Mr. Speaker, I rise today not to put myself forward as an

expert in national defense matters or in matters of military

deployment. I do not serve on the Armed Services Committee or on the

Appropriations Committee which handles military matters. Nor am I a

member of the International Relations Committee. My experience in the

military was as an enlisted person where I rose to the rank of

Specialist 4.

I feel very strongly that we should not be in Kosovo militarily. Yes,

we should help with humanitarian needs and could indeed do much more

for those who are suffering as a result of the civil war by the use of

only a small amount of the money which we are spending on the bombing.

In the current situation in Kosovo we are footing a major part of the

bill and already talking about how we will use our resources to rebuild

this area that is being bombed. Do we forget that we very properly

asked for our allies to contribute in the gulf war, which in fact

alleviated a major burden on American tax payers by the money that was

paid by those who also had an interest in that military activity?

The Vietnam experience is one that I hope I will never forget. I

believe that there are some very important lessons to be learned from

that experience. I felt a feeling of betrayal by the leadership of this

country as a result of the Vietnam war. We were told of the dire

consequences if we did not fight to a victory in that conflict. We

threw hundreds of thousands of young men and women into that fray, and

in the end we had to acknowledge our mistake and withdraw. That has

left a lasting scar on our country. Not our withdrawal, not our

admission of a mistake, but the conflict and the controversy

surrounding the war. And we are today, as we have through the years

since Vietnam ended, paying a terrible price for our mistake and we are

still reaping the bitter fruit of those decisions.

The war in Southeast Asia is very similar to the Balkans, a civil

war. And I ask the question: ``Is Southeast Asia worse now because we

withdrew?'' And I believe the answer is a resounding ``no.''

The civil strife has to be settled by those who are most affected--

those who live there. This is a civil war in the Balkans and it will be

impossible for us militarily from the outside to impose a successful

solution on the problems faced by the people of this area.

I, would ask the question--what kind of a country would we have

today, had England and France been successful in intervention in our

own civil war on the sides of the Confederate States?

While I oppose the military action in Kosovo and am adamantly opposed

to sending any ground troops, I am also concerned greatly by the cost

of this operation. It is my opinion that the current administration

will have easily spent a hundred billion dollars in soirees around the

world from Bosnia to Iraq to Kosovo. This money will come from only one

source, the American tax payer, and most likely from the surplus of

Social Security money.

I, believe that the current expenditure of funds is unwise and will

be of a major detriment to our efforts to save Social Security and

Medicare. We have worked long and hard to improve the financial

condition of this country over the last four years. Kosovo holds the

key to totally reversing the successes we have had and returning us to

a situation of using funds from Social Security to pay our bills. It

was wrong when it was done during Vietnam and it is wrong today.

I, believe that it is also the greatest error when leaders of our

country fail to recognize that they have made a mistake in judgment,

and continue to push ahead with all of their vigor and might, often

with the use of our fighting men and women and the expenditure of our

funds, to prove that they are in fact right.

In the end I believe that we will see the error of our involvement

militarily in Kosovo. I do not subscribe to this theory that we can't

back out because we have military involvement now. I know of no

endeavor anywhere that was won by pursuing a failed policy and failing

to admit mistakes when they are so very obvious. I do not buy the

theory that we must continue to pursue military action there simply

because we are there.

All that we need to do is provide for the safe removal of our

military, with hope that military bombs can be replaced by talk and

negotiation which will help the troubled people of this area reach an

agreement as to their future.