Mr. Speaker, I will not take the entire

hour, but I do want to continue a discussion that I started last

evening, a discussion regarding the situation in Kosovo and the

involvement of our troops in the air campaign, as well as the potential

involvement of our troops in a ground campaign.

I thought it was especially important to continue this this evening,

Mr. Speaker, because, as we both know, there are a number of our

colleagues who are this evening sitting in their offices signing mail

and responding to constituent concerns and at the same time keeping one

eye and perhaps one ear on the discussions taking place here.

I think it is important that we look at all the parameters associated

with the status of our military today as we hear increased discussions

in the city about committing significantly larger amounts of American

troops to Kosovo, and committing a significant amount of American

resources to the situation and the ultimate defeat of Milosevic.

Last night, Mr. Speaker, I focused on the need to bring Russia in and

to basically have Russia, which is on an ongoing basis a significant

beneficiary of American tax dollars, to play a vital and direct role in

helping to bring Milosevic to the table and to agree to negotiated

terms to settle the ethnic unrest that has occurred in Serbia,

especially with the Kosovars.

As I said last night, we spend between $6 hundred million and $1

billion of taxpayer money on programs to assist Russia. From economic

development to stabilization of their nuclear programs to assistance

with environmental issues, we are actively engaged in Russia, and I am

in the middle of many of those issues as the chairman of the

Interparliamentary Commission with the Russian Duma.

Now is the time for us, Mr. Speaker, to let Russia know that we

expect, for the assistance that we give them, that they play a

significant and vital role in bringing Milosevic, an ally and close

confidante of the Russian government and certain Russian leaders, to

the table to help us resolve this conflict peacefully.

As I said last evening, I have had discussions with Russian Duma

deputies and with leaders in Russia who want to pursue such a course.

Make no mistake about it, I think these negotiations should be on our

terms, not Russia's. We should set the policy based on the negotiations

that we have had with the Contact Group in the past, but Russia has to

be part of the process.

I think in the 3 weeks or so that we have been bombing Serbia it is

evident that we have not seen Milosevic move, in terms of coming our

way in acquiring a peaceful settlement. What we can in fact do is, in

continuing to apply pressure on the government there for the NATO

alliance, is bring Russia in and give Russia a more prominent role, and

basically allow Russia to play I think the kind of middle position they

should be playing in bringing Milosevic and his people to somber

discussions about how to resolve this situation peacefully.

I encourage the administration to do that. I am heartened that some

feedback I have gotten today is that the administration in fact is

looking at these options. I think that is critically important for

Republicans and Democrats to continue to press the administration and

our allies to look at ways that we can solve this problem to our

satisfaction, to the satisfaction of NATO, to the satisfaction of the

stability of the Kosovars and Kosovo as a Nation, where people can live

freely without ethnic intimidation, but we should do that also without

having to resort to inserting ground troops and potentially involving

ourselves in a major conflict that could involve the world's two major

superpowers as opponents.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to talk about

some other factors that Members must consider as we prepare to either

support or not support the administration's policy on moving additional

troops and operations and personnel and platforms into Kosovo and the

surrounding theater.

Before I do that, however, I want to reiterate two important points

that I made last evening. The first is that Milosevic understand in no

uncertain terms that all of us in this body are united with the

President in demanding that he end his reign of terror on the Kosovars,

and that he stop and be held accountable for the atrocities that are

now unfolding in Kosovo and Serbia, and that we as Americans will

follow through in holding him accountable personally. Let there be

no mistake about that.

The second key point I want to make and reemphasize from last evening

is that we are solidly behind our military; that we in the Congress are

doing everything in our power to give them the tools and the resources

they need to allow them to continue the operations that have been

outlined for them by the Commander in Chief.

But let me get into the meat of what I would like to discuss this

evening, Mr. Speaker. That deals with the need for Members of this body

and the other body to understand that deploying our troops in Kosovo,

sending our pilots in to conduct aerial campaigns, sending our

helicopters, our Apaches in to provide safe ways, is not the same as

sending inanimate robots into an area.

These are human beings, and these human beings have need, they have

wants. We have not been as supportive as a Nation in providing the

backup and financial resources to protect the quality of life and

stability of these troops as we should be.

This is an appropriate time for us to outline these concerns, and to

use this as part of our discussions as we decide whether or not to move

into a phase where ground troops are entered into Kosovo.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the people in America have been convinced

that for some reason we are spending so much more money today on our

military than at any point in time in the past. The facts just do not

bear that out.

When I talk to my constituents back in Pennsylvania, I use a simple

analogy. I do not compare what we are spending on defense to Ronald

Reagan, as some would perhaps do. Rather, I go back to the time of John

Kennedy.

When John Kennedy was president in the sixties, Mr. Speaker, we were

spending 52 cents of every Federal tax dollar coming into Washington on

the military. Yet, it was a time of peace. It was after Korea and

before Vietnam. Fifty-two cents of every tax dollar was spent on the

military. Nine percent of our gross national product was spent on

defense back then.

In today's budget, we are spending 15 cents of the Federal tax dollar

on defense. We are spending 2.6 percent of our gross national product

on the military. The numbers have dropped dramatically. In fact, by any

accounting standard, we are spending a significantly smaller portion of

our Federal allocation that is available on defense and security than

we were back when John Kennedy was the President, even though I would

argue that was a more stable time and a time of peace throughout the

world.

But some other factors have changed. Back when John Kennedy was

president we had the draft. Young people were brought into the

military. They served a period of 2 years or more. Then they went on

with their lives. They were paid next to nothing.

Today we have an all volunteer force. They are well educated. Many

are married, they have children, so we have added health care costs,

housing costs, travel costs, so a much larger portion of our smaller

defense budget is being spent on the quality of life to get those

troops, to get those people, to serve in the military and to keep those

troops involved and to stay on beyond one tour of duty.

In fact, quality of life is the overriding driving factor of our

defense budget process today, to make sure our troops are happy, that

they have the best possible quality of life to raise their families and

to continue to serve America.

That was not the case back in the sixties. With the draft, we paid

the troops a meager amount of money. Most were not married. We did not

have all the associated costs with housing, education, health care, and

so forth.

Some other things have changed. Back in John Kennedy's era when we

were spending 52 cents of every Federal tax dollar on the military, we

were not spending a significant portion of our defense budget on

environmental mitigation. In this year's defense budget, $11 billion of

the defense budget will go for what we call environmental mitigation.

That is money that is not going to provide support for our troops. That

is money that is not going to buy new equipment or to replace old

equipment, or to repair equipment.

Now $11 billion out of today's budget for defense environmental

mitigation, and zero dollars spent during John Kennedy's era for the

similar type of situation, a further change from the nineties as

compared to the sixties.

But there is even a more fundamental difference that gets at the

heart of our problem in sustaining the readiness of our troops today.

That is the issue that I also talked about last evening. This issue,

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to drive home to Americans and to our

colleagues on a daily basis.

During the time from World War II's ending until 1990 and 1991, under

the administration of all the presidents that served during that

period, starting with Harry Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard

Nixon and going on through John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, and going

on through Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, and even including Ronald

Reagan and George Bush, during all of that time the total amount of

deployments by those Commander in Chiefs was 10, 10 deployments in 40

years.

Our troops were only inserted into hostile environments as a measure

of last resort by our Republican and Democrat Commander in Chief.

Let us look at the past 8 years, Mr. Speaker. Since 1991, 1990 and

1991, we have had 33 deployments. I had to cross them out, because

Kosovo is now the 33rd. There have been 33 deployments of our troops

into hostile situations. Each of these 33 deployments, 33 in 8 years,

versus 10 in 40 years, each of these deployments cost hundreds of

millions or billions of dollars. None of these 33 deployments were

budgeted for, not one. None of these deployments were paid for with an

up or down vote on the Congress in advance of the deployment of the

troops.

The payment of the costs associated with these deployments was made

by taking dollars out of an already decreasing defense budget, out of

programs of modernizing our aircraft, modernizing our naval fleet,

modernizing our platforms, and giving the soldiers, sailors, marines,

and corpsmen the kinds of quality of life that they deserve in an era

where we have all volunteers.

In fact, the Comptroller of the Pentagon has given us a figure that

these 33 deployments cost us $19 billion of unanticipated expenditures.

Many of them were paid with supplementals to provide the funding to pay

for these operations.

In fact, the irony of these 33 deployments, Mr. Speaker, is that we

in the Congress, Democrats and Republicans alike, joining together each

year for the past 4 years, plussed up more money to try to replenish

some of these funds that were being eaten away for this rapidly

increasing deployment rate.

In fact, 4 years ago we gave the Pentagon $10 billion more than what

the President asked for. Three years ago we gave the Pentagon $6

billion more than what the Pentagon asked for. Two years ago we gave

the Pentagon $3 billion more than what the President asked for.

In each of those years, as we in the Congress tried to replenish the

funds to replace money that was being used for these deployments, the

President and the administration criticized the Congress for giving the

Pentagon more money than they asked for.

Finally this year, the Pentagon leaders have spoken up and said, ``We

can take this no longer. The funding problem is so severe in the

Pentagon that we have to tell you candidly that we need more money in

next year's budget.''

The service chiefs came in and testified before the House committees

and the Senate committees and said, at a minimum, they need $19 billion

more than what President Clinton asked for in the fiscal year 2000

budget.

The President said he would make $11 billion of new funding

available. It was a great speech. But when we cut away all of the

rhetoric, the actual new money put in by the President in his budget

for the next fiscal year is $3 billion. In fact, one of the gimmicks

they used was to take $3 billion out of R&D for defense, shift it into

acquisition, and call that a $3 billion plus-up in defense spending.

The problem we have today is that the readiness of our troops, the

capability to perform in Kosovo, is directly dependent on how much we

support our troops. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we have undermined the

capability of our military.

Because of the rapidly increasing level of deploying our troops

around the world and because of the rapidly decreasing defense budget,

we have unfortunately encountered a mismatch that is affecting the

quality of life for our troops, that is affecting the ability for our

troops to serve this Nation well in Kosovo, let alone the possibility

of asking ground troops to go in to fight what could be a massive war.

Mr. Speaker, let me give my colleagues some examples that are very

specific. One of our national defense technical media outlets is

running a series of stories that, to me, are embarrassing. They have

documents, one of which I will enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

These are internal memos of the Army where the Army is discussing the

need to replace the survival radio gear that we provide the pilots and

crew members on aircraft flying over hostile environments.

This gear and equipment is essential because, if a plane is downed,

as we saw with the F-117A, those pilots and those crew members have got

to have a way to get a signal back so that we can go in and rescue

them.

These documents refer to those systems. Unfortunately in the internal

memos of the Army, in discussing the availability of these devices to

provide for our planes that are flying, not just over Kosovo, but also

over Iraq in the peacekeeping role there and protecting the no-fly

zone, this is what the Army is saying to those who are asking for these

devices to put on these planes to protect our pilots, and I quote: ``We

do not have any radios available to fill shortages.'' We do not have

any radios available to fill shortages, referring to these devices that

are so critically important for pilots that may be downed in either

Iraq or in Kosovo from enemy fire.

They go on to discuss the fact that we need to have some kind of

protection for the pilots. So further on in the same memo, these are

internal Army memos that I have been given by the medial outlets

running these stories, this is a directive that has been issued by the

Army, ``The pilot in command'' of the aircraft ``will continue to

ensure that not less than one fully operational survival radio is on

board the aircraft. This does not preclude crew members from carrying

additional radios on board the aircraft as assets become available. In

addition, the'' pilot in charge ``will ensure that crew members without

radios have other means of signaling'', now listen to this, Mr.

Speaker, either a ``foliage penetration flare kit and/or a signal

mirror.''

Can we imagine, Mr. Speaker, that we are sending pilots and crew

members into a hostile environment, whether it is over Iraq or Kosovo,

and we are telling them, because we do not have enough equipment, that

they should make sure that they have a signal mirror; that that is the

method they are going to use to tell our rescue crews that they have

been downed.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was another story that ran a week or so

ago where one of our Maryland units, I believe it is the 104th Air

Reserve Squadron out of neighboring Maryland who is currently flying

the missions over Iraq at this very moment, that the commanding officer

has been quoted as saying that that unit had to go to local Radio Shack

stores and buy GPS devices to give their pilots to carry on board these

planes.

Mr. Speaker, this is not some pie-in-the-sky make-believe threatening

scenario. This is what is happening today with our military. How can we

as the world's most powerful Nation there to provide security and

leadership for NATO allow our pilots and their crews

to fly combat missions without the appropriate equipment to guarantee

the safety of their lives?

Is it no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the retention rate for our pilots

in the Navy and the Air Force is the lowest rate today since World War

II? The retention rate for Air Force and Navy pilots flying planes

today over Kosovo and Iraq is below 20 percent. In one case, it is 15

percent.

We wonder why these young pilots who we have invested so much money

to train do not want to stay in. It is because we are not giving them

the equipment they need. It is because their morale is suffering and

because they are sick and tired of going from one deployment to the

next.

Instead of having time to come back to visit with our families, to

visit with our children, they are being dispatched to Haiti, from Haiti

to Somalia, from Somalia to Macedonia, from Macedonia to Bosnia, from

Bosnia to Kosovo.

The morale is suffering in a dramatic way, and we are seeing the

result of that in a level of retention for pilots that we have not seen

in the last 50 years. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing it in the

ability to recruit new young people in the services.

The Secretary of the Army just 1 month ago, because of shortages in

the Army's ability to bring the new recruits, has proposed that we

lower the standard of acceptance, that we now take young people in the

Army who do not have high school diplomas.

Here is the irony of that, Mr. Speaker, the Army's number one

priority right now, which I fully support, is the digitized

battlefield, to give the Army warrior of the 21st century an

information technology capability second to none, a computer in the

backpack so they have visual imaging, a GPS capability so in their

goggles they can see what the pilots in our helicopters and our planes

and our radar surveillance planes are seeing.

At a time when we are making our soldiers digitized, able to be

operating computers, we are having to lower the standard of acceptance

in the Army to well below a high school diploma because we cannot fill

the billets, because the morale in the services are suffering unlike

any time, including 1970s, since World War II.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have ships going out to sea, aircraft

carriers short of 600 to 700 sailors from what the required rate of

deployment and billets should be for a mission, 600 to 700 sailors

short because we cannot provide the number of sailors to man the ships

to do the functions that they are required to do in hostile

environments.

Mr. Speaker, these are facts. These are not ideas. These are not

maybes. These are dependables. These things are happening today. We

have a severe problem with our military. We are stretching it to the

bone.

Our military was not designed to become the world's police department

where every time a conflict occurs, we send in the American troops.

These are not robots. These are human beings with families, with loved

ones. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

I appreciate President Clinton today or yesterday going down and

speaking to the pilots who are flying our B-52s, real heroes for

America and real heroes for the world that we are trying to protect.

But I wish the President would have addressed one other thing when he

spoke to them.

I wish he would have told those pilots what we all know, that those

B-52 bombers are going to be 75 years old before we can retire them, 75

years old and flying because we have undermined the base of financial

support to provide new aircraft.

That is what is critical to those pilots in those B-52s and those

crews. It is not just enough to say they are American heroes. It also

requires us to give them the new equipment, the training, the repairs,

the kinds of support they need to do the job they are being asked to

do.

We are not doing that, Mr. Speaker. We are not modernizing the

military because, over the past 6 years, we have cut program after

program to put the money in to paying for these deployments because we

do not have the dollars necessary to fund these deployments up front.

This means that marines flying in the CH-46 workhorse helicopter that

was built during the Vietnam War will be flying those helicopters when

they are 55 years old. Those helicopters were designed to be flown for

20 to 25 years.

The marines will have to fly the 46 when it is 55 years old because

we have not replaced the 46 with the aircraft that is designed to take

it out of service, because we have taken the money from that program

and used it to fund these escapades around the world; and that is what

they are, escapades.

Critics would say to me, ``Well, wait a minute, Congressman Weldon,

you are being critical of this President and this administration for

all of these deployments. What about President Bush? Wasn't it

President Bush back in 1991 in this 33 deployment rate who sent our

troops to Desert Storm, a very large conflict?''

The answer is, yes, it was President Bush who sent our troops into

Desert Storm. We did have a full and open debate in this body and the

other body before those troops were committed to combat.

We did one other thing, Mr. Speaker, or I should not say ``we did''.

The President did. President Bush felt so strongly about the allied

commitment in Desert Storm that he personally went to the major world

leaders around the world, and he said something very simple to them.

``If you cannot send troops, then you must support this operation

financially. But if you can send troops, we want your troops

involved.''

Desert Storm was the largest multinational force that we have seen

certainly in this decade. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Desert Storm cost the

American taxpayer $51 billion, a huge sum of money. But, Mr. Speaker,

President Bush got our allies to reimburse us $52 billion. There was no

net cost to our defense budget.

Each of these deployments, the reverse has occurred. Not only are the

allies not reimbursing us for our costs, in places like Haiti, we are

subsidizing the cost of other nations sending their troops in along

with us. In fact, we are using American defense dollars to fund the

support, the housing, the food, and the subsidization of other nations

to bring their militaries into these deployments that we have become

involved with.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is getting grave. We on the Committee on

Armed Services are getting ready to mark up our defense authorization

bill. We have very serious problems. The Joint Chiefs have said

publicly they need $19 billion more than what the President has in fact

allocated.

That does not include a pay raise for all the service personnel. That

does not include service-wide adjustments to the retirement system that

are needed. That does not include missile defenses, which are one of

the fastest growing threats that we see emerging in the 21st Century.

The estimate we have come up with is that we are short approximately

$25 billion in the next fiscal year just to take care of our ongoing

commitments. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because Kosovo has already cost

us $2 billion. Where did that money come from? It came out of an

already decreasing defense budget. Every major operation in the country

has had to put dollars on the table to help fund the Kosovo deployment.

We are going to have to pass a massive supplemental. I saw the report

today where the long-term projected cost of Kosovo could exceed $10

billion to $15 billion alone. Mr. Speaker, I ask the question of our

colleagues, where is that money going to come from? Where are we going

to find that additional $10 billion to $15 billion when we cannot even

fund the $19 billion to $25 billion shortfall that has been identified

before Kosovo became an issue.

We are in a massive crisis. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I have spoken

around the country, I have made the statement that this period of time,

the 1990s, will go down in history as the worst decade in undermining

our national security because of our increasing rate of deployment and

our massive decreases in defense allocations. The two run in a

diametrically opposite way, and we are feeling the crunch today.

With all of these deployments, the Navy is being asked to do more and

more assignments around the world. We are now dispatching another

carrier over to the Kosovo theater; to the

Balkan theater. The Navy at one time had 585 ships. If we listen to our

Navy experts today, we are having trouble keeping our Navy at 300

ships, in spite of these massive increases in deployments around the

world.

Our fighter squadrons. We have fighter squadrons today, Mr. Speaker,

where up to one-third of the planes are grounded because we are using

them as spare parts to keep the other two-thirds in the air flying.

Mr. Speaker, how long can this go on before the American people sense

that something is terribly wrong? Is it going to take a massive loss of

life? Are we going to have to see another case where soldiers are

killed, as we saw 28 young Americans killed in 1991 when that low-

complexity SCUD missile hit the barracks in Saudi Arabia that we could

not defend against and we brought them home in body bags?

It is a real fact, Mr. Speaker, that 8 years after that attack on our

soldiers in Saudi Arabia with that SCUD missile that we have no highly

effective system today to deal with the medium-range missiles that Iran

and Iraq both now have, that North Korea has now deployed that

threatens our troops in South Korea and threatens our troops in Japan.

The growth of missile proliferation is providing threats to our troops

that we do not have the money to build systems to defend against.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction has caused the President to

ask for billions of dollars of additional money to deal with the

threats of the potential use of chemical, biological and small nuclear

weapons, and I agree with his assessment of the threat. But, Mr.

Speaker, we do not have the money.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the greatest threat, the threat of cyber

terrorism, the use by a rogue nation or rogue group with high-

performance computers to compromise our smart weapons and our civilian

information systems, is requiring a massive increase in new dollars to

deal with information warfare, and we do not have the money to put into

that process.

Mr. Speaker, I recite these facts because as we, my colleagues and I,

are being asked to assess whether or not our troops should be deployed,

both our helicopters which are already there and the troops that

support them that are already there, and the potential follow-on of a

larger group of troops going into Kosovo, we had better consider one

very important thing: We had better be prepared to provide every ounce

of support for those men and women that they need.

That is going to require a significant new investment of money. That

is going to require an effort that breaks the budget caps. It is going

to require us to significantly increase the support to replace the

Tomahawk cruise missiles, the guns and ammunition, the fuel, the

lodging costs, and all those other associated costs that currently are

in excess of $2 billion for the Kosovo deployment.

Mr. Speaker, we better be prepared for one other debate as well. If

we cannot sustain the level of our troop strength that we need, if we

cannot reverse the decline in the retention of our pilots, especially

Navy and Air Force pilots, if we cannot turn around the Army's problem

of recruitment, the Navy's problem of filling its billets, if we cannot

solve those problems, Mr. Speaker, I believe all my colleagues know

what that means we will have to debate. That means we have to debate

whether or not to consider reinstating the draft. Boy, all of a sudden

does that raise eyebrows across the country.

It is easy to say put the troops in. It is easy to say put American

kids in harm's way. It is easy to say send planes over. But, Mr.

Speaker, we need men and women to fly those planes, to fly those

helicopters, to feed those troops. And if morale becomes such a problem

because of our lack of support financially for our troops, what then do

we do?

If we cannot convince young people to voluntarily serve their

country, and that is where we are heading, then, unfortunately, if we

are going to see the administration keep this level of deployment up,

we have got to find a way to get young people to fill those billets, to

sail those ships, to man those helicopters, to fly those B-52s, to fly

those F-117As. And if we cannot do that voluntarily, Mr. Speaker, that

means we have to force people to serve our Nation to complete these

operations that our commander-in-chief has gotten us into.

These are not easy decisions. These are not easy circumstances where

we can, sitting in our armchair, decide to send more robots into a

theater and risk their lives. We have a problem with our military

because we have not funded readiness, we have not funded modernization,

we are not even giving the pilots the remote sensing gear they need if

they are shot down.

And if we cannot provide the support to keep those volunteers serving

our country, then those Members of Congress who are standing before the

national media, who are talking about putting our troops in harm's way,

who are talking about sending tens of thousands of new troops into

Kosovo, they better be prepared to address the issue of where do these

young people come from. Because if we cannot provide the bodies, then

we have to force young Americans to do what they did prior to the

Vietnam War, and that is serve their country as a part of a national

conscription effort.

Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to do that. I do not think we should

be thinking about restoring the draft, but I also understand the

reality of the situation we are in. We cannot have it both ways. We

cannot deploy our troops 33 times, we cannot keep young people in

Haiti, Macedonia, Somalia, the Balkans, in Bosnia, and put them in

Kosovo, and have them handle floods and tornadoes and earthquakes and

unrest in Central America, and rebuilding in Central America, and at

the same time not have the bodies to fill those slots. It does not work

that way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have never heard this President deal with these

issues. He has not talked about the need to provide additional support

for our troops. He does not want to break the budget caps. He does not

want to put the kind of money in that the Joint Chiefs have said

publicly they need this year. And he is not willing to talk about the

morale problems in the military. These are issues that we in the

Congress cannot run away from.

Defense is not a partisan issue. I am the first to admit publicly,

Mr. Speaker, that Democrats in this body have been as supportive of

defense as have Republicans, and some of our leading supporters of the

military are Members of the Democrat party. An overwhelming number of

our Republicans are strong supporters of our military.

I want to speak to those other Members of the Congress who want to

put our troops in harm's way but who want to cut the defense budget

even further than what it is now. Mr. Speaker, we cannot let that

happen. Every one of those Members of Congress who goes on national TV,

who stands in the well of this body and talks about committing our

troops, talks about humanitarian efforts, talks about saving lives and

taking people out of wheelbarrows to give them homes, they better be

prepared to vote for the money and the support to deal with the morale

problems, the readiness problems, the modernization problems that we

have in the military today. Because that is what this debate needs to

focus on. This is not about undermining the leadership of our country.

This is about giving those men and women asked to go into harm's way

the tools they need to do their job.

We need to have this debate across America, and I hope, as we get

closer to a decision on how to proceed with Kosovo, we continue to

understand that every day we are there is costing us, by one estimate I

saw, $30 million an hour. Thirty million dollars an hour of U.S. tax

money that we do not know where it is coming from. Thirty million

dollars an hour that the U.S. is putting up, that we are shouldering

the bulk of the responsibility for.

These costs have to come from someplace, and this body needs to find

a way to provide the additional resources to pay for those operational

costs and not rob other accounts that force us to fly aircraft well

beyond their life expectancy, that forces morale to continue to drop,

that forces our pilots to want to get out and make money in the private

sector, and that forces those people flying those bombing missions and

those security missions over Iraq and Kosovo at this very hour to not

have the necessary equipment so that if they are shot down they can

alert our rescue crews to come in and know where they are to get them

out quickly and safely.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges before us are great. This country needs

to understand all the dimensions of the Kosovo deployment. This country

needs to understand that we cannot afford to be fair weather friends of

the brave men and women who serve this country. It is not just enough

to stand up and wave the flag and say ``I am behind the troops.'' We

must be prepared to take care of all the extra costs that are

associated with these 33 deployments, many of which our troops are

still involved with around the world today.

I ask my colleagues to consider these facts as we move further into a

very nasty and dangerous situation far away from the homes and the

towns where these brave Americans live.