Mr. Speaker, today we debate two concepts--

responsibility and planning. Understanding our responsibilities and how

we plan to carry them out is the key to determining what America's

interest in Kosovo is.

Our responsibility as Americans are limited and crystal clear. We

must oppose any threat to our national security. Our interests in the

Balkans are limited. We have no direct national interest in the

region's politics. Our interests are solely limited to preventing any

other outside power from increasing its threat to America by dominating

the region. Preventing any conflict in that region from emboldening

tyrants elsewhere or becoming a threat to our ties with key allies.

Unfortunately, our current policy threatens to do just that.

When we commit American power we have a responsibility to plan. We

must have a plan of action that will lead to the achievement of

objectives that is consistent with U.S. interests. There must be

linkage between our political objectives and military plans if we are

to succeed in achieving our goals.

Unfortunately, our mission in Kosovo falls short in both respects.

The Balkans are not an area of vital national interest. We have no

security interest that remotely justifies the massive commitment of

military resources and U.S. credibility that the administration has

made. It is both dangerous and irresponsible to place our forces and

credibility at risk.

It was very clear to me during any recent visit to the region that

there is a clear disconnect between our political objectives and our

military actions. A human tragedy is unfolding in the region. Having

personally visited the refugee camps I understand the devastation faced

by the Albanian people. I also know that our first humanitarian

responsibility is to do no additional harm. The administration's

actions have fueled this too. To this day it remains unclear what the

administration's long term political objectives for the region are. We

cannot succeed without objectives.

My colleagues, I fear that our policy du jour places American lives,

strategic alliances and credibility at risk. The lack of policy

direction

makes success unachievable and threatens to only compound the current

humanitarian crisis. This is a political problem which requires a

political, not military, solution. Let's escalate our diplomatic

efforts to seek a solution to this humanitarian crisis. We still have

diplomatic cards to play. Let's not compound the errors of our current

policy by military escalation. Let's focus our efforts on achieving a

diplomatic triumph.

Going to war is the most profound question we will ever vote on as

representatives. We must never risk American lives except to protect

our vital national interests.

My colleagues, I ask each and every one of you to look at the facts.

The president has failed to outline a plan with achievable objectives.

Escalation only promises more political failure despite military

successes. Let's stop this ruinous spiral and seek a diplomatic

solution. Please join me in voting against the Administration's war

policy.