Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in this

historic debate on the tragic situation in the Balkan region. We find

ourselves in a disturbing conflict, and I believe the public is

concerned about our long term strategy.

The President and the Secretary of Defense have recently begun a call

to duty of more than 33,000 reservists and National Guardsmen. Each one

of us here represents men and women that could be called to fight in

the Balkans. I am confident that these men and women will represent our

country well. This conflict in the Balkans has been generally viewed by

my constituents as a mostly international issue taking place in areas

that are unknown and unfamiliar to many of us. However, the recent call

up of reservists and National Guardsmen has hit my district square in

the heart, since it could involve the potential deployment of the

National Guard and Air Force Reserve components stationed at March Air

Reserve Base.

I am very proud of the efforts by our military personnel. Although

this is the longest and largest such campaign in which no American

lives have been lost, chances are this may not continue. The credit for

this extraordinary accomplishment should be placed on the shoulders of

our American and allied troops. These brave men and women deserve our

praise. Let me take this opportunity to extend enormous gratitude from

myself and everyone living within the 43rd District of California for

the job and effort of our troops.

As proud as I am of our troops, I am concerned that the President has

not done enough to involve Congress in the decision-making process

throughout the Balkans crisis. Still today, Congress has not been

advised on the exit strategy once hostilities have ceased. Yet, at the

same time, this President is asking Congress for additional funds for

this campaign. Mr. Speaker, I hope the President will begin to involve

Congress.

I have every confidence that our men and women will do their jobs. I

do not have confidence that they will have the material support that

they deserve over the long haul. That is why we desperately need to

pass a large defense supplemental bill to make up for previous years of

inadequate defense requests from this administration.

I have voted today to reserve the decision to start any ground war to

Congress, where it belongs. I have also voted against the extremes of

media withdrawal and declaring war. Authorizing the air war merely

recognizes reality--a reality which Congress must monitor daily so that

the will and interests of the American people are reflected in our

foreign policy.