Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr.

Dreier), the chairman of the Committee on Rules, for yielding me the

time. As my colleague from California has explained, this rule provides

for the consideration of four different measures dealing with U.S.

troops in Yugoslavia. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate,

equally divided and controlled by the chairmen and ranking minority

members of the Committee on International Relations and Armed Services.

For each measure, this rule provides an additional hour of debate.

Under the rule, none of the measures may be amended on the House

floor. Furthermore, the rule prohibits consideration of any other

measure with respect to Yugoslavia brought up under the War Powers Act

for the remainder of the 106th Congress.

The purpose of considering these four resolutions is to give Congress

a role in the decisions affecting U.S. military actions against

Yugoslavian President Milosevic and his reign of terror directed

against the Albanians in the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo.

The rule was approved by the Committee on Rules late last night on a

straight partisan vote with Democrats against it, and I strongly oppose

the rule, and I ask for its defeat.

The first measure called up under the rule H.R. 1569 prohibits the

use of funds for deploying ground troops in Yugoslavia without

additional congressional authorization. This measure raises numerous

legal and military questions. In a worst case scenario, this resolution

would result in the Federal courts defining what operations are legal

in Yugoslavia. The measure was only introduced yesterday, and it had no

hearings and no committee consideration. If passed by the Congress, it

would certainly face a presidential veto.

The second measure, House Concurrent Resolution 82, calls for the

immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops in Yugoslavia. On a bipartisan vote

of 30 to 19 the Committee on International Relations recommended

against passing the bill. The committee report said that this

resolution would have severe consequences for U.S. national security

and severe repercussions with the North Atlantic Alliance. It stands

little chance of passage on the House

floor. Enactment of this measure would undermine the President, our

military forces and destroy any hope that our air campaign against the

Serbs would have a positive outcome.

The third measure, H.J. Resolution 44, declares war against

Yugoslavia. The Committee on International Relations unanimously

recommended against this resolution. The legislation is intended to

clear up the legal question of whether or not the U.S. is at war.

Unfortunately, this resolution does more harm than good at this point.

In fact, the report of the Committee on International Relations warned

it could actually strengthen Milosevic politically. This measure also

does not stand any chance of surviving a presidential veto.

Lastly, the rule makes in order S. Con. Resolution 21 authorizing the

President to conduct military air operations and missile strikes

against Yugoslavia. This bill passed the Senate with bipartisan

backing.

Considering a declaration of war is one of the most solemn duties of

Congress under this Constitution. Only 11 times before in our Nation's

history has Congress ever formally declared war. This rule mocks the

dignity of that responsibility. What we have here is a grab bag of

conflicting, contradicting and confusing resolutions about the war in

Yugoslavia which stand little chance of enactment, and proceeding in

this fashion is an embarrassment to the United States, to our

President, to the men and women in our Armed Forces and to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, what would it say if none of these resolutions pass, or

some of them pass, or if they all pass but are vetoed? The only signal

that can possibly result from this rule is that our Nation is confused

and hesitant. That certainly is not the message we want to send to our

NATO allies, nor is it the signal we want to send to our troops.

It is not the signal we want to send to the American people. Indeed,

Congress does have a role in going to war, but finding that role at the

end of the 10th century in an era of modern warfare is difficult, and

this rule does not find it.

Under the War Powers Act, both H. Con. Resolution 82 and H.J.

Resolution 44 would be amendable on the House floor, but this rule

prohibits amendments to all four resolutions.

Furthermore, the rule prohibits any further resolutions about

Yugoslavia to be brought up in the 106th Congress under the expedited

procedures of the War Powers Act. This is a terribly restrictive

clause, that nullifies a key part of the War Powers Act. It reduces the

ability of each House Member to participate in the decisions about this

war.

At a hearing before the Committee on Rules yesterday, the gentleman

from California (Mr. Campbell), the author of two of these resolutions

before us today, urged the committee to remove this provision. The

expedited procedures are everything, the gentleman said.

I appreciate the Republican Committee on Rules majority granting a

full five hours of debate time to these measures. Still, the cause of

democracy is not served by this restrictive rule. Under the War Powers

Act, the House is required to consider H. Con. Resolution 82 and H.J.

Resolution 44, so I have no issue with their consideration under the

House rules. However, bundling these four measures together makes the

House look weak and indecisive.

I agree with the backers of these bills that Congress should not,

cannot, be left out of the loop on vital decisions of war, but this

rule is a clumsy, ineffective way to participate. The only way to get

our voice heard is through careful, deliberate and bipartisan measures.

The American people are hurting for leadership from Congress. They

want us to work together. Painful experience with controversial issues

in the recent past should have taught the House that bipartisanship is

the only way to reach the American people.

This rule will not increase the role of Congress in the decision to

make war. It will only further undermine our ability to be taken

seriously. I urge the defeat of this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time,

and would simply say that there is nothing more powerful than when this

body speaks with one voice, and the only way to get our voice heard is,

I think, through careful, deliberate and bipartisan measures.

I believe that the American people want us to work together. They

believe, I think, that we are hurting for leadership here in the

Congress, particularly on issues like this. It is not that the issues

that we are debating are not important. They are important, each and

every one of them, and the vote we will take on them, but the way we

are packaging this makes it look like we are frivolous.

This rule will not increase the role of Congress in the decisions to

make war, it will only further undermine our ability to be taken

seriously. The rule, in my opinion, is not the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.