FOR CONTINUED U.S. ENGAGEMENT IN THE BALKANS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, next week the Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up several bills that will incorporate the Administration's supplemental request for this fiscal year. Included in this request is two point six billion dollars for peacekeeping and reconstruction in Kosovo and the surrounding region.

In that context, I rise to examine the rapidly changing conditions in the Balkans and to argue for continued vigorous American involvement in the region, including meeting the Administration's supplemental request.

Mr. President, since the end of the Cold War few, if any other parts of the world have commanded as much of our attention as the Balkans, particularly the area of the former Yugoslavia. This is no accident. The Balkans were the crucible for the First World War, played a pivotal role in the outcome of the Second World War, and persist as the only remaining major area of instability in Europe.

As every thoughtful political leader in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid or other capitals will attest, if the movements in the countries of the Balkans toward political democracy, ethnic and religious coexistence, and free market capitalism do not succeed, the resulting turmoil will endanger the remarkable peace and prosperity laboriously created over the past half-century in the countries of the European Union and in other Western democracies.

Moreover, Mr. President, for Americans warning of this possibility is not merely an academic exercise. In political, security, and economic terms, the United States is a European power. We are tied to the continent through a web of trade, investment, human contacts, and culture to a degree unequaled by relations with any other part of the world. Instability that spread to Western Europe would directly and adversely affect the United States of America in a major way.

In other words, Mr. President, we do not have the luxury of being able to distance ourselves from the Balkans, no matter how emotionally appealing such a policy may appear at times.

As someone who visits Southeastern Europe on a regular basis, I fully understand how frustrating dealing with Balkan issues can be. Much of this stunningly beautiful area, with its jumble of ancient peoples, has seemingly intractable problems. Americans accustomed to quick solutions naturally become frustrated, especially since we have built up a large presence on the ground in several Balkan countries in the last few years and, therefore, know first-hand the complexities involved.

But the very diversity of the Balkans means that even if human history moved in a linear fashion—which it certainly does not—progress toward democracy, human rights, and free markets in Southeastern Europe would necessarily be uneven, moving forward in some countries, stagnating in some, and even regressing in a few.

Mr. President, this is precisely what has been happening; the region is experiencing ''ups and downs.'' Contrary to popular belief, undoubtedly influenced by the proclivity of the mass media to emphasize the negative, there have been several positive developments in the Balkans.

Slovenia, the northernmost country of the Balkans, is the region's success story. It has already established a solid democracy, and its transition to a free-market economy has been so successful that its per capita gross domestic product now exceeds that of a few members of the European Union. Slovenia seems certain to be in the next round of NATO enlargement, and it is one of the strongest candidates for EU membership.

Croatia, which suffered for a decade under the authoritarian rule of Franjo Tudjman, elected a new parliament this past January with a moderate, democratic coalition gaining a solid majority. The winner of the February presidential election, Mr. Mesic, is also a democratic reformer.

Already there has been signs of positive movement from the new regime in Zagreb, both domestically and in foreign policy. For example, the government has begun investigating corruption from the Tudjman era in the banking and communications sectors. In the international realm, the Croatian government has signed an agreement on cooperation with the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague. Moreover, the new government has closed down illegal television transmission towers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had spread ultra-nationalist programming from Croatia.

In fact, the hard-line obstructionist nationalist Croat leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina is running scared, knowing that it has lost its patron, the former HDZ regime, in Croatia. It appears that the new government in Zagreb has pledged itself to full Dayton implementation, including a commitment to the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state.

It is debatable whether the ''good example'' set by Zagreb will soon influence the situation in Serbia; but it is already clear that the change of government in Zagreb is causing Bosnian Croat leaders to re-think their strategy.

The local elections in Bosnia last month provided mixed results. In the Republika Srpska, Prime Minister Dodik's coalition lost ground, but there is still hope that the new government being formed will accelerate the pace of implementation of the Dayton Accords.

In the Federation, reformist Bosnian Croats did not have sufficient time to organize strong opposition to the entrenched HDZ nationalists. As the withdrawal of subsidies from Zagreb to the Bosnian Croat HDZ takes effect, however, the moderate Bosnian Croats may be able to increase their strength in the upcoming national elections.

The most heartening developments concern the Bosnian Muslims, the largest of the three major communities in the country. The Muslims have demonstrated an accelerating move away from the nationalist SDA party to non-nationalist alternatives, as demonstrated by their electoral victories in several of Bosnia's largest cities.

Mr. President, the southern Balkans also show several positive trends, some of them quite remarkable. At the Helsinki Summit of the European Union in December 1999, Turkey for the first time was granted the status of candidate for membership. To be sure, any realistic analysis of Turkey's chances would make them long-term, but the development in Helsinki is nonetheless a real breakthrough and is being received as such by the majority of Turkey's population.

Moreover, the devastating earthquakes that rocked both Turkey and Greece last summer elicited mutual expressions of popular sympathy from both peoples and have led to a significant warming of relations between these two long-time rivals.

Both Bulgaria and Romania are governed by Western-looking, democratic free-marketeers. The closing of the Danube by the NATO bombing in the air war last year has had an extremely damaging effect on their already shaky economies. Both countries, though, have embarked upon painful, but necessary reforms. The reformers will be sorely tested in upcoming national elections.

Macedonia, perhaps the most fragile country in the region, has survived the trauma of the Kosovo war, with its massive influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees, without the violent destabilization expected by many observers, and certainly intended by Milosevic. A newly elected conservative government includes an ethnic Albanian party, but the raw material for an ethnic conflagration persists.

The ''downs'' in the Balkan picture, which have been getting the lion's share of the publicity, are Serbia proper, Montenegro, and Kosovo.

Certainly the principal negative fact of life in the region is the continuing presence in power in Serbia of Slobodan Milosevic. My colleagues know well my feelings about this man. In 1993, six years before the Hague Tribunal made public its indictment, I called Milosevic a war criminal to his face at a meeting in his office in Belgrade.

Milosevic, quite simply, has been a disaster for the Serbian people. He has destroyed Serbia's economy, eviscerated its body politic, and debased its reputation internationally. It is not easy to start—and lose—four wars in eight years, but Milosevic has managed to do it. He is a man of only one ideological conviction: that he must hold

onto power in Serbia. To retain power he is ready to use any means, including ruining the lives of the people he theoretically represents.

Unfortunately, Milosevic clings to power through a combination of ruthlessness, tactical cunning, and the inability until now of the Serbian opposition to forge a permanent anti-Milosevic coalition that could be compelling for the Serbian electorate. There is some basis for cautious optimism that the political opposition in Serbia may be unifying in its opposition to Milosevic. Last month the opposition was able to bring out to the streets of Belgrade a massive crowd of more than two hundred thousand demonstrators against Milosevic.

The gangland quality of life in contemporary Serbia is demonstrated by the recent public machine-gun slayings of ''Arkan,'' the Yugoslav defense minister, and other ultra-nationalist figures. Most recently independent journalists in Serbia have been given implicit death threats—from no less a personage than Mr. Seselj, the deputy prime minister! These moves, however, bespeak the increasing weakness and fear of the Milosevic regime, not any strength.

I should add that another reason that Milosevic has been able to survive this cold winter is assistance from like-minded dictators. Over the past few months, China made a gift of three hundred million dollars, and Iraq contributed much needed oil. It is also extremely likely that Russia and Belarus have funneled assistance to Milosevic.

The United States Government is actively supporting the creation of a civil society in Serbia through targeted grants to a variety of independent media, citizens' groups, independent trade unions, and towns controlled by the democratic opposition.

Despite Milosevic's malevolent and unscrupulous behavior, I remain convinced that ultimately the pressure from below—and from within his government, party, and armed forces—will result in his fall from power. What is key is that we not lose our patience or our nerve. I will not put a date on Milosevic's fall, but fall he will, and the long-suffering Serbian people will begin to regain their dignity.

Montenegro, the junior partner in the Yugoslav Federation, is governed by a multi-ethnic, democratic coalition led by President Milo Djukanovic. The reformist government of this little republic of less than seven hundred thousand citizens is struggling to avoid being overthrown by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who is currently scheming about how to undermine Montenegro's democratically elected government. His tools are the Yugoslav army and shadowy paramilitary forces loyal to him, plus economic pressures applied to its vastly smaller neighbor.

We have seen Milosevic starring in this movie before—- in Slovenia, in Croatia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Kosovo. Milosevic lost each time, in the process sacrificing hundreds of thousands of lives and causing untold material damage. I can only hope that he has learned his lesson.

Kosovo is another ongoing challenge for American policy and fortitude. Eleven months after the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops, Serbian police, and paramilitaries, the province is still struggling to regain a semblance of normalcy. The task is enormous: by the estimate of the U.N., some eight hundred ten thousand residents who fled during last year's war have returned to a province in which approximately two-thirds of the housing stock was destroyed or damaged beyond repair. Not an appealing base on which to rebuild a traumatized society.

In that context, the herculean efforts of the international civilian and military authorities have had a good measure of success. Despite the understandable headlines detailing revenge killings of Serbs and Roma by ethnic Albanians, and of Kosovar Albanians by other Kosovar Albanians, the fact is that the incidence of homicide has dropped dramatically over the last several months.

The serious upsurge in ethnic violence in the town of Mitrovica earlier this year shows that universal security in the province has yet to be achieved. The response of KFOR to Mitrovica was to send in additional troops, from different sectors. Also a special prosecutor was appointed by the United Nations to handle Mitrovica. Things boiled over there; now the flame has been doused and the lid is back on. We will have to keep an eye on Mitrovica and northern Kosovo.

Similarly, the Presevo Valley in southeastern corner of Serbia proper, which has a strong ethnic Albanian majority population, is a potential flashpoint. Radical elements have been training in the demilitarized zone between Kosovo and Serbia proper, occasionally staging hit-and-run raids on Serbian police. Their motive is clearly to provoke a larger conflict, and then to appeal to KFOR to bail them out. We should not fall for this trap. I am pleased that the Administration has made clear to the radicals that they are on their own, and has enlisted the help of responsible Kosovar Albanians to rein them in.

With respect to security in Kosovo, however, the overall trend is in the right direction. The drop in the murder rate is due largely to the excellent work of the forty-two thousand, five hundred KFOR troops in Kosovo, and increasingly to the more than three thousand, one hundred international police deployed by the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo—known as UNMIK. Eventually four thousand, four hundred UNMIK police are to be deployed.

Our government must be sure to make its pledged payments to UNMIK on time and to pressure other donor countries to do the same. Cooperation between UNMIK's chief, Dr. Bernard Kouchner, and KFOR's commander has been superb. If Dr. Kouchner is given all the tools the way KFOR has been, then I believe he will be able to do his job successfully.

Incidentally, Mr. President, KFOR's commanders have been, in order, an Englishman, a German, and now a Spaniard—all under NATO's Supreme Commander in Europe, an American.

While profound mistrust of KFOR and UNMIK exists among much of the Serbian community in Kosovo, a hopeful sign is that observers from the Serb community recently joined the power-sharing system UNMIK has set up with a broad spectrum of Kosovar Albanian leaders.

Much of the Serbs' mistrust—and of widespread unease among the Kosovar Albanians—stems from the fact that although the homicide rate in the province has dropped, other forms of criminality are increasing. Particularly worrisome is the influx of organized crime elements from Albania across the porous, mountainous border into Kosovo.

We must not allow Kosovo to descend into gang-infested semi-anarchy. This is the principal reason that the promised international funding for UNMIK simply must be delivered promptly. I cannot stress this requirement enough. Our government must pressure the Europeans—who have assumed the primary responsibility for KFOR, UNMIK, and the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe—immediately to live up to their pledges.

Because of excellent work by the U.S. Agency for International Development and other national and international organizations, there are high expectations all over Kosovo that this spring and summer there will be reconstruction on a mass scale all over the province. We must be certain that the international funding is delivered in time, so as not to deflate the Kosovars' and the Kosovo Serbs' hopes and damage our credibility and that of our allies and other cooperating nations.

Mr. President, the more I delve into the details of the American and other international efforts to rebuild the Balkans—in Kosovo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Albania, and elsewhere—the more respect I have for our outstanding men and women serving in often difficult and dangerous circumstances in our diplomatic service, our armed forces, and our aid missions. They are bright, they are dedicated, and they are getting tangible results. This is a side of the story that the American public should hear more about.

It is also important that the American public understands that the overwhelming majority of KFOR troops, the overwhelming majority of UNMIK personnel, and the overwhelming majority of development assistance are all being provided by our European allies and other friendly governments. Mr. President, one bright spot of the Kosovo story is that it shows that

burdensharing not only can work, but is working.

In Kosovo, perhaps more than anywhere else in the Balkans, however, even as we analyze serious current problems, we must never lose sight of what the situation would be if we had not acted militarily last year. Milosevic would have gotten away with vile ethnic cleansing on a scale unprecedented in Europe for decades, causing untold human misery, destabilizing Macedonia and Albania, irreparably harming the credibility of NATO, and possibly even fracturing the alliance.

No, the situation in Kosovo is far from good, but it is incalculably better than it would have been, had NATO, under President Clinton's leadership, not intervened.

In early February, at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, the U.S. Congressional delegation had breakfast with Lord Robertson, the Secretary General of NATO. As he so aptly put it, ''no one should expect a Balkan Switzerland to be created in a few short years.'' But that should not blind us, either to the significant progress already achieved, or to the continuing importance to the United States and to the rest of Europe of the struggle for lasting security in the Balkans.

We must keep our eye on the prize and redouble our efforts to rebuild and stabilize Southeastern Europe. So, once again, I urge my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee to fully fund, without conditions, the Administration's supplemental request for peacekeeping and reconstruction in Kosovo. The stakes are simply too high to do otherwise.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

## PARK SERVICE SNOWMOBILE BAN

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes today to talk about the Department of Interior's recent decision to ban snowmobiling in most units of the National Park System.

While the Interior Department's recent decision will not ban snowmobiling in Minnesota's Voyageurs National Park, it will impact snowmobiling in at least two units of the Park System in my home State—Grand Portage National Monument and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. In addition, this decision will greatly impact Minnesotans who enjoy snowmobiling, not only in Minnesota, but in many of our National Parks, particularly in the western part of our country.

When I think of snowmobiling in Minnesota, I think of families and friends. I think of people who come together on their free time to enjoy the wonders of Minnesota in a way no other form of transportation allows them. I also think of the fact that in many instances snowmobiles in Minnesota are used for much more than just recreation. For some, they're a mode of transportation when snow blankets our state. For others, snowmobiles provide a mode of search and rescue activity. Whatever the reason, snowmobiles are an extremely important aspect of commerce, travel, recreation, and safety in my home state.

Minnesota, right now, is home to over 280,000 registered snowmobiles and 20,000 miles of snowmobile trails. According to the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association, an association with over 51,000 individual members, Minnesota's 311 snowmobile riding clubs raised $264,000 for charity in 1998 alone. Snowmobiling creates over 6,600 jobs and $645 million of economic activity in Minnesota. Minnesota is home to two major snowmobile manufacturers—Arctic Cat and Polaris. And yes, I enjoy my own snowmobiles.

People who enjoy snowmobiling come from all walks of life. They are farmers, lawyers, nurses, construction workers, loggers, and miners. They are men, women, and young adults. They are people who enjoy the outdoors, time with their families, and the recreational opportunities our diverse climate offers. These are people who not only enjoy the natural resources through which they ride, but understand the important balance between enjoying and conserving our natural resources.

Just 3 years ago, I took part in a snowmobile ride through a number of cities and trails in northern Minnesota. While our ride didn't take us through a unit of the National Park Service, it did take us through parks, forests, and trails that sustain a diverse amount of plant and animal species. I talked with my fellow riders and I learned a great deal about the work their snowmobile clubs undertake to conserve natural resources, respect the integrity of the land upon which they ride, and educate their members about the need to ride responsibly.

The time I spent with these individuals and the time I have spent on my own snowmobiles have given me a great respect for both the quality and enjoyment of the recreational experience and the need to ride responsibly and safely. They have also given me reason to strongly disagree with the approach the Park Service has chosen in banning snowmobiles from our National Parks.

I was stunned to read of the severity of the Park Service's ban and the rhetoric used by Assistant Secretary Donald J. Barry in announcing the ban. In the announcement, Assistant Secretary Barry said, ''The time has come for the National Park Service to pull in its welcome mat for recreational snowmobiling.'' He went on to say that snowmobiles were, ''machines that are no longer welcome in our national parks.'' These are not the words of someone who is approaching a sensitive issue in a thoughtful way. These are the words of a bureaucrat whose agenda has been handwritten for him by those opposed to snowmobiling.

The last time I checked, Congress is supposed to be setting the agenda of the Federal agencies. The last time I checked, Congress should be determining who is and is not welcome on our Federal lands. And the last time I checked, the American people own our public-lands—not the Clinton administration and certainly not Donald J. Barry.

In light of such brazenness, it's amazing to me that this administration, and some of my colleagues in Congress, question our objections to efforts that would allow the Federal Government to purchase even larger tracts of private land. If we were dealing with Federal land managers who considered the intent of Congress, who worked with local officials, or who listened to the concerns of those most impacted by Federal land-use decisions, we might be more inclined to consider their efforts. But when this administration, time and again, thumbs its nose at Congress and acts repeatedly against the will of local officials and American citizens, it is little wonder the some in Congress might not want to turn over more private land to this administration.

I cannot begin to count the rules, regulations, and executive orders this administration has undertaken without even the most minimal consideration for Congress or local officials. It has happened in state after state, to Democrats and Republicans, and with little or no regard for the rule or the intent of law. I want to quote Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt from an article in the National Journal, dated May 22, 1999. In the article, Secretary Babbitt was quoted as saying:

> When I got to town, what I didn't know was that we didn't need more legislation. But we looked around and saw we had authority to regulate grazing policies. It took 18 months to draft new grazing regulations. On mining, we have also found that we already had authority over, well, probably two-thirds of the issues in contention. We've switched the rules of the game. We are not trying to do anything legislatively.

That is a remarkable statement by an extremely candid man, and his intent to work around Congress is clearly reflected in this most recent decision. Clearly, Secretary Babbit and his staff felt the rules that they've created allow them to ''pull the welcome mat for recreational users'' to our national parks.

As further evidence of this administration's abuse of Congress—and therefore of the American people—Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner was quoted in the same article as saying:

> We completely understand all of the executive tools that are available to us—And boy do we use them.

While Ms. Browner's words strongly imply an intent to work around Congress, at least she did not join Secretary Babbit in coming right out and admitting it.

Mr. President, I for one am getting a little sick and tired of watching this