

NOVEMBER 22, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON SECRETARY POWELL TO ACCEPT AMBASSADOR
PATTERSON'S RECOMMENDATION
TO END U.S. AID TO COLOMBIAN
AIR FORCE UNIT IMPLICATED IN
SANTO DOMINGO MASSACRE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) called on Secretary of State Colin Powell to immediately decertify the Colombian Air Force's 1st Combat Command, a wing of the military that is implicated in the Santo Domingo massacre of 1998, where 18 civilians, including several children, were killed in the attack. Below is Schakowsky's letter to Secretary Powell:

November 20, 2002

*The Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC*

Dear Secretary Powell:

I am writing to urge you to immediately decertify the Colombian Air Force's 1st Combat Command so that wing of the Colombian military may no longer receive aid from the United States. As you know, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson has recommended this action as well.

Since 1998, I have closely followed the Santo Domingo massacre. As you know, 18 civilians, including several children were killed in the attack. I have raised this subject with U.S. and Colombian officials at the highest levels and have been urging the State Department to decertify all military units implicated.

Massacres are not a unique phenomenon in Colombia. However, the Santo Domingo massacre is one of the clearest cases of the misguided and ineffective policy the United States is seeking to implement in Colombia. Moreover, this case is even more troubling because two U.S. companies, Occidental Petroleum and AirScan, Inc., are implicated. Members of the crew of the Colombian aircraft that dropped the bomb on Santo Domingo have testified that they were acting under guidance from U.S. citizens who were flying a surveillance plane belonging to AirScan that was patrolling the battlefield. It is my understanding that AirScan was under contract with the Colombian Air Force to perform patrols in proximity to Santo Domingo. In addition to immediately cutting off all aid to Colombia's 1st Combat Command, the United States should assist Colombia in locating the employees of AirScan and Occidental that are implicated in this matter.

While long overdue, aggressive and appropriate action by your Department on this case will demonstrate at least some measure of commitment by the Bush Administration toward upholding human rights conditions placed on U.S. aid to Colombia.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to your timely response.

***Sincerely,
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress***