Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow

colleagues, how long will the war

go on before Congress notices? We have

been bombing and occupying Iraq since

1991, longer the occupation of Japan

after World War II. Iraq has never committed

aggression against the United

States.

The recent escalation of bombing in

Iraq has caused civilian casualties to

mount. The Clinton administration

claims U.N. resolution 687, passed in

1991, gives him the legal authority to

continue this war. We have perpetuated

hostilities and sanctions for more than

8 years on a country that has never

threatened our security, and the legal

justification comes from not the U.S.

Congress, as the Constitution demands,

but from a clearly unconstitutional authority,

the United Nations.

In the past several months the airways

have been filled with Members of

Congress relating or restating their fidelity

to their oath of office to uphold

the Constitution. That is good, and I

am sure it is done with the best of intentions.

But when it comes to explaining

our constitutional responsibility to

make sure unconstitutional sexual harassment

laws are thoroughly enforced,

while disregarding most people’s instincts

towards protecting privacy, it

seems to be overstating a point, compared

to our apathy toward the usurping

of congressional power to declare

and wage war. That is something we

ought to be concerned about.

A major reason for the American

Revolution was to abolish the King’s

power to wage war, tax, and invade personal

privacy without representation

and due process of law. For most of our

history our presidents and our Congresses

understood that war was a prerogative

of the congressional authority

alone. Even minimal military interventions

by our early presidents were for

the most part done only with constitutional

approval.

This all changed after World War II

with our membership in the United Nations.

As bad as it is to allow our presidents

to usurp congressional authority

to wage war, it is much worse for the

President to share this sovereign right

with an international organization

that requires us to pay more than our

fair share while we get a vote no greater

than the rest.

The constitution has been blatantly

ignored by the President while Congress

has acquiesced in endorsing the 8-

year war against Iraq. The War Powers

Resolution of 1973 has done nothing to

keep our presidents from policing the

world, spending billions of dollars, killing

many innocent people, and jeopardizing

the very troops that should be defending

America.

The continual ranting about stopping

Hussein, who is totally defenseless

against our attacks, from developing

weapons of mass destruction ignores

the fact that more than 30,000 very real

nuclear warheads are floating around

the old Soviet empire.

Our foolish policy in Iraq invites terrorist

attacks against U.S. territory

and incites the Islamic fundamentalists

against us. As a consequence, our

efforts to develop long-term peaceful

relations with Russia are now ending.

This policy cannot enhance world

peace. But instead of changing it, the

President is about to expand it in another

no-win centuries-old fight in

Kosovo.

It is time for Congress to declare its

interest in the Constitution and take

responsibility on issues that matter,

like the war powers.