Mr. Speaker, some of us stood in this chamber 8 years ago

when President Bush called on the Congress to support his military

plans in the Persian Gulf. I was one of those Democrats who strongly

supported the President at that time. But I recall, Mr. Speaker, that

we were given 16 hours of debate, 16 hours of debate, on one single

resolution. Every Member of this body had full opportunity to speak his

mind. We now have four conflicting, contradictory, mutually exclusive

resolutions, with each of them given one hour of debate.

With all due respect, I think this is an outrage. This will be one of

the most significant issues this Congress will debate in this session

or for many sessions to come, and I strongly call on my colleagues to

defeat this rule. This is a rule which is giving us 30 minutes on each

side to decide on war or peace, which is an absurdity, and it is not

worthy of this body.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, my distinguished Republican

colleague, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Bereuter) and I represented

this body at the NATO summit.

Nineteen countries devoted 2 full days to discussing the plans for

the future. It is unconscionable that the Congress of the United States

should be denied the opportunity to seriously discuss issues of war and

peace. The President has just asked for the call-up of some 33,000

reservists. We have a major military engagement, and this body and the

country are entitled to a full airing of all of the issues involved in

this.

I trust that my colleagues will see fit to turn down this rule. It is

poorly crafted. It is a gag rule. It allows not a single amendment, and

it gives over 200 Republicans and over 200 Democrats 30 minutes to

discuss each of these issues. This is simply unacceptable, and I

earnestly call on the majority to rethink this restrictive, un-American

rule.

Mr. Speaker, the voices of appeasement and isolationism

are reverberating in these halls. For 40 years NATO stood against the

Soviet Union, the mighty superpower, and NATO apparently, in the view

of some of our colleagues, cannot stand up to Slobodan Milosevic.

This past weekend at the NATO summit, 19 nations stood together

determined and united to see to it that the ethnic cleansing comes to

an end, that the persecution, mass rape, mass murder of the Kosovars

comes to a halt. And it is painful indeed to listen to some of my

colleagues who forget that for the whole period since the end of the

Second World War, NATO provided a shield behind which Europe could be

safe and free and secure and prosperous.

This is a historic moment. For the first time, Hitler's first

victims, the Czechs, the Poles, the Danes, the Norweigans, the Dutch

and the Belgians stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the newly democratic

Germany and 11 other nations, including Canada and ourselves, in saying

``no'' to the perpetrators of genocide. This is not the time to cut and

run.

It is important for all of us to realize that when the dust settles,

this will prove to be NATO's finest hour. We are in it not for oil, not

for glory, not for territory, but for the principles on which this

country was founded, the principles that NATO has succeeded in taking

root throughout western Europe and now throughout central Europe.

If anybody really believes that behind a new Iron Curtain in

Yugoslavia there can be a dictatorship while the rest of Europe will be

safe, stable and secure, it better wake up. We need to understand that

if we allow Slobodan Milosevic to continue his evil deeds, he started

the war against Slovenia, he lost it. He started the war against

Croatia, he lost it. He started the war against Bosnia Herzegovina, he

lost it. The last war he now starts, it is against the people of

Kosovo. These people have done nothing, nothing to hurt the Yugoslav

nation. They just want to live in peace and decency, and it is the

responsibility of NATO to stand up as it has for half a century.

I strongly urge rejection of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to put this resolution by my

good friend from California in proper perspective.

When yesterday a deeply divided Committee on International Relations

debated and then voted on this matter, we voted unanimously to reject

this proposal.

As a matter of fact, my good friend, the gentleman from California

(Mr. Campbell), himself voted against his own resolution.

So I think it is sort of important to realize that what we are

dealing with here is an academic legalistic exercise, the purpose of

which is to take this issue to the courts. No one seriously believes,

fortunately, that the United States should declare war against

Yugoslavia.

Now there are many reasons why we should not do that. The first and

perhaps the most important is that this is not an American engagement,

this is a NATO engagement, and not one of the other of the 18 NATO

countries has declared war on Yugoslavia. Were we to do so, this would

be an Americanization of a war with all the negative consequence that

implies. It would divide the alliance. It would indicate that we are

determined, as we were during the Second World War, to move on until

there is an unconditional surrender.

Those are not our goals. Our goals are limited, clearly defined and

specific. We wish to see the 700,000 individuals who were driven out of

Kosovo to return there in peace and security. That is the goal we seek.

Therefore, a declaration of war under these circumstances would be ill-

advised, ill-timed and clearly contrary to U.S. national interests.

I urge all of my colleagues to reject this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, my friend from Florida would have heard a

great deal about all of those outrages had he been active in the

Congressional Human Rights Caucus. The folks who cry crocodile tears

for all these people who have been killed and tortured and murdered are

nowhere to be seen when we are dealing with human rights issues.

Mr. Speaker, the greatness of this country is measured by the moments

when we act in a bipartisan fashion. It was the Marshall Plan, it was

NATO, and it was all the bipartisan measures passed by our predecessors

that created the great moments of American history in the 20th century.

In the other body 16 of my colleagues' Republican colleagues, some of

the most distinguished members of the Republican party, Senator John

McCain, their most credible presidential candidate, Senator Lugar of

Indiana, the foreign policy expert, Senator John Warner, head of the

Armed Services Committee and 13 others voted for this identical

resolution. They have risen to a high level of bipartisanship.

Now I have some credentials along those lines. I stood up with

President Bush 8 years ago and voted to support that President because

I felt the national interest was at stake. It is no less at stake

today. The blind hatred that is so apparent on the part of some of my

colleagues towards this administration makes it impossible to make

rational judgments.

What we are asking for is to get our troops the feeling that the

Congress is behind what they are doing day and night under the most

difficult circumstances. That is all that this resolution calls for.

And John McCain saw fit to vote for it, as did 15 other distinguished

Republican senators. They have taken ownership, if I may borrow the

phrase of the Republican whip, they have taken ownership of this

measure because this is an American engagement. It is not a Republican

or a Democratic engagement, just as the Marshall Plan was an American

engagement and NATO was an American engagement.

We are seeing a miracle unfold. Nineteen nations of the most

disparate types are united, but our own House of Representatives has

risen with division. Vote for this resolution.