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John Neagle

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Peruvian President On Drug Policy

by John Neagle

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On Nov. 30 at a press conference in Lima, Peruvian President Alan Garcia said he would support "dialogue" with drug traffickers if they agree to abandon their illicit activities. The press conference took place during a seminar titled "Narcotrafico y Terrorismo." Garcia confirmed that he and other Latin American leaders would meet with US President George Bush on Feb. 15 in Cartagena, Colombia. The Peruvian leader called on the governments of industrialized countries to commit themselves in practice and in terms of economic resources to eradicating the drug trade alongside development of crop substitution plans. Garcia criticized US drug policy in that on the one hand, Washington demands eradication of coca plants, and on the other it permits the price of coffee to plummet in world markets, resulting in greater difficulties for campesinos to seek viable lucrative alternatives to coca production. He said the US government's millions of dollars for anti-drug efforts in Latin America are concentrated on repression and police methods. The president added that while such activities are important, they do not resolve the roots of the problem. (Basic data from Notimex, 11/30/89)

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