

### *A Note for Students and Discussion Groups*

This issue of the HEADLINE SERIES, like its predecessors, is published for every serious reader, specialized or not, who takes an interest in the subject. Many of our readers will be in classrooms, seminars or community discussion groups. Particularly with them in mind, we present below some discussion questions—suggested as a starting point only—and references for further reading.

### **Discussion Questions**

The Pentagon wants to stay out of the fight against drug trafficking. Why? Shouldn't military technology such as radar be deployed in the interdiction of drugs? Assess the effectiveness of interdiction as an antidrug policy.

What does the author mean by the statement that "our errors began with the 'war on drugs' metaphor"? How do word pictures influence the way we think about things? What would be a better image than war for describing a policy to combat the illegal drug problem?

The author argues that the United States and Latin America are now both involved in the different aspects of the drug trade, from cultivation to money laundering and from health problems to police corruption. Is your community part of the "joint venture" of drugs?

Imagine that you are a Bolivian tin miner who has just lost his job. What would you do? Would you migrate to the Chaparé region and grow coca? Would you go to the U.S. embassy and ask for a visa to emigrate to the United States?

Has Colombia done enough to fight drugs? If Colombian police catch a major trafficker, should the United States seek his extradition? How does drug trafficking threaten democracy in Colombia? in the United States?

## Talking It Over

Written by Merrill Collett

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The U.S. State Department believes that the forced eradication of South American coca plantations can significantly reduce cocaine consumption in the United States. Do you agree? What are the social and political consequences of the U.S. coca eradication project in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley? What is the environmental impact of eradication? of coca cultivation?

Does the drug industry contribute to the economic development of Latin America or is it just a stopgap measure that keeps economies from failing but does not contribute to the growth of their economic bases?