

A New Approach to Fighting Drugs in Latin America

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The Houston Chronicle
September 26, 2010



A Bolivian coca saleswoman shows leaves in La Paz. (AP Photo)

Hillary Clinton's recent comments comparing Mexico's drug-fueled security crisis to Colombia 20 years ago have caused a stir in Mexico. Her intent was clearly not to provoke; she won wide praise during her trip to Mexico early in 2009 when she acknowledged the obvious role of U.S. demand for illegal drugs and called for partnership. But it seems that nothing having to do with the illegal narcotics trade is easy and, as in the 1990s, the U.S.-Mexico relationship is at risk of being defined primarily by efforts to fight drugs.

These issues have been gaining renewed prominence regionally, as well. A number of former Latin American presidents, most recently Mexico's former President Vicente Fox, have called for a new approach in the war

