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On May 8 in La Paz, Mining Minister Walter Soriano said "informal" tin exports from Brazil and the People's Republic of China had caused a substantial price decline in world markets. Miners and merchants in both nations regularly engage in smuggling to avoid taxes and customs fees. Soriano, also president of the Association of Tin Producer Countries, said the two nations export 35,000 metric tons of the mineral per month. Bolivia, said Soriano, is among the most adversely affected among tin producing nations. In Bolivia, tin is extracted via deep mining, compared to strip mining in Brazil and China. Consequently, Bolivian production costs are higher. As of the first week in May, world market tin prices averaged $2.60 per pound. The average cost per pound of refined tin at Bolivia's largest mine, the state-run Huanuni, is $3.00. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 05/08/91)

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