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## **U.S. State Department Annual Report: Latin American Drug Crop Production Down For First Time In 10 Years**

*by Steven Ranieri*

*Category/Department: General*

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In its annual report for 1990 on strategies to combat drug trafficking, the US State Department said the cultivation and production of drugs in Latin America and the Caribbean dropped for the first time in 10 years. According to the report released March 4, the decline was due largely to efforts by Mexico, Colombia and Bolivia. In 1990, Colombian law enforcement officers and soldiers destroyed or confiscated almost 53 tons of cocaine, an increase of 33% over the previous year. Mexican authorities destroyed 46.5 tons of cocaine, and an unprecedented quantity of poppy and marijuana crops. Anti-drug policies by the Bolivian government led to lower prices for coca, prompting many growers to participate in a voluntary coca crop eradication program, said the report. Under the program, the government eliminated slightly more than 8,000 ha. of coca. The report indicated an increasing tendency by drug trafficker organizations to use Central American countries as trans-shipment locations for narcotics destined for the US, result of difficulties in using Mexico or Caribbean nations. Anti-drug foreign aid in FY1991 totaled \$150 million, of which Latin American and Caribbean nations received \$86.8 million. The Bush administration has requested \$171.5 million for FY1992. Of the total, \$99 million are earmarked for Latin America and the Caribbean. (Source: Notimex, 03/04/91)

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