

Press Release

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**SCHAKOWSKY VOTES TO CUT U.S. MILITARY AID TO COLOMBIA
CALLS FOR END TO INEFFECTIVE, INHUMANE POLICY**

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) yesterday joined Democrats in supporting the McGovern Amendment to the Foreign Operations FY06 Appropriations bill, which would have reduced military aid for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative to Colombia by \$100 million. Past funding of the Andean Initiative has failed in reducing the amount of narcotics produced in Colombia, and has done nothing to stop the countries gross human rights violations.

The full text of Schakowsky's statement is below"

"Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and for his leadership on this important issue.

I rise in strong support of the McGovern-McCollum-Moore amendment to cut \$100 million from the Andean counterdrug initiative account, which, by the way, still leaves \$634.5 million in the account. I am not against helping create a more peaceful nation for the people of Colombia, and of course we want to reduce the flow of drugs to this country and the use of them by Americans, but I do not support throwing good money after bad in the quagmire that is our Colombia policy.

I wanted to read from an article today in the L.A. Times written by Sonni Efron, the headline being "Drug War Fails to Dent U.S. Supply."

'The Bush administration and congressional allies are gearing up to renew a plan for drug eradication in Latin America despite some grim news. The \$5.4 billion spent on the plan since 2000 has made no dent in the availability of cocaine on American streets, and prices are at all-time lows. United Nations figures released this month show that coca cultivation in the Andean region increased by 2 percent in 2004 as declines in Colombia were swamped by massive increases in Peru and Bolivia. And the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service said last week that the antidrug effort has had 'no effect' on the price or purity of drugs in the United States. The findings have fueled skepticism in Congress where conservative groups have joined efforts to lobby against continued funding.'

Let me underscore that: 'Conservative groups have joined efforts to lobby against continued funding. The National Taxpayers Union calls the antidrug program a 'boondoggle'.' That is from The L.A. Times.

And the policy of fumigation is not only ineffective, but it is inhumane. The majority of small farm families whose crops are sprayed do not receive assistance to transition to food crops from either the Colombian or the U.S. Governments. They are given no incentive to change their behavior, no alternative to make a living that will help them survive.

There are areas in Colombia where massive spraying is occurring and little or no development aid is provided. Even legal crops in those areas are killed. They are subsistence crops, and there is nothing given to replace that loss for those families. This is inhumane and it is also remarkably ineffective. Sixty-two percent of the coca fields detected by the U.N. in Colombia in 2004 were new; evidence that fumigation, in the absence of alternatives, is not moving farmers away from planting coca.

If we want a long-term and effective plan, it has to be a new one. It is not enough to send a report to our constituents each year and detail how much we are spending to go fight drugs. And it is not a real success when we reduce coca in one country while cultivation soars in another. We need to show them results, and this plan has provided none.

So if you truly care, you are going to support the McGovern-McCollum-Moore amendment and send a message that we need a new approach."

[Click here to read the L.A. Times Story](#)