

**Legislators brace residents for 'long haul'** October 8, 2001, Monday

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BODY: Congressman Mark Kirk knows first hand how exacting the U.S. missiles directed at Afghanistan can be.

Wilmette Republican Kirk, a former lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserves, flew several missions over Kosovo two years ago. During one of those missions, "we were able to get one of our munitions to go right through the door of a radar van" Serbian troops were using, he said Sunday.

Kirk said U.S. "precision-guided munitions" are just that when conditions are right, but he also was careful not to raise expectations too high about a U.S. war that several members of Congress said will be long and unlike any other. "War is a blunt instrument in which you can never guarantee there will be no one unintended hurt," Kirk said. He praised President Bush's move to air-drop food and other humanitarian aid while also launching offensive military bombing strikes calling it "a new chapter of warfare."

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, though, warned of a difficult battle ahead.

"This isn't something that's going to be over in a day or a 30- day bombing war," Hastert said. "The people who perpetrated these acts are not in the open. They live in the shadows."

Sen. Dick Durbin, a Springfield Democrat, also lauded efforts to get humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan is key.

"There are millions of people on the edge of starvation and death," Durbin said. Those innocent people need help, and they and people worldwide need to see the common people of Afghanistan are not the targets of what Bush has dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom, he said.

A member of the Senate's intelligence committee, Durbin said preparations for the action undertaken Sunday have been methodically under way for weeks. The initial attacks, he said, should "open the way for a more direct attack against (Osama) bin Laden and the Taliban."

All of the elected federal representatives who could be reached for comment Sunday said their constituents and others should continue to be cognizant of heightened security risks in their communities. But they also echoed Bush in encouraging citizens to continue routines that may now be very different than they were one month ago.

Routines for members of Congress changed with the military launch.

Sen. Peter G. Fitzgerald, an Inverness Republican, said his car was searched for bombs three times Sunday as he entered the Capitol complex. Before Sept. 11, senators never had to submit to metal detectors and ID checks, but now they are. Police officers also are guarding the Washington water supply, he said.

"This conflict is on our shores and within our midst to an extent that we haven't seen since the Civil War," Fitzgerald said. "We do clearly have a more heightened risk of terrorism on our shores."

Fitzgerald said bin Laden seemed "delighted" as he described America as "full of fear" in a statement he released Sunday. But, Fitzgerald said, "terrorism is not a way to influence U.S. policy. Americans are going to have to adjust their lives to tolerate more security. This could go on for a long time."

How long?

"It could be years," said Rep. Don Manzullo, an Egan Republican. "As long as the nightmares of those jets going into the towers last."

Manzullo rode along parade routes in Marengo and Oregon Sunday afternoon and said he believes his constituents are prepared for whatever lies ahead. "People are not going to be disappointed if they turn on the news in the morning and find out that bin Laden was not a casualty."

Rep. Judy Biggert, a Hinsdale Republican, said she wants to be sure her constituents "know they won't know everything that's going on and they shouldn't because it could have a detrimental effect on our strategic plans.

"It's going to be a long haul and it's going to take many turns because it's a stealth enemy," she said.

Rep. Jan Schakowsky, one of Congress' more liberal Democratic members, also said she supported Sunday's offensive actions and believed government and private industry leaders have been moving steadily forward in improving security at home.

"It's important to continue to isolate our terrorists. Will they try again? Probably," she said, "but now they also have to defend themselves."