like Radio Free Asia, the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe are exceptionally talented and courageous. They and their families make substantial sacrifices, and they put themselves at great personal risk to carry out their important responsibilities. These dedicated men and women deserve our full support. I strongly urge my colleagues to pass this needed legislation.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the 106th Congress is about to adjourn without passing critical legislation to reduce the level of gun violence in this country.

Over the last years, the American people have been demanding that their schools, places of worship, and other public places be better protected from gun violence. Congress had an opportunity to address the gun violence problem in our country by passing sensible gun laws that would help ensure that young people or those with criminal backgrounds do not illegally gain access to firearms. In the end, Congress failed the American people.

It is very disappointing that Congress refused to act on the issue of gun violence. Too many senseless shootings have put our sense of safety in jeopardy. Here are just some of the high profile shootings that took place during this session of Congress, and the casualties that occurred as a result.

In the year 1999:

January 14, an office building, Salt Lake City, Utah, one dead, one injured;

March 18, a law office, Johnson City, Tennessee, two dead;

April 15, a library, Salt Lake City, Utah, three dead, four injured;

April 20, a high school, Littleton, Colorado, 15 dead, 23 injured;

May 20, a high school, Conyers, Georgia, six injured;

June 3, a grocery store, Las Vegas, Nevada, four dead;

June 11, a psychiatrist's office, Southfield, Michigan, three dead, four injured;

July 4, multiple locations, Illinois and Indiana, three dead, nine injured;

July 29, two day trading firms, Atlanta, Georgia, 13 dead, 13 injured;

August 5, two office buildings, Pelham, Alabama, three dead;

August 10, a Jewish Community Center, Los Angeles, California, five injured, and later in the same day, one dead;

September 14, a hospital, Anaheim, California, three dead;

September 15, a church, Fort Worth, Texas, eight dead, seven injured;

November 2 an office building, Honolulu, Hawaii, seven dead;

November 3, a shipyard, Seattle, Washington, two dead, two injured;

December 6, a middle school, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, four injured; and

December 30, a hotel, Tampa, Florida, five killed, three injured.

In the year 2000:

January 23, a Sikh temple, El Sobrante, California, one dead, one injured;

February 14, a sandwich shop, Littleton, Colorado, two dead;

February 29, an elementary school, Flint, Michigan, one dead;

March 1, several locations, Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, three dead, two injured;

March 8, the scene of a fire, Memphis, Tennessee, four dead, two injured;

March 10, a high school dance, Savannah, Georgia, two dead, one injured;

March 24, a State office building, Effingham, Illinois, two dead;

April 18, a seniors home, Lincoln Park, Michigan, two dead, one injured;

April 24, a zoo, Washington, D.C., seven injured;

April 28, several locations, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, five killed, one injured;

April 28, a restaurant and hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah, two dead, three injured;

May 11, a middle school, Prairie Grove, Arkansas, two injured;

May 17, a ball park, Ozark, Alabama, two dead, one injured;

May 26, a middle school, Lake Worth, Florida, one dead;

June 25, a basketball court, Chicago, Illinois, seven injured;

August 28, a professor's office, Fayetteville, Arkansas, two dead;

September 7, a sewage lagoon, Bunker, Missouri, two dead, two injured;

September 24, a high school, outside Seattle, Washington, one injured;

September 26, a middle school, New Orleans Louisiana, two injured;

October 20, a courthouse, Yreka, California, one dead, two injured; and

October 23, a pizzeria in New Baltimore, Michigan, one dead.

Gun violence is a critical issue that the majority of Americans care about deeply. The will of the majority can be frustrated in the short run, but not in the long run. This issue will not go away. If this Congress will not pass legislation addressing gun violence in America, I am confident that another Congress will, and I will continue to work toward that objective.

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the volatile situation in Yugoslavia. Slobodan Milosevic as Yugoslav dictator is history. The long nightmare is over. The Serbian people have spoken and, although Milosevic's ultimate fate is still uncertain, Kostunica's victory marks a sea change in Serbia's current history, a clear choice for democratic change over a stagnant and morally bankrupt dictatorship.

As Kostunica works hard to secure and stabilize his fledgling government, the final outcome is not yet certain. The United States must not fumble the opportunity to support the new Serbian government as it navigates a potentially treacherous transition. With Milosevic's party still controlling the Serb parliament and Milosevic himself still lurking in the political shadows, we must engage in an open and constructive dialogue with Kostunica and his allies.

To this end, I welcome the recent move by the administration to lift some of the sanctions that specifically targeted the Milosevic regime, namely the flight ban and the oil embargo, while retaining the so-called ''outer wall'' of sanctions. I also commend the State Department's decision to send a delegation to Belgrade to discuss the Kostunica government's assistance needs.

Mr. President, extending a helping hand does not, however, mean giving Kostunica and his new government a free pass when it comes to accounting for the terrible crimes of the Milosevic regime. To unilaterally lift all sanctions, or to open up the aid spigot fully would be both premature and naive. Instead, the United States should adopt a more measured response, recognizing as well the fact that a too forward-leaning or heavy handed policy could risk undermining Kostunica before he is able to consolidate power. The following immediate steps would, I believe, help lay the correct groundwork for future cooperation.

First, the United States must maintain its insistence that Milosevic be delivered to the Hague to stand trial for war crimes. Anything less would fatally undermine the International Tribunal.

Second, even as we congratulate Mr. Kostunica and recognize him as an inestimable improvement over his predecessor, we must emphasize to him that his democratic credentials alone will not be a sufficient qualification for Serbia to reenter the international community. A Kostunica government must fully respect the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and not undermine the Dayton Accords. Kostunica's recent meeting in Sarajevo with the three members of Bosnia's collective presidency gives some grounds for optimism. Serbia must also unequivocally renounce the use of force in Kosovo and take steps to implement policies that reflect a respect for minorities and rule of law.

The foreign operations bill for fiscal year 2001 will, in fact, condition U.S. assistance to Serbia on meeting the above benchmarks. I support this section of the bill because it is the right thing to do and the right message to send. But while we should remain firm in our policy, we must also be flexible in our evaluation, recognizing what Kostunica is able to do and what he is unable to do while pro-Milosevic forces still wield considerable power in the Serbian government.

Third, the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe must be given a jolt. Too much time has been wasted on conferences and working groups. Assistance must begin to flow in the next few months. A long-needed measure to help the front-line states would be a crash-effort to clear the Danube River of

bombed-out bridges, thereby reopening vital trade links from Bulgaria and Romania to Western Europe.

Finally, we should strongly encourage the European Union to make good on this commitment to expand its membership to candidates as soon as they meet the qualifications. In Southeastern Europe this means Hungary and Slovenia. Brussels must not squander a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Mr. President, there is another reason I wanted to take the floor today, one that touches on the future of our commitment to the Balkans and, indeed, to a stable and secure Europe.

As we continue to work towards a Serbia that will meet the necessary criteria to rejoin the community of western democracies, it is just as important to remember why we are engaged in the Balkans in the first place. This is, after all, an election year, a time when Americans should rightly question the policies and decisions of the current administration when making their decision about the next.

U.S. military engagement on the European continent since the end of World War II has provided the security umbrella under which democracy and free-market capitalism have been able to develop and flourish. The Balkans, however, are a world away from that reality, the last remaining area of instability in Europe. During the last decade several hundred thousand people have been killed in three bloody wars there. The NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo are designed to provide the same kind of umbrella as in post-war Western Europe to allow democracy, civil society, and capitalism to take root and develop.

Without American leadership, this region would most likely still be mired in civil war, ethnic cleansing, and ultra-nationalist aggression, with Milosevic firmly ensconced at the center of it all.

I remember well when in September 1992, reacting to the mass murders an ethnic cleansing that Milosevic directed in Croatia and Bosnia, I called for lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and, six months later, for hitting the Bosnian Serbs with air strikes. I was joined by Bob Dole and JOE LIEBERMAN, but for three years ours was a lonely fight. Finally, after hundreds of thousands killed and massacres in Srebrenica and Sarajevo that galvanized public opinion, our government undertook a bombing campaign that led to the Dayton Accords.

Just as that American military action in 1995 served as the catalyst for change in Bosnia, so did Operation Allied Force in 1999 dash the myth in Serbia of Milosevic's invincibility. If he had gotten away with purging Kosovo of most of its ethnic Albanians, those in Serbia who found Milosevic to be odious would have had no reason to believe that anything could be done to stop his immoral and ruinous policies.

American leadership has been indispensable for successful military action in the Balkans. The bombing campaign our government undertook in 1995 led to the Dayton Accords for Bosnia. Operation Allied Force in 1999 forced Milosevic to withdraw his military and paramilitary units from Serbia, destroying the myth in Serbia of his invincibility. This leadership goes beyond the purely technical military assets that only the U.S. can deploy; it also involves intangibles. SFOR in Bosnia and KFOR in Kosovo contain thousands of highly qualified soldiers from many countries, but the American troop presence on the ground gave the mission its ultimate credibility with the Balkan peoples. This fact I have witnessed firsthand from my many trips to the region.

I am, therefore, alarmed by the recent calls for a unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Balkans. Such a radical shift in our policy, I believe, would have a catastrophic effect not only on the very real progress we have made in stabilizing both Bosnia and Kosovo, but on U.S. leadership in Europe and on the Atlantic Alliance as a whole. U.S. participation on the ground in the Balkans is essential to our overall leadership in NATO, which is an alliance not only of shared values, but also of shared risk and responsibility. To begin a disengagement from the Balkans would not only guarantee the loss of American leadership in NATO, but also, I fear, lead to the premature end of Western Europe's commitment to stabilizing the Balkans.

As my colleagues surely know, the vast majority of the troops in SFOR and KFOR—approximately eighty percent—are European. Yet despite this minority participation, the United States retains the command of both Balkan operations in the person of U.S. General Joseph Ralston, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

Let me be blunt: it is naive to believe that we could retain command of these operations—or, more importantly, leadership of NATO itself—if we would cavalierly inform our allies that we were unilaterally pulling out of the Balkans. It just won't work.

If the U.S. withdrew, like it or not, the future of SFOR and KFOR would be in jeopardy, and the likelihood of renewed hostilities and instability beyond the borders of Bosnia and Kosovo would greatly increase.

We are entering into a very sensitive period for the Balkans, one that could either strengthen or tear apart the fragile peace that KFOR and SFOR have helped secure. Local elections will take place in Kosovo later this month, in Bosnia in November, and in Serbia in December. The anti-democratic, ultra nationalist forces in the region are now no doubt biding their time and hoping for a new administration that has already laid its withdrawal cards on the table.

The assertion that our Balkan operations are a heavy drain on our resources is also completely off base. Our Bosnia and Kosovo operations together amount to little more than one percent of our total defense budget. This hardly constitutes a ''hollowing out'' of the military.

The argument that our commitment to the Balkans is open-ended is equally misleading. There are detailed military, political, economic, and social benchmarks set in place. Our ''exit strategy'' is crystal clear: a secure, stable, democratic Balkans with a free-market economy that can join the rest of the continent, a Europe ''whole and free.'' These are the ideals for which the greatest generation fought and died. We dare not embark upon a policy that fails to recognize the most important international lesson of the twentieth century: America's national security is inextricably linked to the maintenance of a stable and peaceful Europe.

To pull the plug on a Balkans policy that has finally begun to yield real dividends and at the same time to put NATO, the most successful alliance in history, at risk would jeopardize America's national security.

It would also betray the brave crowds in Serbia, who have struggled to open up great possibilities for their country, the Balkans, and all of Europe. This is no time for Americans to retreat from the struggle out of ill-conceived, artificially narrow definitions of national security. The American people have shown time and again that they lack neither vision nor patience when they are convinced of the importance of a cause. A Europe unified by democracy is such a cause.

S. 1854, THE 21ST CENTURY ACQUISITION REFORM AND IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2000

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I was pleased that last Thursday the Senate unanimously passed S. 1854, the ''21st Century Acquisition Reform and Improvements Act of 2000.'' I originally introduced the bill last year with Senators DEWINE and KOHL, and we are hopeful that it will be enacted into law this year. I want to express my thanks to Senator LEAHY, the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, and to Senators DEWINE and KOHL, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Antitrust Subcommittee, respectively, for their hard work and cooperation in developing and passing the bipartisan proposal that the Senate approved. The reforms that will be put in place upon enactment of this legislation are long overdue. Businesses, both small and large, as well as the antitrust enforcement agencies, have much to gain by its enactment.

As my colleagues know, the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976 requires companies contemplating a merger or acquisition to file a pre-merger notification with the Antitrust Division or the Federal Trade Commission if the size of the companies and the size of the proposed transaction are greater than certain