Mexico's case, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has sought to nationalize the metal known as "white gold." According to the second excerpted article from privately held popular media outlet *Radio Fórmula*, a new state company called Lithium for Mexico will control the metal in Mexico, demanding foreign partners to enter joint ventures and junior partnerships. The article reports that only one company has received a unique exception to this rule—China's Ganfeng Lithium. Mexico's government justifies this exception on the basis

that Ganfeng had an existing agreement to control lithium at the Bacanora site before the mineral's nationalization. These developments demonstrate China's advances in Latin America with respect to its critical minerals strategy, as well as the success of its economic diplomacy in achieving carveouts for its companies.

China's consumption of lithium accounted for 65 percent in the global lithium market, driven partly by the fast-developing new-energy vehicle sector and the energy storage industry, along with the country's carbon emissions reduction goals.

Source: "Chile vows to enhance cooperation with China in lithium sector," *Global Times* (state-owned media outlet under the auspices of the People's Daily), 9 November 2022. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202211/1279134.shtml>

Chile's consul general in Chengdu...Gustavo Díaz Hidalgo, on Wednesday vowed to further enhance cooperation with China in the lithium sector, in a bid to stabilize the global supply of the vital mineral for making batteries...Díaz predicted that the global demand for lithium each year would surpass 1 million tons by 2025, crossing 2.5 million tons by 2030.

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Source: "Litio para México: Empresa estatal lo explotará en exclusiva...salvo una excepción china (Lithium for Mexico: State company will exploit it exclusively...with one Chinese exception)," *Radio Fórmula* (a popular outlet owned by the large media conglomerate Grupo Fórmula), 24 August 2022. <https://www.radioformula.com.mx/economia/2022/8/24/litio-para-mexico-empresa-estatal-lo-explotara-en-exclusiva-salvo-una-excepcion-china-728919.html>

The Secretary of Energy, Rocío Nahle, explained that the current concession for exploration and exploitation of lithium at the hands of a private company will be maintained... Although concessions will no longer be granted to explore and exploit the mineral...the only one in force for exploitation before the reform to the Mining Law, in the hands of an Asian company, will remain in force.

Notes:

[1] For more information on U.S. opportunities in the Lithium Triangle and how the United States might effectively compete, see: Ryan C. Berg and T. Andrew Sady-Kennedy, "South America's Lithium Triangle: Opportunities for the Biden administration," 17 August 2021. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/south-americas-lithium-triangle-opportunities-biden-administration>

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY: ARMY CAMPAIGN DOCTRINE IN TRANSITION

Kevin McCauley
September 2020

This monograph examines current People's Liberation Army (PLA) Army campaign doctrine, with a discussion of PLA theorists' vision of the evolutionary development of warfare to provide context for current doctrine as well as potential future direction. The PLA develops doctrinal joint and service campaign scenarios for possible offensive and defensive operations. PLA campaigns represent the operational level of war between strategic operations and tactical combat. The PLA's current focus on specific campaigns provides insight into Beijing's perception of potential conflict scenarios. The campaign scenarios provide commanders and staff data on command and control, coordination, combat actions, support, and other critical campaign elements for specific operational environments. The description of each campaign's operational environment and combat actions provides valuable support to operational planning and a context for staff and unit training for their specific operational mission. The Army campaigns are executed as components of a joint campaign, or as a primarily independent Army campaign with support from other services.

