

I find in my own State of Colorado that there are thousands and thousands of parents who are taking on the responsibility of teaching their children at home.

Mr. Speaker, recently I received a copy of an article that was written by a gentleman by the name of Steven Archer, and he details a study that was just done by Larry Rudner, who is the leading statistician at the University of Maryland. He studied home schoolers, and what it comes down to is this.

He said,

Regarding the results of this research, Rudner said, the bottom line of the study is that the 20,000 home-school students I studied were doing extremely well in terms of their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

In fact, the median test scores for home-schooled children who participated in this study were in the 75th and 85th percentile range. This is exceptional compared to the national average which, by definition, is the 50th percentile based on the performance of children in the public schools, which, Rudner explained, deviates little from that value. Home schoolers also did significantly better than their private school counterparts based on Catholic school norms where the median scaled scores were in the 65th to 75th percentile range.

According to Rudner, major findings in the study include the following:

Almost one-quarter of home-school students are enrolled one or more grades above their age-level peers in public and private schools.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, but I would just say that it verifies what we already know about home schooling and that is that it works, it works in an academic sense, it works in a social sense. And I want to take the opportunity here today to thank Jerrod for his card, to thank Jerrod's parents for giving him the opportunity to be home schooled, and to thank all those thousands and thousands, perhaps millions, of parents around the country who are doing the same for their children.

KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. JOHN SHADEGG) who has, I think, a good health care proposal and is one of our leaders in Congress on health care issues.

PATIENTS' HEALTH CARE CHOICE ACT

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I presume he is going to discuss with us a little bit later some issues about national defense, and I will await hearing his topic and hearing his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, today, on behalf of myself and 13 other colleagues, I have introduced the Patients' Health Care Choice Act, H.R. 1687. We are embroiled in a great debate about health care reform in this Nation, and it is appro-

priate that we should be embroiled in that debate, and there is a great deal of discussion about how we ensure that Americans get quality health care. But, as a part of that discussion, we have left out a big piece of the debate.

We have talked a lot on this floor about patient protection legislation. I want to make it very clear, I do think that we need HMO reform. I do believe that we need to do something to ensure that Americans get the health care that they purchase and that they pay for and that they deserve.

But I want to make it equally clear that the entire problem cannot be solved by a mega-regulatory piece of legislation which puts a Band-Aid on the current problems in health care, which addresses the short-term problems we have and ignores the long-term problems with our health care system. And be sure, there are long-term problems.

The Patients' Health Care Choice Act is a bill that takes a long-range look at the health care industry and says that we can do it better. Fundamentally, it operates on the premise that giving Americans greater choice in their health care options, that giving them greater access to health care and improving the incentives for them to purchase and consume health care services in a responsible fashion will do far more to improve our health care system in America than a whole new set of complex government regulations that try to mandate the marketplace and tell businesses how to run their businesses.

Let me talk about those three issues that I have just addressed, greater choice and health care options. Today, most Americans get their health insurance through their employer; and that has been a good system. It has enabled millions of Americans to get health care. But, regrettably, it does not give those Americans the kind of choice that we have everywhere else in the market.

If any one of us wants to go buy an automobile, we have dozens we can take our pick from. If we want to buy a pair of shoes or a new suit or a new home, we have virtually unlimited choices; and this is a great aspect of the American economy.

But one of the drawbacks of the health care system that we have in America today is that many Americans, indeed more than half of the Americans who are insured, are given two choices or less. And indeed many of those, and the statistics are disputed, many in fact get only one choice: Their employer says, "You may have this plan."

This bill, the Patients' Health Care Choice Act, says we ought to be giving Americans a much broader choice. Let them pick the kind of health care plan they want. Let them pick the plan that suits their needs and their family's needs. Let them shop with their feet and make market decisions about their health care.

Now, how can we do that? Well, I will explain how this bill does that.

But there is a second aspect of our health care system that is equally broken, and that is access to health care. Let me explain that.

Beginning during World War II, many employers wanted to be able to give their employees additional incentives to work for them and they wanted to do that by giving them raises. The government, however, had instituted wage and price controls. As a result of those wage and price controls, employers were prohibited from giving their employees additional raises.

So, the mind of man being ingenious, they came up with the idea of saying to their employees, "We will give you health care benefits." And as a result of a ruling of the IRS and a ruling of the Tax Code, what we established during World War II was a policy which has driven employer-based health insurance. And that policy says that if their employer provides them health coverage, that health care coverage is a deductible expense to the employer. That is, he can deduct it from his tax return before he pays taxes on that tax return or before she pays taxes on the earnings of that business but, most importantly, it is excluded from income to the employer. That is to say, it is unlike wages, which would be taxed when received by the employee. Instead, health care benefits are excluded from income.

Now, what has that meant? What it has meant is that many, many businesses offer very, very strong health care plans that have many aspects to them and give Americans health care. That is very, very good. But there has been an unintended consequence of that, one I already mentioned, and that is now we have got employers purchasing health care, not individual employees, and that is taking away choice, as I already mentioned.

But another consequence of the current structure is that all of those Americans not fortunate enough to be working for an employer that offers them health insurance coverage are left out of the system.

Let me try to explain that. If they are a lucky American and they work for an employer who provides them health care insurance, they are getting that health care from their employer and they are getting a tax subsidy because their employer's cost is subsidized. It is a deductible expense to the employer, and it is not income to them.

But what about those uninsured Americans? Today, in America, there are 43 million uninsured Americans. How do we treat them under our Tax Code? The answer is we kind of give them the back of the hand.

Now what we say to them is they are not going to get a subsidy from the government for their health insurance. They are not going to get a tax write-off. What we are going to do is say to them, we are going to punish them. If

they decide to go out and do something prudent and take some of their hard-earned dollars and buy a health insurance plan, we are going to punish them because we are going to say that they have to pay for that plan with after-tax dollars, dollars on which they already paid taxes.

What that means to the average American whose employer does not provide them health coverage is that their cost of health coverage is somewhere between 30 and 50 percent higher than their peer that works for an employer who provides health coverage. I suggest that that is absolutely irrational and insane.

Let me make a point at this particular instance. In America, I believe we have reached a consensus some years ago, maybe 5, maybe 8, maybe 10, that no American should go without basic health care. If that is our belief, if our public policy in this Nation is that people should not go without health care, then how can we have a policy that says, if they are lucky enough to work for an employer that provides health care, the government will subsidize it with a deduction to that business; but if, by pure happenstance, they are either unemployed or they are employed by an employer who cannot offer them or does not offer them health insurance coverage, we are going to punish them and we are going to say they ought to go out and buy insurance but, if they do, we are going to charge them 30 to 50 percent more because the government will not help.

Well, the Patients' Health Care Choice Act takes a giant step towards helping those people by providing a refundable tax credit for those people. It is a refundable tax credit set at a modest level, but its purpose is to put on an equal footing to create equity between those Americans who get their health insurance from their employer and those Americans not lucky enough to do that.

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What would this tax credit mean and who would be eligible for it? Any American who does not get health insurance coverage from their employer would be eligible for the tax credit. The tax credit would be set, is set, at an amount roughly equal to the tax benefit that employers now get, the tax subsidy that those who are employed now get for their coverage.

All one would have to do to qualify for the tax credit would be to go out and buy at least a catastrophic policy. You would then apply to the government, you would certify that you have bought the policy and you would immediately get the tax credit.

Is the tax credit difficult to administer? It is not. It works through the withholding system, so that you could withhold from your wages, or you would get a benefit in a withholding of your wages to allow you to pay for your health insurance as you go and let you buy that health care as you move

forward. We honestly believe that is a giant step forward for Americans.

I do not know how I am doing on time, but let me just finish with the last portion of the bill because I think it is critically important. The third piece of the bill is to institute some major improvements to both the group insurance market and the individual insurance market by instituting health marts, association health plans, and a new concept called individual membership associations.

Health marts are organizations that are set up, and association health plans are similar to those, to create new pooling mechanisms so that companies could go together and create pooling mechanisms to offer their employees greater choice. Individual membership associations are a new concept in the law, and they do essentially the same thing, only they move away from relying solely on employer-based health insurance.

What they say is that new organizations, like for example the American Automobile Association, or any other association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, in my home State of Arizona the Arizona State University Alumni Association or the University of Arizona Alumni Association, could sponsor a health care plan, pool together a large number of Americans and have a group health care plan called an individual membership association. Those health care plans would provide new pooling mechanisms and help bring down the cost of insurance.

The last aspect of this bill that I think is critically important goes to the issue of choice, is that as I mentioned at the beginning, many, many Americans are trapped in one health care plan. Their employer offers them only one plan and that is the plan they get to pick from. Sadly, that does not give people the kind of options they want.

The final piece of this bill, to encourage the creation of a market and to give people choice, is a provision in the bill which says that at the employer's decision, employees could be allowed to opt out of their company's health care plan.

Let us say right now you are an employee of a company and you are being offered a health care plan. Let us say hypothetically after this legislation goes into effect, you say that you would rather go shop in the private market, you would rather go look and see if you wanted to join a health mart or see if you wanted to go to an association health plan or see if you wanted to join one of the insurance plans offered by an individual membership association.

What you would do is you would go to your employer and you would say, "I would like to consider opting out of my employer-sponsored plan." The employer would then calculate his or her actual cost of insuring you. In reality we know that younger people cost a lot less to insure than older people. So an

employer might do a calculation. To insure a single young woman 21 years old might be as little as \$850 a year. By contrast, to insure her counterpart, a 58-year-old secretary, might be two or three or four or five times that amount of money.

The employer would make this calculation based on an actuarial basis, looking at the employee's age, sex, and geographical location, and come up with a figure. That figure for a young employee might be \$800; for an older employee it might be \$4,000. They would then say to the employee, "This is the amount of money you have to shop."

If the employee then went out and shopped and found a health care plan which better suited his or her needs or his or her family's needs, that amount of money could be spent by that employee to purchase that amount of insurance. Now, we do require that the money must be spent to purchase insurance. However, if you are lucky enough to go out and buy, for example, a catastrophic policy and have some savings, the legislation allows you to roll that savings into a medical savings account or a medical IRA for future health care needs.

What we will have done by achieving this is we will have truly made health care personal and portable for those Americans who choose to opt out of their employer's plan. We, the cosponsors of this legislation, the Patients' Health Care Choice Act, H.R. 1687, believe that giving Americans choice will create the right kind of market incentives that will improve quality and bring down cost, and will do so in a fashion that will benefit the entire system.

We also believe it will be tremendously beneficial to small employers with a relatively small number of employees who do not want to be in the business of procuring health insurance for their employees. They would have the option of allowing their employees to opt out and creating this new system.

We have dealt with the problem which will be raised, the issue of adverse selection, by allowing the employer to make this actuarial calculation, so that people will not have a motivation to opt out of their employer's system for any reason other than they would like to have a choice. We believe fundamentally that choice and market incentives will improve health care.

We would end the problem that plagues our current system of overconsumption. Right now, the current system, because your employer pays for the plan and you consume it, has created a great incentive for overconsumption. The average employee, understanding that somebody else or believing that somebody else, their employer, has already paid for the benefits, they tend to overutilize the system.

I recently had a conversation with a leader in the Senate who indicated to

me that he had recently had a conversation with a family member who had a cold. The family member said, "I'm going to go see the doctor tomorrow about this cold." This leader said, "Well, jeeze, why are you going to go see the doctor about the cold?" The individual said, "Well, I already paid for it, and it's free."

Of course that is not true. They did not already pay for that particular visit, and of course no visit to a doctor is free. But that is the mind set we have gotten into in America, where we have made people not individually responsible for purchasing their own health care acting in an irresponsible fashion.

I believe this legislation takes us in the right direction. I am extremely pleased that as we introduced it today, the House majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), was an original cosponsor of the bill and had some very nice things to say about this legislation. He said, "I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Patients' Health Care Choice Act," and he complimented the tax credit provision of it which will deal with the problem of uninsured Americans by giving them a tax credit to go out and buy health care coverage.

I am also extremely pleased that the American Medical Association, in a letter sent to me on April 29 of this year after having reviewed our draft legislation, specifically said, "Your proposed bill will make a significant step in the right direction." I think that is because the bill does many of the things that the American Medical Association says need to be done.

We need to make health care personal, we need to make it portable, we need to change the system where one person, employers purchase health care, but others, individual employees, consume that health care. We can restore the marketplace here, we can do things that will benefit people in a very positive fashion, and we can do that through this legislation.

I am extremely excited about it. I am thrilled to have the encouragement of the AMA and of many leaders here in the Congress. I look forward to working on this legislation, the Patients' Health Care Choice Act of 1999, H.R. 1687, I am thrilled that we can move this kind of legislation forward to give Americans a long-term solution to the health care problem.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. If the gentleman would answer one question.

Mr. SHADEGG. Surely.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I do not feel that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the answer in their Patients' Bill of Rights was to have unlimited lawsuits, which in my opinion would drive up the cost of health care and destroy our HMOs, versus what you are planning to do is to make changes, to make sure that people have access and adequate care. Is that correct?

Mr. SHADEGG. That is exactly right. The whole theory behind the Patients'

Bill of Rights is between a combination of complex government regulations, and going at the issue of ERISA reform by allowing lawsuits, we can solve the problem. That is not going to solve the problem.

Our legislation says, let us create a marketplace. If people want to buy a plan where the plan is less expensive because they have given up their right to sue their plan, let them do that. On the other hand, if people want to pay a little bit more for a plan and recognize that in paying more, they are getting the right to sue their plan, that seems to me to give them an option. In addition to which I think this Congress is going to move forward on thoughtful legislation for HMO reform which will not open the door to unlimited lawsuits. I agree with the gentleman, the last thing we want to do is create a litigation frenzy.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I thank the gentleman for his leadership on the health care issues. I am on the Labor-HHS appropriations committee. I think it is absolutely exciting seeing the revolutionary research that is being done all the way from cancer to Alzheimer's to Parkinson's, diabetes. Many of us want to double that research budget over the next 5 years. We are going to have trouble doing that by some of the things that I am going to talk about here today. But I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I am RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM. I represent the 51st Congressional District in north county, San Diego. I come here tonight, as someone once said, with a very heavy heart.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, unlike many of my colleagues in this body and the other body, I spent the majority of my adult life in the military. I come with a lot of experience. I have flown in three fighter squadrons. I was both a student and an instructor at the Navy fighter weapons school, which most people call Top Gun, where we devised the tactics and invasions of countries of our potential enemies. I served on Seven Fleet Staff, where we planned and my preliminary job was planning the invasion and the defense of Southeast Asia countries. I flew 300 combat missions in Vietnam. I was shot down on the 10th of May, 1972, and I was very fortunate, unlike my colleague SAM JOHNSON in this body, was not taken prisoner of war but had a helicopter rescue me before the enemy got to me. I was commanding officer of an adversary squadron that flew Russian and Chinese tactics, forces against our fighters and allied fighters. And I am a student of history, not only of the capabilities but the planning, the strengths and weaknesses in the deployment of air, land and sea forces. That was my job in the military.

I come tonight first of all to speak on Kosovo. Many people will tell you about the problems. They will tell you about the travesties that are taking place, on both sides in my opinion, but they will not give you any solutions.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do tonight is first give in my opinion what some of those solutions are instead of committing ground troops or continuing the air war, because as I give the solutions, Mr. Speaker, I think my colleagues will see that the causes and the problems come in fold. I would like to start first of all by starting at what I consider the beginning of the end.

The first was Rambouillet. Rambouillet was an agreement. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, would you take this agreement in hand? First of all, if you were going to allow a foreign power to occupy what you considered your country. Secondly, that that foreign power would hold that country, yours, in its hand for 3 years and then turn it over to a country like Albania that since 1880 has not only tried to take Kosovo in expansionism but also Macedonia, Montenegro and even parts of Greece. That is why the Greeks are so petrified.

The ad hoc air campaign is no strategy. It is a disaster in my opinion. The strategy of bombing until they capitulate is poor foreign policy and is not a strategy. For us that have fought in wars, unlike many of my colleagues in this body, it is easy to kill but it is very, very difficult to work to live.

What would you do, then, Mr. Congressman, if you had the power? First of all, halt the bombing. Jesse Jackson, who I disagree with most of the time, has shown more leadership than the President or many of the leaders in this body and the other body in my opinion. Jesse Jackson has said that a diplomacy with no diplomacy is no diplomacy; that bombing and forcing an enemy to capitulate with no other dialogue is wrong. I agree.

First of all, Russian military, 70 percent of the Russian military, according to our CIA. I would say, Mr. Speaker, nothing I am going to say here tonight is secondhand. It is firsthand, face to face, either with our intelligence agencies, our military or sources directly related to Kosovo.

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But 70 percent of the Russian military support the overthrow of the Yeltsin government. These are the hard-line Communists, the hard-line Communists that want to see Yeltsin leave and communism returned to the former Soviet Union. These are the same Communists that strongly support Milosevic, and it is part of the problem.

So how do you resolve that? Let us solve Russia's problem, and the United States and Kosovo and the Albanians at the same time.

The Serbians, the Yugoslavians have said that they would allow Russian troops to act as peacekeepers because they trust them. The Greeks, the Scandinavians, the Italians and maybe even the Ukrainians, but let us keep out the United States, Britain and Germany, who is Yugoslavia's bitter enemy since Hitler's days. They do not trust them,

and they are not about to let them on what they consider their homeland.

Kosovo, as per Rambouillet, you have got to start over. The President had a total disregard for the gut feeling of what Kosovo means to the Yugoslavian people and to the Albanians as well. It was a no-win situation, and let us start over. You may have a vote on Kosovo, but it will have to remain, if you want peace in that part of the world, it will have to remain part of the greater Serbia.

You can have a cantonization program, much like they have in the Scandinavian countries to where they have an area for the French, where they have French speakers in French schools, and for the Germans, and for the Swiss, and on and on. That is accepted by the Orthodox Catholic Church of both Greece and greater Serbia and over 200,000 Serbian Americans.

Milosevic, once there is stability with the peacekeeping troops that he trusts and that the Albanians trust, then Milosevic has got to withdraw his troops and his armor prior to Rambouillet. It does not mean they have to give up full power or autonomy, but they have got to remove the threat to the Albanians and to themselves in the long run.

The KLA who is supported, and this is not secondhand, not just in the newspapers, but looking George Tenet, head of the CIA, eye to eye, face to face, and George Tenet told me. He says:

Duke, the KLA is supported by Osama Bin Laden, the terrorist that blew up our embassies. Izetbegovic, a Muslim leader in Sarajevo, has over 12,000 Mujahideen and Hamas that surround him, Mr. Speaker, 12,000. They have emigrated from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan and Syria, the fundamentalist Muslims. These are the Jihad, the real bad people in this world. They know that some day that NATO and the United States will pull out of both Bosnia and Kosovo, and they have surrounded themselves with people they think will give them the strength. Unfortunately, the strength is a threat to world peace and a threat to the United States and the free world, in my opinion.

So, the President has got to look the President of Albania in the eye and say: We want every single one of those Mideast Mujahideen and Hamas out of the country within a short time. He has got to look Izetbegovic in the eye and say: I want every single one of the Mujahideen and Hamas and other fundamentalist terrorists out of Bosnia, out of Kosovo and out of Europe. Besides that, the President has got to look the President of Albania in the eye and say: You have got to stop your expansionism toward Kosovo, toward Macedonia, toward Montenegro and toward Greece.

When there is stability and not before there is stability can you even start considering bringing back in the refugees. There will have to be some kind of outside source to determine which refugees should come back to Kosovo.

One of the problems the Serbs created themselves is tearing up the pa-

pers of the Albanians. Why? Because over 60 percent of the Albanians in Kosovo are there illegally. They have crossed the border, they are not citizens, and to separate now the citizens from the noncitizens, I think the Serbs have made it even more difficult. But yet that has got to be accomplished, in my opinion; and it is going to have to be done thoughtfully.

In the meantime, we are going to have to take a look at the millions of people, in my opinion, that the United States, NATO and Milosevic himself have caused through forced evacuation, that those people starving, they are hungry. If you look into the eyes of the children, they do not have the slightest clue of what is going on.

These are not the Albanians that I am talking about, the terrorists. These are people like you and me with families that just want to live and survive.

But I would also say there is the Yugoslavians the same way, that to identify an entire race as evil is wrong. We have gone down that road in history too often, and each time it has been disastrous.

So we have to aid the citizens on both sides at least with minimal conditions because what are you going to do? You going to bring them back into Kosovo in tents, with no food, and there has got to be a general plan and a central clearinghouse.

The United States should provide leadership, technology and intelligence in its part of the cost. Europe countries, Russia, Greece, Ukraine, Italy, France, Britain and the others, need to pick up the slack and to put the pieces of the puzzle back together; and NATO needs to pay its fair share. The United States is paying for 90 percent of this war. That is wrong. There are 18 other nations in this war, and they should have burden sharing equal to ours.

One of the other problems, Mr. Speaker, is that the President talks about wanting to save Social Security and Medicare and education. Every penny of that surplus that he is talking about comes out of Kosovo. We have already spent \$16 billion in Bosnia. We still spend \$25 million a year in Haiti building roads and bridges. That all comes out of the military budget, and that has got to change. We are in over 150 countries. Our military is so spread out and so distraught that we are only saving about 23 percent of our enlisted and 30 percent of our pilots. That means your experience, not only your troops working on your maintenance, but your aviators and your personnel are without leadership in many cases and/or expenses.

We have been in Korea over 50 years. Bosnia, we were supposed to be there 1 year, and it is \$16 billion. We are still in Saudi Arabia. It has got to stop, and this all needs to be part of the solution as well as strength through peace.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back and tell you in my opinion what some of the causes, and there is a saying:

If you smell the roses, look for the coffins.

In Vietnam it is: Where have all the flowers gone?

As I mentioned, Rambouillet was a disaster, a shortsighted attempt at foreign policy, and I quote Henry Kissinger and Larry Eagleburger:

Was an offer that the President either knew or could not accept, that the Yugoslavians could not accept to give up Kosovo even if Milosevic had said I will give up Kosovo. The Serbian people with their nationalism have been fighting in Kosovo since 1385, that one in three Serbs during World War II gave up their lives against 700,000 Germans on April 5, 1941. The Germans bombed Belgrade and along with a half a million Croatians and a quarter million Muslims have fought with Nazi Germany. One in three Serbs died defending Kosovo, and they either kicked out or killed every single one of the Muslims, of the Croatians and the Nazis, and in doing that they paid for that country in their blood in their opinion. And I think before you ever have a solution, before you ever have a foreign policy, you have got to look in the eyes of all the sides affected, not just one side, or that diplomacy will fail. It will be a no-win situation.

The President basically tried to put a horse's head in bed with the Serbian people, Milosevic. Milosevic sent him the rest of the horse back because the President had not a clue on the gut feeling of the Yugoslavian people as far as Kosovo.

This is the home of the Orthodox Catholic Church. It is their Jerusalem, and they will not give it up. So Kosovo has got to go off the table and remain part of greater Serbia, but yet it can be cantonized.

The military, the Pentagon, told the President. I can name the guys that I flew with in these wars that are now in the Pentagon. They looked me eye to eye and said:

Duke, we told the President not to get into this air war, not to do it, because, A, the goals could not be achieved with air strikes alone, and the unwillingness to conduct ground troops and to insert them into the war, that we would make things worse, that we would kill a lot of innocent people, we would stretch our military beyond belief, we would make ourselves vulnerable in North Korea and Iraq and other places in the world and that we would accelerate an increased forced evacuation of refugees. And that is exactly, Mr. Speaker, what we have done.

When you ask the people where were you when the Serbs came: We were in our homes; they told us to get out. They were not evacuating, they were not refugees, but our bombing forced acceleration of that, and there are millions of people that in my opinion this President and Milosevic are responsible for that would not be there today, and this is a sad thing to say about your own country, Mr. Speaker, and the lack of planning and understanding and leadership.

You think in the planning to just conduct air strikes, something I did for

20 years, that the President would have looked at the weather to commence air strikes when the weather is predicted to be overcast and bad weather, which you cannot conduct your air strikes safely for 2 weeks. Do you think they might have checked the weather?

When Chernomyrdin was on his way to the United States knowing how Russia supports the Serbs, do you think they might have notified Russia? Instead Chernomyrdin had to turn around his airplane and go back to Russia. To me, that is ludicrous. It is not something that you would plan.

And this ad hoc air circus warfare that is stepped up little by little with very little planning is not the way to win a war, and I would ask you, Mr. President, to think about what we have done.

Mr. Speaker, do you know the total number of people killed in Kosovo prior to our bombing? It is amazing. People will say 10,000, 20,000. It is 2,012. Prior to us bombing, this great massive killing, 2,012.

Tudjman, the head of the Croatians, slaughtered 10,000 Serbs in 1995 and ethnically cleansed out of Croatia 750,000 Yugoslavians. Where were we then? And on a scale 2,012, and one-third of those were Serbs killed by the KLA. Was there an apartheid? Yes. Ninety percent, not all Albanians, made up of other nations.

As my colleagues know, there was over 100,000 Serbs that left Kosovo because of the harassment by the KLA. There was fighting on both sides. And before you can have diplomacy, you have got to understand the only problem is not Milosevic. The KLA is a problem. Tudjman is a problem. Our lack of understanding of European problems is the problem.

And again what I tell you is not secondhand; it is firsthand.

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General Clark, face-to-face, when I was in Brussels, said, DUKE, NATO only wanted to bomb one day and quit; to me, face-to-face, not in a newspaper, not from an Intel source, that NATO only wanted to bomb one day and quit.

Secretary Cohen said, well, DUKE, our biggest problem is the media. If we have the media coming down on us, we are lost. In other words, the spin has got to come. Because I asked, why did they continue? Because the President got ahold of Blair from Britain, and the German Chancellor, and pushed the bombs to what we are doing now, and that is why I think it really is a Clinton-Gore war.

For us to disregard the Pentagon, to not have the knowledge of what Kosovo meant, to push NATO into this, and now they are into it, and then to say NATO speaks with one voice after last week in their meeting, if they are speaking with one voice, why is Hungary still shipping oil to Serbia, a NATO country? Why is France still shipping oil? Why is France trading nuclear weapons to Iran? These are part

of NATO nations and they are speaking with one voice?

I think that is wrong. The policy to bomb into submission is a lack of policy.

Again, I would like to thank Jesse Jackson, who I disagree with most of the time, and his son serves here on the other side of the aisle, but I want to say Mr. Jackson gave more leadership and more thought toward this problem than the President of the United States, and I want to personally thank him for that.

It is easy to fight, we have the power, but it is difficult to work and live, and I quote Jesse Jackson: There is fear on both sides. The understanding, the diplomacy.

When I was a youngster, I worked in a hay field and I sat on a bench and I had a Persian cat jump up in my lap, and I was petting the cat. Just a few minutes later a Siamese cat came on the other side. Of course, the two cats tensed up but I was going to make them friends. I was smarter than those cats, and I knew their attitudes could be changed.

I moved those cats closer and closer and they would tighten, and I would pet them. They would tighten and I would pet them, and I would move them closer. I sat there out of the hay fields with no shirt on and those cats hit each other and I was a shredded mess.

If one tries to bring refugees into a country where they want to kill each other and put the United States in the middle, it is going to be a disaster.

The Serbs fear the KLA. The Albanian people fear the Serbs. The Serbs feel that the country is theirs. The Albanians feel that portions of the country is theirs. Again, before we can have any diplomacy, the President has to understand, when the liberal level attempts to use a vehicle like the military that they neither understand nor have supported in the past, they are bound to fail.

They have a strange dichotomy, Mr. Speaker. They have a vehicle which they loath at times, and at the same time they use this vehicle to serve foreign policy. They are inept, and I would say that the Strobe Talbotts, the Jane Fondas, the Tom Haydens, the Ramsey Clarks are bound to fail because they do not have the gut inclinations on what the use of the military is, and especially when they deny what their warfighters say and go on.

Let us look at NATO today. It is not Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Let us look at the makeup. France is a socialist communist coalition. Italy, a former, and I say "former", communist; they say he is a quick study for democracy. Germany, a Greenpeace socialist. Tony Blair, a liberal left labor party. And then the President with his military record.

I contend that this is not leadership in foreign policy with the use of that vehicle that will be successful, especially if they turn their heads away

from their advisors, the people that know what they are doing in conflict. They are out of their element and disaster is inevitable.

I asked General Clark, face-to-face, I said, how many sorties, how many flights, is the United States making? We have got 19 nations in this. With his eyes he looked at me and he said, DUKE, to the sortie we are flying 75 percent of the air strikes. That does not include the B-2s, the C-17 logistics, the tanking and the other missions. That puts us up over 86 percent. Ninety percent of the weapons dropped are from the United States. There are 18 other nations, Mr. Speaker, in this.

Our supplemental coming up tomorrow should be a check from NATO. Billions of dollars for a European war and we are paying for it, and we are taking the money out of the things that we are trying to support like medical research and Social Security and Medicare and education to fight this war.

There are many of us who think that we should not be there, and that there is a better way. Eighteen other nations. I think that is wrong.

I talked to Stavros Dimas, he is number two in the Greek parliament on the minority side. They are absolutely petrified of Albanian expansionism because, like I said, in the early 1800s they wanted even parts of Greece. History, in 1389 when Kosovo was one, and I mentioned that on April 5, 1941, 700,000 German troops invaded Kosovo and Belgrade was bombed. The Chetniks, who were mostly the guerrilla fighters, the partisans and the loyalists, were led by a general named Miholevic, not Milosevic but Miholevic, and they killed or kicked out every single German out of Kosovo.

The CIA, George Tenet, again, told me that the KLA is supported by Osama bin Laden, the Mujahideen and Hamas from Middle East countries. And these are the people that some of my colleagues want to arm?

They say, oh, no, no, no, that is not true. That is not true. There cannot be any KLA sympathizers to Mujahideen and Hamas.

Well, I would tell my friends that they are wrong and it is backed up eyeball-to-eyeball with George Tenet.

Mr. Speaker, I have a tape here. I cannot play it on the floor because it is illegal to use electronics on the floor of the House, and I will not play it, but what is in this tape is some 36 surface-to-air missiles fired at a strike in January of 1972. My flight had over 36 SAMS fired at it. I lost two good friends this day. I lost two other good friends and pilots in a strike up by Quang Tri City.

Part of the supplemental that we are going to fight for tomorrow has these stand-off weapons, the stand-off weapons that have kept many of our pilots safe but yet because of Iraq, because of other places the President has gotten us into, four times in Iraq, the Sudan, Somalia, Haiti, that we are running out of these stand-off weapons like the

Tomahawk. We call it a TLAM. The conventional air launch cruise missile we call a CALCM, these run at about \$2 million apiece. The Tomahawk runs at about a million. The Joint STARS, which is a joint surveillance large aircraft that gives us the intelligence and the information we need on the ground, we are short of those. We have lost two F-16s. We have lost two Apaches. We lost an F-117 fighter.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, we are going to lose more aircraft, and if we commit ground forces into Kosovo, even if we force Milosevic to capitulate, we then buy Kosovo. If you look at the history, General Shelton said this is absolutely the most difficult land and area environment to attack in the world. It is one of the easiest to defend.

A single rocket launcher can knock out a tank and these narrow roads can tie up a whole column of tanks. Guerrilla warfare, which they are used to fighting, they have been fighting there for 800 years. Yes, I think we can overcome the Serbian forces but if we do, A, at what cost? B, we have just bought Kosovo. And then what? I think it is a disaster.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think with the history of the area, that with the lack of understanding by the White House, the lack of diplomacy with Russia and the threat of Russia becoming involved, it is very evident that we are in a very dangerous situation.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, an article that I would like to submit. It says, Head of U.S. Air Command Warns of Strained Forces. They warned of strained forces long before Kosovo ever took place.

We had 14 of 24 jets at Top Gun down for parts; 137 parts were missing. Eight of them were down for engines. The 414th, which is the Air Force aggressor squadron in fighter weapons school, was about the same way. Oceana, a training base, had 4 of 35 jets up, only 4, which trained our new pilots, because they are sending the parts forward.

I do not guess Iraq is important anymore because the no-fly zone, we are letting that skid. Or the threat to North Korea is not there.

There is another article here that I would like to submit, Mr. Speaker, that says if we were forced to go into North Korea or these other areas, that we could no longer fight a two-conflict battle, which is what our national security policy has been.

This is a very difficult time for my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We will find a mix of people on both sides of this issue from both sides of the aisle. I like to bring to it an understanding, not only of the diplomacy that is needed but the understanding that is needed before we can ever have a peace.

The President's position of just bomb until Milosevic quits will not work, in my opinion. Even if there is a short halt in the peace, it will escalate again, and I think that is wrong.

I look at other problems not only in Kosovo but around the world with foreign policy.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, read the New York Times about the lab secrets that were stolen for China in our nuclear labs. It was found out. The gentleman pleaded guilty. He actually took secrets on our missile technology and submarine technology to China. He gave it to the PLA, the communist People's Liberation army, showed it to them and then burned it and came back. He has confessed. But is he up for treason? No. The judge would not handle it. He got a 1-year sentence and he is out this year from a prison in California. Treason?

Colonel Liu, who is General Liu's daughter, the head of technology transfer for the People's Liberation Army in China, Colonel Liu met with John Huang. John Huang introduced Colonel Liu to the President, gave the President, the Clinton and Gore campaign, \$300,000.

Loral gave the Clinton-Gore campaign a million dollars. Hughes gave the Clinton-Gore campaign a million dollars. The following week the President waived, against the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the National Security Agency, waived and let the Chinese have, and what did he let them have, Mr. Speaker? Secondary and tertiary missile boost capability, which we were briefed by the CIA that Korea was 10 years away from striking the United States. Guess what? They magically have that now after we gave it to China.

The laboratories, what was stolen? The President was briefed in 1996 that we had a spy at our laboratories, at our nuclear labs, and they did nothing. What did they steal? They stole the W-88 warhead, which is a small nuclear warhead. And what did the President waive, against the Department of Defense and national security advisors?

□ 2100

The MIRVing capability, which now allows China to put eight nuclear warheads on a single missile. If that is not bad enough, the targeting devices, before, yes, they could hit the United States, or if they were targeting Chicago, they may hit Peoria. But now they could hit the fourth window on the third apartment on 32nd Street, with that accuracy.

When we have that kind of foreign policy mixed with Kosovo, mixed with the threat to this country with Iraq and Iran, then I think this country needs to take a sidestep and readjust not only its foreign policy but its trade policy as well.

Mr. Speaker, it brings me a lot of sadness to come to the well tonight to speak in this manner. But this is not an easy situation for any of us. Let us get out of Kosovo. There is a much better way, a peaceful way, to achieve this and to work.

I do not think there will be peace in the Middle East in my lifetime, there

may not be peace in Northern Ireland in my lifetime, but we have to keep working in that direction. But it does not mean that we have to put troops in Northern Ireland or the Middle East, or keep them in Korea or in Saudi Arabia, because we have a lot of things in our country that we need to do like social security, like Medicare, like education, like medical research.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following articles:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 27, 1999]
ANALYSIS: WARNINGS OF AIR WAR DRAWBACKS
(By Bradley Graham)

With NATO leaders still wedded to a strategy of pounding Yugoslavia only from the air, a top alliance commander warned yesterday that the relentless bombing could end up setting the country's economy back several decades and still not produce the desired results.

General Klaus Naumann, outgoing head of NATO's military committee, told reporters that alliance leaders came out of their summit conference here this weekend determined to pursue and intensify the month-old bombing campaign. U.S. military commanders differ, however, over when to start using two dozen AH-64A Apache attack helicopters now on station in Albania, he said. Some officers fear the low-level aircraft are still to vulnerable to Yugoslav anti-aircraft missiles.

With consideration of ground forces put off for the time being, Naumann said he and Gen. Wesley K. Clark, the alliance's top military officer, still look to the air campaign to force President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw Yugoslav forces from the embattled Serbian province of Kosovo, largely because of a sense that no responsible head of government would allow his country to be reduced to rubble.

"Of course, we may have one flaw in our thinking," he added. "Our flaw may be that we think he may have at least a little bit of responsibility for his country and may act accordingly, since otherwise he may end up being the ruler of rubble."

Naumann indicated he favors using the Apache gunships against Yugoslav artillery emplacements along Kosovo's border with Albania, saying the Apaches stand a better chance of finding and destroying these targets with less harm to ethnic Albanian refugees in the area that higher-flying NATO warplanes now in use. But yesterday's crash of an Apache in Albania, during what defense officials described as a training accident, only heightened concerns among some Pentagon officers about putting the Apaches into action in a risky environment.

[From the Military Readiness Review, April, 1999]

KOSOVO AND THE NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY: THE COST OF DOING MORE WITH LESS
(Written and produced by Floyd Spence Chairman, House Armed Services Committee)

"The [U.S. military] must be able to defeat adversaries in two distant, overlapping major theater wars from a posture of global engagement and in the face of WMD and other asymmetric threats. It must respond across the full spectrum of crises, from major combat to humanitarian assistance operations. It must be ready to conduct and sustain multiple, concurrent smaller-scale contingency operations." —The National Military Strategy of the United States.

The National Military Strategy of the United States requires that the U.S. armed

services be prepared to fight and win two major theater wars at the same time they conduct multiple, concurrent smaller-scare contingency operations and maintain a posture of global engagement around the world. The sustained reduction in military force structure and defense budgets since the end of the Cold War has seriously called into question whether the U.S. military is able to execute the national military strategy. Since 1989, the Army and the Air Force have been reduced by 45 percent, the Navy by 36 percent and the Marine Corps by 12 percent while operational commitments around the world have increased by 300 percent.

Strained by the already high pace of day to day operations, as well as on-going contingency operations in Iraq and Bosnia, the U.S. military now faces a rapidly escalating commitment in Kosovo. Indeed, the build-up of aircraft for Operation Allied Force in the Balkans will soon approach the size of the air fleet required in a major theater war—in essence, Kosovo has become a third major theater of war. The U.S. military is already feeling the strain in critical areas:

Aircraft Carriers. The aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, originally scheduled for deployment to the Gulf region, has been assigned to the Balkans and arrived on station April 5. The gap in the Persian Gulf has been filled by the USS *Kitty Hawk*, normally stationed in the Far East. She arrived in the Gulf on April 1, and will be relieved by the USS *Constellation* in June. With no carrier deployed in the Far East in the foreseeable future, the Air Force has been compelled to put its fighter aircraft in the region on higher alert in an effort to partially compensate for the loss of the carrier-based Navy aircraft. The Navy has 12 aircraft carriers in the fleet to cover commitments world-wide. With five currently in shipyards and the rest either recently returned from deployment or just beginning pre-deployment training, Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig recently testified that the service's carrier fleet is "being stretched."

Conventional Fighter and Attack Aircraft. Including the aircraft aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, and the 82 additional aircraft just approved for deployment, approximately 500 total U.S. aircraft are currently involved in Operation Allied Force. This includes over 200 fighters and attack aircraft. General Wesley Clark, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, recently requested some 300 additional U.S. aircraft in order to intensify the air campaign. If approved, it will bring the total number of U.S. aircraft in the region to 800. In addition, the European Command recently removed 10 F-15 fighters and 3 EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft from Incirlik Air Base in Turkey and deployed them in Aviano Air Base in Italy. Press reports indicate that in an April 1, 1999, meeting, the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed concern that General Clark's growing requirements for aircraft and other equipment will mean higher risks in other hot spots around the world.

F-117 Fighters. The Air Force has deployed 24 F-117 aircraft to the Balkans to support Operation Allied Force. Because of their stealth capabilities, F-117s are in high demand for the type of operations currently being conducted over Yugoslavia. However, the United States has a total of only 59 F-117s to cover all requirements world-wide.

Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (Joint STARS). JSTARS is a modified Boeing 707 aircraft equipped with a long-range air-to-ground surveillance system designed to locate, classify and track ground targets in all weather conditions. Currently, the United States has just five JSTARS in the inventory. Two are supporting operations in the Balkans, placing a strain on

the remaining three aircraft that must respond to all other commitments around the world.

EA-6B Prowler. The EA-6B is used to collect tactical electronic information on enemy forces and to jam enemy radar systems. It is also equipped with the HARM anti-radiation missile that is used to destroy enemy radar systems. The EA-6B is found in Navy, Marine Corps and joint Navy/Air Force squadrons. With a total of only 123 in the inventory, nearly 20 are currently deployed to support operations in Yugoslavia. Combined with the on-going deployments in support of Operations Northern and Southern Watch in Iraq and other commitments around the world, the EA-6B fleet is considered by DoD to be "fully committed" at the present time.

KC-135/KC-10 Aerial Refuelers. Currently the Air Force has over 50 KC-135 aircraft and approximately 15 KC-10 aircraft supporting operations in the Balkans. The refueler fleet is heavily committed on a day-to-day basis during normal peacetime operations. As a result, the active Air Force relies heavily on the Guard and Reserve, who fly 56% of the refueling missions for the Air Force. Normally, the Air Force meets its world-wide commitments using volunteers from the Guard and Reserve. However, as the operation intensifies, Air Force will be unable to meet commitments with volunteers alone. The pending Presidential Guard and Reserve call-up is likely to contain a high percentage of KC-135/KC-10 crews. On April 26, 1999, the Secretary of Defense announced that an additional 30 KC-135/KC-10 aircraft and crews, both active and Reserve, will deploy to the region.

Conventional Air Launched Cruise Missiles (CALCM). Prior to Operation Desert Fox against Iraq in December 1998, the Air Force had approximately 250 CALCMs, the non-nuclear version of the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) that are launched from U.S. bombers. The Air Force fired 90 against Iraq during Operation Desert Fox. In Operation Allied Force, 78 have been fired during the first three weeks of operations leaving approximately 80 in the inventory. The Congress recently approved an emergency reprogramming of \$51.5 million in FY 1999 funding to convert an additional 92 ALCMs to CALCMs. In the White House's recent emergency supplemental budget request, CALCMs were designated as the Air Force's number one shortfall.

Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM). The TLAM has become the Administration's weapon of choice to strike heavily defended or high value targets while posing no risk to American pilots. During Operation Desert Fox strikes against Iraq, 330 TLAMs were fired from Navy ships. To date, approximately 178 additional TLAMs have been fired against targets in Yugoslavia. The type of TLAM that is being depleted most rapidly, the Block IIIC model, is the most advanced and therefore the most in demand by military commanders. Further, the U.S. shut down the last remaining TLAM production line in fiscal year 1998 and production of the follow-on missile system is not planned until fiscal year 2003. The White House's emergency supplemental appropriations bill identified TLAM shortfalls as an urgent priority, and included funds to convert older cruise missiles to the more advanced Block IIIC model.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 30, 1999]
HEAD OF U.S. AIR COMMAND WARNS OF STRAINED FORCES—GENERAL SAYS WAR STRETCHES U.S. FORCES

(By Bradley Graham)

The general who oversees U.S. combat aircraft said yesterday the Air Force has been sorely strained by the Kosovo conflict and

would be hard-pressed to handle a second war in the Middle East or Korea.

Gen. Richard Hawley, who heads the Air Combat Command, told reporters that five weeks of bombing Yugoslavia have left U.S. munition stocks critically short, not just of air-launched cruise missiles as previously reported, but also of another precision weapon, the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) dropped by B-2 bombers. So low is the inventory of the new satellite-guided weapons, Hawley said, that as the bombing campaign accelerates, the Air Force risks exhausting its prewar supply of more than 900 JDAMs before the next scheduled delivery in May.

"It's going to be really touch-and-go as to whether we'll go Winchester on JDAMs," the four-star general said, using a pilot's term for running out of bullets.

On a day the Pentagon announced deployment of an additional 10 giant B-52 bombers to NATO's air battle, Hawley said the continuing buildup of U.S. aircraft means more air crew shortages in the United States. And because the Air Force tends to send its most experienced crews, Hawley said, the experience level of units left behind also is falling. With NATO's latest request for another 300 U.S. aircraft—on top of 600 already committed—Hawley said the readiness rating of the remaining fleet will drop quickly and significantly.

His grim assessment underscored questions about the U.S. military's ability to manage a conflict such as the assault on Yugoslavia after reducing and reshaping forces since the Cold War. U.S. military strategy no longer calls for battling another superpower, but it does require the Pentagon to be prepared to fight two major regional wars at about the same time.

As the number of U.S. planes involved in the conflict over Kosovo approaches the level of a major regional war, the operation is exposing weaknesses in the availability and structure of Air Force as well as Army units, engendering fresh doubts about the military's overall preparedness for the world it now confronts. If another military crisis were to erupt in the Middle East or Asia, Hawley said reinforcements are still available, but he added: "I'd be hard-pressed to give them everything that they would probably ask for. There would be some compromises made."

The Army's ability to respond nimbly to foreign hot spots also has been put in question by the month it has taken to deploy two dozen AH-64A Apache helicopters to Albania. While Army officials insist the helicopter task force moved faster than any other country could have managed, the experience appeared to highlight a gap between the Pentagon's talk about becoming a more expeditionary force and the reality of deploying soldiers.

Massing forces for a ground invasion of Yugoslavia, officials said, would require two or three months. Because U.S. military planners never figured on fighting a ground war in Europe following the Soviet Union's demise, little Army heavy equipment is prepositioned near the Balkans. Nor are there Army units that would seem especially designed for the job of getting to the Balkans quickly with enough firepower and armor to attack dug-in Yugoslav forces over mountainous terrain.

"What we need is something between our light and heavy forces, that can get somewhere fast but with more punch," a senior Army official said.

Yugoslav forces have shown themselves more of a match for U.S. and allied air power than NATO commanders had anticipated. The Serb-led Yugoslav army has adopted a duck-and-hide strategy, husbanding air defense radars and squirreling away tanks,

confounding NATO's attempts to gain the freedom for low-level attacks to whittle down field units. Yugoslav units also have shown considerable resourcefulness, reconstituting damaged communication links and finding alternative routes around destroyed bridges, roads and rail links.

"They've employed a rope-a-dope strategy," said Barry Posen, a political science professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "Conserve assets, hang back, take the punches and hope over time that NATO makes some kind of mistake that can be exploited."

Hawley disputed suggestions that the assault on Yugoslavia has represented an air power failure, saying the full potential of airstrikes has been constrained by political limits on targeting.

"In our Air Force doctrine, air power works best when it is used decisively," the general said. "Clearly, because of the constraints, we haven't been able to see that at this point."

NATO's decision not to employ ground forces, he added, also has served to undercut the air campaign. He noted that combat planes such as the A-10 Warthog tank killer often rely on forward ground controllers to call in strikes.

"When you don't have that synergy, things take longer and they're harder, and that's what you're seeing in this conflict," the general said.

At the same time, Hawley, who is due to retire in June, insisted the course of the battle so far has not prompted any rethinking about U.S. military doctrine or tactics, nor has it caused any second thoughts about plans for the costly development of two new fighter jets, the F-22 and Joint Strike Fighter. Despite the apparent success U.S. planes have demonstrated in overcoming Yugoslavia's air defense network, Hawley said the next generation of warplanes is necessary because future adversaries would be equipped with more advanced anti-aircraft missiles and combat aircraft than the Yugoslavs.

If the air operation has highlighted any weaknesses in U.S. combat strength, Hawley said, it has been in what he termed a desperate shortage of aircraft for intelligence-gathering, radar suppression and search-and-rescue missions. While additional planes and unmanned aircraft to meet this shortfall are on order or under development, Hawley said it will take "a long time" to field them.

In the meantime, he argued, the United States must start reducing overseas military commitments. He suggested some foreign operations have been allowed to go on too long, noting that the U.S. military presence in Korea has lasted more than 50 years, and U.S. warplanes have remained stationed in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, flying patrols over Iraq, for more than eight years.

"I would argue we cannot continue to accumulate contingencies," he said. "At some point you've got to figure out how to get out of something."

The Air Force blames a four-fold jump in overseas operations this decade, coming after years of budget cuts and troop reductions, for contributing to an erosion of military morale, equipment and training. The Air Force has tried various fixes in recent years to stanch an exodus of pilots and other airmen in some critical specialties.

It has boosted bonuses, cut back on time-consuming training exercises and tried to limit deployment periods. It also has requested and received hundreds of millions of dollars in extra funds for spare parts.

Additionally, it announced plans last August to reorganize more than 2,000 warplanes and support aircraft into 10 "expeditionary" groups that would rotate responsibility for deployments to such longstanding trouble zones as Iraq and Bosnia.

But Hawley's remarks suggested that the growing scale and uncertain duration of the air operation against Yugoslavia threaten to undo whatever progress the Air Force has made in shoring up readiness. Whenever the airstrikes end, he said, the Air Force will require "a reconstitution period" to put many of its units back in order.

"We are going to be in desperate need, in my command, of a significant retrenchment in commitments for a significant period of time," he said. "I think we have a real problem facing us three, four, five months down the road in the readiness of the stateside units."

MEDICARE MUST NOT BE PRIVATIZED

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am joined tonight by my friends, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

For the next hour we are going to talk about efforts that the majority party has tried to improve Medicare in this system, perhaps the single best government program of our lifetime, that has brought half the population in this country, really has provided health care for half the senior population.

In 1965 when Medicare was created, only about half of America's elderly had health insurance. Today 99-plus percent of America's elderly do.

Mr. Speaker, many in Congress have been on a campaign to scare America's seniors into believing that Medicare is going bankrupt. They say that Medicare must be improved in order to save it. Once again, Medicare privatizers are wrong. The Trustees of the Medicare Trust Fund have just reported that Medicare will remain solvent through the year 2015, up from its earlier projection just a year ago of 2008.

Republicans in Congress, the Washington, D.C. think tanks, and their media supporters who want to privatize Medicare are wringing their hands over the Trustees' latest report. They believe these new projections will lead Congress to do nothing toward reforming social security and Medicare. With the programs projected to last longer, they tell us we cannot rest on our laurels.

The real threat to Medicare, however, is not its alleged pending bankruptcy. The real threat is a proposal just rejected by the National Medicare Commission to privatize Medicare and to deliver it to the private insurance market.

Under a proposal soon to be introduced called premium support, Medicare would no longer pay directly for health care services. Instead, it would provide each senior with a voucher good for part of the premium for health

care, for private health care coverage. Medicare beneficiaries could use this voucher to buy into the fee-for-service plan sponsored by the Federal Government, or could join a private plan.

To encourage consumer price sensitivity, the voucher would track to the lowest cost private plan. Ostensibly, seniors would shop for the plan that best suits their needs, paying the balance of the premium or paying extra if they want higher quality. The proposal would create a system of health coverage, but it would abandon Medicare's fundamental principle, its fundamental principle of egalitarianism.

Today the Medicare program is income-blind. All seniors have access to the same level of care. The idea that vouchers would empower seniors to choose a health plan that best suits their needs is simply a myth. The reality is that seniors will be forced to accept whatever plan they can afford.

The goal of the Medicare Commission was to ensure the program's long-term solvency. The premium support proposal will not do that. Supporters of the voucher plan say it could shave 1 percent per year from the Medicare budget over the next few decades. That is still not enough to prevent insolvency, and it is surely based on much too optimistic projections of private sector performance.

Bruce Vladeck, a former administrator of the Medicare program and the Medicare Commission, a bipartisan Commission Member, doubted the Commission plan would save the Federal Government \$1. That same proposal under a legislative plan, under a legislative title, will not succeed, either.

Efforts to privatize Medicare are, of course, nothing new. Medicare beneficiaries have long been able to enroll in private managed care plans. Their experience, however, does not bode well for a full-fledged privatization effort. These managed care plans are already calling for higher government payments. They are dropping out of unprofitable markets, and they are cutting back on benefits to senior citizens.

Managed care plans obviously are profit-driven, and they simply do not tough it out when those profits are not realized. We learned this the hard way last year when 96 Medicare HMOs unceremoniously dropped 400,000 Medicare beneficiaries because the HMOs did not meet their profit objectives.

Before the Medicare program was launched in 1965, more than one-half of the Nation's seniors were uninsured. Private insurance was the only option for the elderly. But these insurers did not want senior citizens to join their plans because they knew that seniors use their coverage. The private insurance market surely has changed considerably since then, but it still avoids high-risk enrollees and, whenever possible, dodges the bill for high-cost medical services.

The problem is not necessarily malice or greed, it is the expectation that