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**U.S. Aid to Colombia Contravenes Human Rights Intentions:
New Report Shows Dramatic Ties to Extrajudicial Killings**

A detailed report released today by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) describes how U.S. funding to the Colombian military has been supporting army units whose members have killed hundreds of civilians.

Drawing on extensive data from the Colombian Attorney General's and Inspector General's offices, 20 human rights organizations, the U.S. State Department, and the Colombian military, the report shows that billions of dollars provided under the rubric of Plan Colombia have abrogated U.S. human rights law and contributed to the killing of thousands of civilians by the Colombian Army.

"The U.S. has provided more than \$6 billion in support to Colombia since 2000," said John Lindsay-Poland, FOR's research and advocacy director. "This money is used to fund military units that have been proven to murder innocent civilians. That is outrageous and needs to stop."

U.S. law prohibits support to any foreign military unit for which there is credible evidence of having committed gross human rights violations, such as extrajudicial killings, by what is known as the Leahy Law, named for Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT). The report's analysis strongly suggests that implementation of the Leahy Law in Colombia requires suspension of U.S. assistance to nearly all army fixed brigades. The study also refutes U.S. claims that Plan Colombia has been an unvarnished success.

Susana Pimiento Chamorro, FOR's action director, added, "The State Department must be held accountable to human rights laws, and Colombia is an example of where this mandate has failed." State Department officials have said that the Leahy Law is implemented better in Colombia than almost anywhere else in the world.

This forceful study of U.S. relations in Latin America also has grave impacts on other areas of U.S. foreign policy, including Pakistan, where the United States has spent more than \$12 billion in military assistance, including for training and equipping units operating in tribal areas, where human rights groups have credibly reported hundreds of extrajudicial killings. Some aid to the Pakistani military has been legislated through coalition funds not considered "assistance," circumventing Leahy Law.

FOR and Amnesty International issued a report on U.S. aid and civilian killings in Colombia in 2008. International attention to killings of civilians by the Colombian military led to a steep decline in the number of civilians killed by the army in 2009, but the report notes that this doesn't affect the legal requirement to suspend assistance under the Leahy Law, since the law requires "effective measures" to bring those responsible to justice before new or continued U.S. assistance is lawful.

FOR (www.forusa.org), founded in 1915, is the oldest interfaith peace and justice organization in North America. FOR has maintained a human rights accompaniment team in Colombia since 2002.

SINCE 1915, THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION IN THE UNITED STATES HAS CARRIED ON PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS CONCERNED WITH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND JUSTICE, NONVIOLENT ALTERNATIVES TO CONFLICT, AND THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE. AN INTERFAITH ORGANIZATION, THE F.O.R. PROMOTES NONVIOLENCE AND HAS MEMBERS FROM MANY RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC TRADITIONS. IT IS PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION WHICH HAS AFFILIATES IN OVER 40 COUNTRIES.