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November 23, 2005

The Honorable Anne Patterson  
Assistant Secretary of State for International  
Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (Designee)  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Adolfo Franco  
Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean  
US Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Penn. Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Ambassador Patterson and Assistant Administrator Adolfo Franco:

On Monday, November 14, 2005 the President signed into law the FY 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-102), which includes \$734 million for activities in the Andean countries to combat narco-terrorism and drug production. We all want a just and lasting peace in Colombia, but in order to reach this important goal, we need to help create the conditions for peace, such as economic alternatives to drug cultivation, strong democratic institutions, and greater respect for human rights norms.

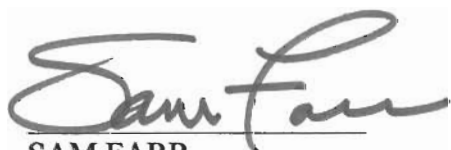
It is critical that funding which is intended to address some of the root causes of drug production and trafficking is protected and continues to be earmarked for projects supporting alternative development (AD), institution-building and Internally Displaced persons (IDPs). The conferees, recognizing the importance of AD and institution building, affirmed in the conference report that "not less than \$228,772,000 shall be appropriated to USAID including \$131 million for assistance for Colombia, for alternative development and institution building." Using these funds for anything other than the specified purposes of AD and institution building would contravene both the spirit and letter of the law. As you know, the conference report makes available \$20 million for "Assistance for Demobilization and Disarmament of Former Irregular Combatants in Colombia." Although the conference report does not specify how to fund the \$20 million for demobilization assistance, Foreign Operations Chairman Jim Kolbe and Ranking Member Nita Lowey have clearly stated that it is not the Committee's intention that the money for demobilization should be allotted from programs like AD. We therefore strongly urge you to comply with the law and Congressional directive and expect that the \$20 million for demobilization activities will not be funded from money which was originally intended in the FY

2006 Budget justification for non-interdiction activities, such as AD/institution building and human rights projects. Additionally, unexpended funds appropriated in FY 05 for AD/Institution Building should not be used for demobilization activities, but be used for their Congressionally mandate purpose.

Colombia has the third largest IDP population in the world, many of whom have been displaced because of the violent activities of these demobilizing FTOs. Colombia's Comptroller General has estimated that the Colombian government, even with U.S. and other international assistance, provides basic support only to approximately 30% of the IDP population. IDPs are among the most vulnerable in Colombia, and we urge the Administration to fully fund IDP programs.

The U.S. government can best support Colombian aspirations for peace and our shared counternarcotics goals by insisting that the underlying financial, military, and drug-trafficking structures of the paramilitary forces be fully and permanently dismantled. The success of the demobilization effort will hinge on constant U.S. oversight of the conditions for demobilization contained in Section 599E of the FY 06 Foreign Operations Appropriations Conference Report. We urge your continued monitoring of the demobilization effort and look forward to regular updates from you on progress which is being made to comply with these provisions.

Sincerely,



SAM FARR  
Member of Congress



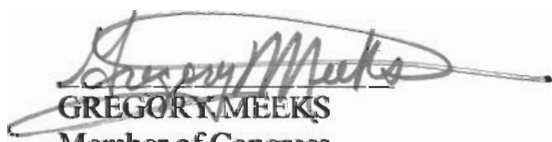
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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



GREGORY MEEKS  
Member of Congress



WILLIAM DELAHUNT  
Member of Congress



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ROBERT ANDREWS  
Member of Congress



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LANE EVANS  
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary Condoleezza Rice  
Administrator Andrew Natsios  
Liliana Ayalde, USAID/Colombia