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Peruvian Foreign Minister Suggests Legalization Of Cocaine Use As Step In Reducing Drug Rings' Power, Violence

by John Neagle
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In a speech to the UN General Assembly on Sept. 25, Peruvian Foreign Minister Guillermo Larco-Cox noted the emergence of drug mafia organizations and alliances between traffickers and terrorists. To dismantle the lucrative drug trade, Larco-Cox proposed "the partial conversion of the (foreign) debt into resources to fight illegal drug trafficking, the legal acquisition of the whole of the coca leaf production and, finally, the decriminalization of consumption." The minister said his tentative proposals go "beyond the stage of reciprocal accusations between producing and consuming countries." He asserted that eradicating the cultivation of the coca leaf, from which thousands of Peruvian peasants derive their livelihood, "would be promoting a social problem of hunger and a protest which may swell subversion and the relocation of illegal crops." (Basic data from AP, 09/25/89)

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