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**SCHAKOWSKY WARNS BUSH ADMINISTRATION AGAINST
EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF U.S. MILITARY AND PRIVATE MILITARY CONTRACTORS
IN COLOMBIA**

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today warned against proposed plans by the Bush Administration to expand U.S. military involvement in Colombia. Schakowsky opposes a plan by the Bush Administration to double from 400 to 800 the maximum number of U.S. troops and increase from 400 to 600 the number of private U.S. military contractors in Colombia.

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"President Bush's policy in Colombia is a miserable failure and risking the lives of more US soldiers and wasting millions more taxpayer dollars on private military contractors will only make that policy worse. The Colombian people deserve more from the Bush Administration than a policy that will escalate violence and do nothing to promote a peaceful resolution to the civil war that has ravaged that nation for more than forty years," Schakowsky said.□□

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Schakowsky continued, "I continue to oppose the use of military contractors who are not subject to the same kind of scrutiny and accountability as U.S. soldiers. And when things go wrong for these contractors, they and their families have been shamefully forgotten by their American employers. The numbers proposed by the Administration, while too high on their own, are misleading because they do not include those foreign nationals who are recruited by these companies as subcontractors. Expanding the use of contractors in Colombia continues the Bush Administration's practice of hiding the truth from the American public and hampers the Congress's important oversight responsibility."

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"It seems that the Bush Administration's solution to dealing with the world is to deploy more U.S. soldiers and guns for hire, while refusing to seek real, lasting solutions. It's time for a new direction in U.S. international policy and diplomacy," Schakowsky concluded.