Madam Speaker, several times over the last few days I

have heard reports on national networks saying that Members of Congress

were getting ``antsy'' about not committing ground troops to Kosovo.

The implication is that all of the Members of Congress want ground

troops in there immediately.

I believe it was a terrible mistake to start bombing in the first

place, and it certainly would be compounding a huge error to place many

thousands of ground troops in there now.

As many columnists have pointed out, the NATO bombings have made this

situation much worse than it ever would have been if we had simply

stayed out. The very liberal Washington Post columnist, Richard Cohen,

wrote, ``I believe, though, that the NATO bombings have escalated and

accelerated the process. For some Kosovars, NATO has made things

worse.''

Pat M. Holt, a foreign affairs expert writing in the Christian

Science Monitor, wrote, ``The first few days of bombing have led to

more atrocities and to more refugees. It will be increasing the

instability which the bombing was supposed to prevent.''

Philip Gourevitch, writing in the April 12 New Yorker Magazine, said:

``Yet so far the air war against Yugoslavia has accomplished exactly

what the American-led alliance flew into combat to prevent: Our bombs

unified the Serbs in Yugoslavia, as never before, behind the defiance

of Milosevic; they spurred to a frenzy the `cleansing' of Kosovo's

ethnic Albanians by Milosevic's forces; they increased the likelihood

of the conflict's spilling over into Yugoslavia's south-Balkan

neighbors; and they hardened the hearts of much of the non-Western

world against us--not least in Russia, where passionate anti-

Americanism is increasing the prospects for the right-wing nationalists

or the Communist Party to win control of the Kremlin and its nuclear

arsenal in coming elections.''

Many conservative analysts have been very critical. Thomas Sowell

wrote: ``Already our military actions are being justified by the

argument that we are in there now and cannot pull out without a

devastating loss of credibility and influence in NATO and around the

world. In other words, we cannot get out because we have gotten in.

That kind of argument will be heard more and more if we get in deeper.

``Is the Vietnam War so long ago that no one remembers? We eventually

pulled out of Vietnam,'' Mr. Sowell wrote, ``under humiliating

conditions with a tarnished reputation around the world and with

internal divisiveness and bitterness that took years to heal. Bad as

this was, we could have pulled out earlier with no worse consequences

and with thousands more Americans coming back alive.''

Mr. Sowell asks, ``Why are we in the Balkans in the first place?

There seems to be no clear-cut answer.''

William Hyland, a former editor of Foreign Affairs Magazine, writing

in the Washington Post said, ``The President has put the country in a

virtually impossible position. We cannot escalate without grave risks.

If the President and NATO truly want to halt ethnic cleansing, then the

alliance will have to put in a large ground force or, at a minimum,

mount a credible threat to do so. A conventional war in the mountains

of Albania and Kosovo will quickly degenerate into a quagmire. On the

other hand, the United States and NATO cannot retreat without suffering

a national and international humiliation. \* \* \* The only alternative is

to revive international diplomacy.''

Mr. Hyland is correct, but unfortunately I am afraid that ground

troops in Kosovo would be much worse than a quagmire. Former Secretary

of State Lawrence Eagleberger was quoted on a national network last

week as saying that the Bush administration had closely analyzed the

situation in the Balkans in the early 1990s and had decided it was a

``swamp'' into which we should not go.

NATO was established as a purely defensive organization, not an

aggressor force. With the decreased threat from the former Soviet

Union, was NATO simply searching for a mission? Were some national

officials simply trying to prove that they are world statesmen or

trying to leave a legacy?

The U.S. has done 68 percent of the bombing thus far. This whole

episode, counting reconstruction and resettlement costs after we bring

Milosevic down, will cost us many billions.

If there have to be ground troops, let the Europeans take the lead.

Do not commit U.S. ground troops. Let the Europeans do something. The

U.S. has done too much already. Humanitarian aid, yes; bombs and ground

troops, no.