

President failed to show vital strategic interest

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) voted to restrict funding for military operations in Libya, saying even the President's own defense secretary conceded there was no vital national interest at stake.

The bill, which failed 180-238, would prohibit funding direct military operations, allowing only support services such as intelligence-gathering and search-and-rescue missions. The U.S. military presence in Libya has now exceeded 90 days without congressional authorization.

"The White House has failed to justify our involvement in Libya," said Buchanan. "The last thing we need is another open-ended military commitment that is not vital to America's national security. We cannot afford to be the world's policeman."

Buchanan noted that the air war in Libya has cost the United States \$750 million, surpassing initial estimates by Defense Secretary Robert Gates who recently concluded that Libya "is not a vital national interest of the United States." The Obama Administration has also provided \$25 million in aid to Libyan rebels in an effort to drive Col. Gadhafi's regime from power.

"America is going broke, yet we are devoting huge resources to a military venture with no national security interest at stake," Buchanan said. "Instead of using our tax dollars to conduct bombing raids in Africa, we should be using the money to pay down the national debt and create jobs in America. Now, more than ever, we should be focusing on policies that grow our own economy and reduce the massive federal deficit."