Mr. Speaker, I rise today to vote in favor of

legislation to put the Congress' voice where it should be--at the

forefront of the national policy which guides our armed forces in the

face of conflict. Under the Constitution, the Congress has the power to

declare war and commit our troops to battle. As a Member of Congress

who is opposed to putting American ground troops in Kosovo, I believe

the Congress should have the opportunity to debate whether it is in our

national security interests and vote to give the President the ability

to put troops on the ground in Yugoslavia. I do not believe it is right

for the President to act unilaterally to put our young men and women in

uniform into ground battle in Kosovo without the explicit authority of

the U.S. Congress.

President Bush acted correctly in seeking the authority of Congress

to commit ground troops before we acted to expel Iraq from Kuwait in

1991. While the President is working with our NATO allies to persuade

the Serbs to end their brutal actions in Kosovo through air

attacks and diplomatic initiatives, I believe he has an obligation to

first seek the authority of the nation's legislative body before

sending tens and possibly hundreds of thousands of our armed forces

personnel to battle.

Many of my colleagues favor sending ground troops into Kosovo; others

join me in opposing the use of ground troops. Either way, I believe

there should be a full debate on the issue and a vote on giving the

President the authority to commit our nation to what is the equivalent

of a declaration of war on Yugoslavia, albeit under the aegis of NATO.

I urge my colleagues to join in supporting legislation that restores

the voice of the Congress in the debate on Kosovo.