Mr. Speaker, limiting debate and blocking all amendments

on this question of life and death is all too typical of this House

Republican leadership. They would convert the War Powers Act to the

``In War, Powerless Act.'' Through its previous inaction, this House

has largely abrogated its responsibility to approve this Nation's

involvement in foreign conflicts. Today's action will only prolong that

irresponsibility.

As a few of us indicated in letters to the President in August and in

October of last year, and again on February 19 of this year, authored

by the gentleman from California (Mr. Campbell), there should have been

no military action in the Balkans, not bombing, not troops, not any

military action until this Congress had given it approval.

The Constitution prescribes that no president should commit the lives

of our youth and the billions of our taxpayers' dollars in nonemergency

situations like this without involvement of the American people,

through their representatives in this House.

While NATO raids Belgrade, the same Republican leadership proposes to

raid the United States' Treasury. They are determined to divert

billions of dollars to purposes that have little or nothing to do with

Kosovo. They are using Kosovo as an excuse to subvert the budget limits

or caps that helped bring us a balanced budget, and which only months

ago they swore to uphold.

Yet now that this conflict is underway, it would be folly not to

consider the facts on the ground. Milosevic is a war criminal, who is

committing genocide. No doubt he and his thugs are watching these

proceedings as they unfold today in Washington. We ought not to send

the wrong message to him or to the other petty tyrants from Iraq to

North Korea who may be watching these proceedings.

What is wrong, further, with this rule, however, is that it denies us

the opportunity to invoke the War Powers Act in the future, as we may

well need to do. This rule is outrageous. It ought to be rejected

firmly.