



Chinese Medical Aid to Venezuela

OE Watch Commentary: The People's Republic of China is strengthening its diplomatic ties with Venezuela through medical assistance. As the first accompanying excerpt from *China Military Online* points out, the "Chinese hospital vessel the Arch of Peace (He Ping Fang Zhou) docked at Venezuela's La Guaira port on 22 September to carry out health operations in conjunction with the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB)." As the Chinese source explains, "the arrival of the vessel is part of the 28 cooperation agreements signed between Venezuela and China during Maduro's official visit to the Asian country last week."

The second accompanying excerpt from the pro-Venezuelan government newspaper, *Ultimas Noticias*, quotes the Venezuelan Minister of Defense Vladimir Padrino Lopez, who claims that it is "a vessel for peace" and "that peace is fostered in the world through cooperative and diplomatic ties." As both excerpts point out, international and Venezuelan media have been reporting on serious problems in Venezuela's national health system. Venezuela's health sector finds itself under strain from the country's economic recession, as well as from international financial sanctions that obstruct vital medical imports. This visit illustrates that China continues to hone its soft power arsenal to gain influence in Central and South America. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wedman)**

Source: "China's Arch of Peace Vessel Docks in Venezuela for Health Mission," *China Military Online*, 25 September 2018. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/25/content_9297699.htm

...Chinese hospital vessel the Arch of Peace (He Ping Fang Zhou) docked at Venezuela's La Guaira port on Saturday to carry out health operations in conjunction with the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB)... The arrival of the vessel is part of the 28 cooperation agreements signed between Venezuela and China during Maduro's official visit to the Asian country last week. He described that visit as being a "success" and said he is willing to learn from China in order to help improve the economic recovery efforts taking place in Venezuela... Venezuela's health sector finds itself under strain from the country's economic recession, as well as from international financial sanctions that obstruct vital medical imports....

Source: "China Navy Hospital Treating 600 a Day," *Ultimas Noticias*, 28 September 2018. <http://www.ultimasnoticias.com.ve/noticias/slider/arca-de-la-paz-atiende-600-pe%e2%80%8arsonas-por-dia/>

...International and Venezuelan media have been reporting on serious problems in Venezuela's national health system, including widespread shortages of medicines and medical equipment, as a result of the country's economic crisis. Venezuela's health sector finds itself under strain from the country's economic recession, as well as from international financial sanctions that obstruct vital medical imports....

"The first thing we must emphasize is (the vessel's) name. It is a vessel for peace, and peace is fostered in the world through cooperative and diplomatic ties," said Venezuelan Minister of Defense Vladimir Padrino Lopez. Lopez went on to note that the arrival of the He Ping Fang Zhou "is also a defensive operation, as the vessel is part of an exercise involving military hospitals in the country held this Saturday." Venezuela should also deepen military ties with China, he said.



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Chinese Navy hospital ship Peace Ark (866) departs Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam following the conclusion of Rim of the Pacific 2016.
Source: Petty Officer 2nd Class Laurie Dexter, <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/2772672/chinese-navy-hospital-ship-peace-ark-866-departs-joint-base-pearl-harbor-hickam-following-conclusion-rim>, Public Domain...