

The Human Rights Program, the Center for Latin American Studies,  
and the Katz Center for Mexican Studies present:

## “Plan Mexico, the Drug War and Human Rights in Mexico”

*A “brown bag” lunchtime discussion with:*

**Laura Carlsen**, Director, Americas Program of the Center for International Policy  
**General José Francisco Gallardo**, human rights advocate and former military commander

**Wednesday, October 21, 2009**

**12:00 - 1:30 pm**

**Social Science Tea Room, Room 201**

**1126 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street**

The Merida Initiative is a three-year regional security cooperation plan launched by the Bush administration in October of 2007. The last year of the \$1.5 billion plan is currently before Congress for funding, with the possibility of extension. Like Plan Colombia, the Plan Mexico strategy relies on a military-based “war on drugs” model that has failed to stem illegal drug flows and has led to a sixfold increase in human rights violations and a huge jump in drug-related violence--15,400 executions since the offensive began in 2007. Nearly 50,000 soldiers have been deployed in Mexican communities where they are immune from prosecution in civilian courts for human rights violations against citizens. The speakers argue for a new binational rights-based approach.

### *Biographies of Speakers:*

**Laura Carlsen**, director of the Americas Program of the Center for International Policy, is an international writer and speaker on U.S.-Latin America relations. She holds a master’s degree in Latin American studies from Stanford University and has lived in Mexico City for over two decades and published over one hundred articles and many chapters on social, economic, and political aspects of Mexico and U.S. foreign policy and regional grassroots movements, including an extensive critique of the Merida Initiative, *A Primer on Plan Mexico*. Carlsen writes and edits the Americas Updater [www.americaspolicy.org](http://www.americaspolicy.org) and the AmericasMexico blog <http://americasprogram.wordpress.com> and is a frequent guest on radio and television programs throughout the hemisphere.

**General José Francisco Gallardo**, a former high ranking military commander, knows the inside workings of Mexico’s military. He has called for an end to impunity for human rights violations by the military and for the creation of a military human rights ombudsman’s office to investigate such abuses. Because of his outspoken advocacy for reform, he was imprisoned in 1993. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience. After more than eight years in prison, then-President Vicente Fox reduced General Gallardo’s sentence to time served, but the courts never acknowledged his innocence or abuses of justice in the case. He continues to work as a tireless advocate for human rights and against military abuses in Mexico. Gen. Gallardo holds a doctorate in Public Administration and has received numerous academic and human rights awards.

*This event is free and open to the public.*

