

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING PAPER

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TENSIONS IN THE ANDES

Essential Factors:

Long-time border disputes involving Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador continue to cause occasional flare-ups.

-- The latest episodes occurred in January, when Peruvian officials chose to highlight Chilean espionage incidents, and Ecuadorean authorities arrested Peruvians allegedly spying on Ecuadorean military maneuvers.

-- Bolivia can be expected to press for a sovereign corridor to the Pacific.

-- Ecuador continues to appeal to Peru to cede to it sovereign territorial access to the Amazon.

-- Peru's recent arms build-up has led Ecuador and Chile to try to catch up by purchasing modern arms.

The authorities of the four governments have adopted a constructive approach: visiting neighboring countries, issuing official statements, and taking other actions to tamp down regional frictions.

US Objectives:

We want to ameliorate these recurring regional tensions. We are also interested in limiting acquisition of arms by countries in the area, and in Latin America as a whole.

Venezuelan and Brazilian Objectives:

President Perez argues for a greater US role in resolving these border disputes. He supports the current Mexican initiative for regional arms limitation. Brazil, which apparently does not support the Mexican initiative, is nevertheless interested in encouraging peaceful relations in the area.

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Points to be made:

-- We will continue urging peaceful resolution of the Andean region's problems and would welcome Venezuelan (and also Brazilian) views.

-- We favor settlement of border disputes. If a settlement is reached on Bolivian access to the sea, we will help obtain economic aid for the corridor area.

-- We support the Latin American arms limitation initiative, and will be pleased to cooperate in our role as an arms supplier country.

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