

8-15-1991

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Khol, Barbara. "Peruvian Government Denies Plans For Active Involvement Of U.S. Military Advisers In Anti-narcotics Program." (1991). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur/7024>

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Peruvian Government Denies Plans For Active Involvement Of U.S. Military Advisers In Anti-narcotics Program

by Barbara Khol

Category/Department: General

Published: Thursday, August 15, 1991

In communiques released Aug. 8, the Foreign and Defense Ministries denied reports that the US plans to send 50 military advisers to participate in anti-drug efforts, and the war against leftist rebels. The statement said "the presence of foreign troops had been explicitly ruled out" in the government's anti-drug policy. The New York Times quoted senior State Department officials as disclosing the plans to send the military trainers, including Green Berets and Navy personnel, to Peru. According to the Times, in July President Alberto Fujimori and the military high command agreed to the outlines of the \$34 million military aid program. The newspaper said the program would involve training two combat battalions, creating a river patrol force to intercept contraband chemicals used to make cocaine, and refurbishing military helicopters and combat jets. The Times said the Bush administration was expected to announce the program once all the details had been worked out with the Peruvian government. The involvement of US military personnel is reportedly considered necessary since Washington fears the Peruvian government is losing control of the situation, or rebel involvement in the drug trade. President Fujimori reiterated the content of the above communiques during a meeting with Sen. Enrique Bernales, leader of the Peruvian Senate's pacification commission, and president of the UN Human Rights Commission. The president asserted that the New York Times report is entirely false. (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 08/07/91; AFP, EFE, 08/08/91)

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