Mr. Speaker, like the gentleman before me who stood

before this House, the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania, I

rise to address this House regarding the crisis in Kosovo, and my

speech will echo some of the themes that he addressed, particularly at

the end of his presentation.

Mr. Speaker, our actions in Kosovo are motivated by the highest level

of idealism. We are willing to spend our treasure and, much more

importantly, risk the lives of our men and women, to prevent atrocities

and to assure that the Albanian Kosovars will be able to live in peace

and with autonomy.

In some foreign capitals, they simply cannot believe this level of

idealism. They are scurrying to find some ulterior motive. But those

who understand America know that we are in Kosovo motivated by that

idealism and certainly not motivated out of a desire to have some

interest in some mineral resources less valuable than a single B-2

bomber. We who understand America and understand American idealism,

know that that idealism will be expressed through our government.

Yet even in such a great idealistic undertaking, we must establish a

realistic strategy. We must make sure that our idealistic motivations

do not cloud our judgment. And here, Mr. Speaker, I would like to

contrast realism with blinding idealism.

In a more ideal world, Kosovo would be the only place of tragedy and

atrocity. But realistically we should note that the government of Sudan

has killed 2 million of its African citizens, and that killing

continues tonight; that 800,000 Tutsis were killed in Rwanda; and there

are continuing mass murders on an enormous scale in the Congo, Myanmar

and elsewhere.

In an ideal world, we could hope to easily restore Kosovo as a

multiethnic, semiautonomous region. Realistically it is unlikely that

Albanians and Serbs will live in harmony in the absence of an outside

force. And it is just as unlikely that the Kosovars will renounce their

goal of independence.

A blind idealist might see the world as pure good versus pure evil.

Yet the Serbs, who we vilify today, were just a few years ago

themselves victims of ethnic cleansing. Some 180,000 Serbs who had

lived for centuries in Croatia were expelled from that country--while

America said nothing, and did nothing. And the Kosovar Albanians, who

are pictured today as the embodiment of all ideal virtue--we must

remember that they are tragic victims of present circumstance--but they

are represented in large part by the KLA, the Kosovo Liberation Army,

an organization that the United States Government has described as

terrorist, an organization that may have alliances with Iran, with

Osama Bin Laden, and even with drug dealers.

Blind idealism would cause us to demand the maximum possible

objective and believe that we could achieve that objective with the

minimum force. Yet realism requires us to adopt perhaps more limited

objectives consistent with the future safety of the Albanian Kosovars.

And realism demands that we marshal the substantial force which may be

necessary to achieve any realistic objective.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should take three steps.

The first echoes the comments of the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I

believe that we should involve Russia in the diplomatic efforts to the

maximum possible degree. Russia may be able to pull the Serbs to a

negotiating position that is more realistic, and more just, than the

position that Milosevic insists upon taking at the present time.

Russian involvement in both diplomacy and in peacekeeping offers a

face-saving method for Milosevic to make major concessions.

Now, I know that there are those who will stand before this House and

who will say we should not be negotiating with Milosevic, we should be

seeking to dispose of him. But I would point out that we are still

waiting for someone to dispose of Saddam Hussein. And in a realistic

world, we must try to bring an end to the mass murder as quickly as

possible.

Involving Russia is important beyond the events at hand. Ten years

from now, Kosovo may be nearly forgotten if we are successful in

bringing peace today, but Russia will continue to be a critical

nuclear-armed state, and treating Russia with respect now will be

important in our relationship with Russia in the future. And we should

remember that 85 years ago, Russia mobilized its army in support of

Serbia in events that led immediately to World War I.

Tomorrow, Secretary Albright will meet with Igor Ivanov, the Foreign

Minister of Russia. That meeting will take place in Oslo. Hopefully

this is the first step toward the maximum possible involvement of

Russia in bringing peace to Kosovo.

Second, we should signal now that we are willing to reach peace on

the basis that the Rambouillet agreement would apply to roughly 80

percent of Kosovo territory rather than all of Kosovo.

No one denies that the Serbs have rights in Kosovo. They represented

over 10 percent of the Kosovo population even today. When I say

``today,'' I mean before the tragic recent events. Kosovo has been part

of Serbia for centuries, and Kosovo is the religious and

cultural birthplace of the Serbian nation. In fact, the Rambouillet

agreement itself seeks to recognize Serb rights by stating that Kosovo

would remain part of Serbia.

By leaving Serbs in control of the historically and religiously

significant sites, including the original seat of the Serbian Orthodox

Church, the most important of the monastery lands, and the battlefield

of Kosovo Polje, on which the Serbs fought the Turks in the 14th

century, we can make an offer that the Serbs can accept. Or, rather,

Russia can make an offer that both sides can accept. In contrast, no

Serb government, even one without Milosevic, even after 20 days of

bombing, could accept the current Rambouillet agreement which the

Serbs, and many other observers, believe would end all Serbian rights

in all of Kosovo.

Certainly the Kosovar Albanians who represent roughly 85 percent of

the population before the recent tragedy could live far better in

roughly 80 percent of Kosovo's territory, protected by NATO troops as

compared to asking those same people to live in refugee camps.

Third, we should begin training an army of Kosovar Albanians. This

army should be independent of the KLA, and for now U.S. troops should

control custody of the weapons while the training proceeds.

Milosevic may not believe that bombing will compel his departure from

Kosovo, and he may not believe that NATO troops are willing to risk

casualties in ground combat. But if there is an Albanian army being

trained, then even Milosevic will know that there will be a ground

force willing to absorb combat casualties which could be deployed in a

matter of months.

This will hopefully impel him to negotiate now.

The administration asserts that bombing alone will bring Milosevic to

his knees. If this is true, then we can cease the training operation

and retain custody of the weapons without affecting the long term

future of the Balkans.

There are those who insist that we try to achieve the maximum

objective, Rambouillet applied to all of Kosovo with the minimum

involvement of the Kosovars themselves. They advise deploying NATO

troops while not even training the Kosovars. This approach is not only

dangerous for our service men and women, it is also dangerous for our

foreign policy. If we deploy NATO troops into hostilities, and if

casualties rise to the point where the American public, or the German

public, or the French public, or the British public demand the

withdrawal of their Nation's soldiers, then the NATO alliance will be

broken and Milosevic may prevail. If that occurs, then every tyrant and

mass murderer in the world will feel that he can act with impunity. The

Vietnam syndrome and the Somalia syndrome will return.

Mr. Speaker, we need the option, sometime in the near future, of

being able to deploy a well-trained, well-armed force of Albanians--a

force willing to take casualties because they are fighting for their

own homes. Hopefully, by negotiating from strength we can achieve an

agreement that will eliminate the need to deploy any combatant ground

troops, NATO or Kosovar.

In conclusion, the American people have shown a willingness to commit

their treasure, and more importantly the lives of their sons and

daughters, to preventing atrocities and ameliorating tragedies. If we

realistically define our objectives and if we prepare to use all of the

tools at our disposal, we will secure a reasonable life for the

Kosovars, and we will inspire the American people to support limited,

realistic efforts to stopping atrocities in Sudan, Myanmar, the Congo

and elsewhere. If instead we devote inadequate resources to an effort

to achieve an absolute idealistic objective, we may fail, and that

would be a tragedy for those service men and women who die in such an

effort. It will be a tragedy for the Kosovars, and it would be a

tragedy for the victims of atrocities around the world.