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

Mr. Speaker, I think we have had an excellent debate, and it shows a

great division. And there is great division because we have several

legitimate interests, and it is a matter of balancing which of these

interests outweighs the other. One interest is a humanitarian interest;

another interest, of course, is our NATO alliance and their military

objectives; another interest that many people have expressed here very

eloquently is our concern for the safety of our men and women in

uniform. Let me just review my own position and the history of this

Congress in the last 15 years or so.

In Lebanon, in Libya, in Grenada, and of course in the Middle East, a

number of us voted to give the President of the United States,

President Ronald Reagan and President George Bush, great discretion and

to attribute to them great presidential prerogative with respect to

initiating conflict. And that accrued to our benefit, because the

Presidents were able to strike swiftly and to move American force

projection very quickly without asking for permission from Congress. We

were able to achieve goals we could not have otherwise achieved.

So one principle I followed was that the Commander in Chief must be

able to act quickly, using a full range of military options short of

total war. And my feeling is that total war is what we have conducted

in the past in World War I and II, the last war ending when we reduced

Tokyo and parts of Germany to rubble. I do not want to reduce Belgrade

to rubble.

I do not want to stand by and do nothing. So I agree with the

gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Bateman) that the range of options is a

range of options that does not serve this Congress well.

The second principle that I felt we were following over the last 15

years was that the Commander in Chief must be able to act with full

military leadership authority when leading joint operations with our

allies.

Somebody commented once that if we were not in the NATO alliance, it

would be like that church full of townspeople without Gary Cooper, all

of them with different ideas but all of them too timid to execute

anything. And I think that is probably true.

So I am going to vote to be consistent with my votes that I exercised

with respect to the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush. And

I want to say to all my Republican colleagues who voted with me on

those votes and voted not to force the President to seek a vote before

he could go in with military force, that I think those principles which

accrue to the benefit of the United States and save lives will long

outlive this presidency in which many of us have a lack of confidence.

Now let me turn to my Democrat friends and simply say this: We have

cut our military under President Clinton, almost in half. So to carry

out this foreign policy that we are engaged in right now, whether it is

in Kosovo or on the Korean Peninsula or in the Middle East, we now have

10 Army divisions instead of 18, we now have only 13 fighter air wings

instead of 23, we are down almost 40 percent in Navy vessels, we are

short $3 1/2 billion in basic ammunition for the U.S. Army, we are

short in almost all of our smart stand-off weapons that save lives, and

we are going to have votes in the very near future to increase that

ammunition, spare parts and equipment that will ultimately save lives

of our military people, whether they are operating in this theater or

some other theater.

We need Democrats to vote in a strong defense. If we do not have

them, we are going to go ahead with half empty ammo pouches in these

wars, with our coffers of spare parts that are only half full, and we

are going to repeat years like the one we just had in which 55 American

military aircraft crashed in peacetime missions because of lack of

training, lack of spare parts, and old equipment.

So I am going to join and try to be consistent with the votes I have

made in the past. I hope all my colleagues will vote for a strong

national defense regardless of their vote on this issue.