

Waging the War on Drugs in Bolivia

Executive Summary

*The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) is pleased to announce the publication our background paper entitled *Waging the War on Drugs in Bolivia*.*

As one of the world's three leading producers of the coca plant and an increasingly important producer of cocaine itself, Bolivia is a linchpin in the U.S. war on drugs. Levels of U.S. antinarcotics assistance and involvement in Bolivia in recent years provide ample illustration. Since former President Bush launched the Andean Initiative in 1989, Bolivia has received more than \$800 million in antinarcotics support and remains one of the top recipients of dwindling U.S. foreign assistance to Latin America. The U.S. government directly supports roughly a dozen law enforcement agencies or task forces, as well as special task forces of all three branches of the Bolivian armed forces -- a veritable narco-law enforcement complex.

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) is closely monitoring U.S. antinarcotics policy toward Bolivia, with particular attention to the Chapare coca growing region, where local coca growers bear the brunt of antinarcotics efforts. The purpose of this background paper is to disseminate some of the information and analysis we have collected to collegial organizations and others interested in U.S. policy toward Bolivia. We hope it will serve as a guide to understanding the dynamics of antidrug policies in Bolivia, the myriad of U.S. and Bolivian law enforcement and military units involved, and the collateral damage of the U.S. war on drugs being waged in that country.

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