Mr. Speaker, I want to first express how proud and

honored I am of our brave men and women in the armed services. I salute

them and offer them my unequivocal support for the wonderful job they

are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I was opposed to this operation from the beginning.

Putting American troops in the middle of an ethnically charged civil

war carrying six hundred years of cultural baggage is pure folly.

Neither the Albanians nor the Serbs are interested in any sort of

serious compromise. As I said two months ago and I say today, I do not

believe that we should risk the lives of our American men and women in

an ethnic conflict thousands of miles away where there are no American

interests at stake.

This is an issue that should have been handled by the European

nations, but it wasn't. We should not send American men and women

thousands of miles from home to do what European men and women should

be doing for themselves.

But now that we are embroiled in this foreign policy failure, now is

not the time to disengage because to do so would be a blow to U.S.

prestige and a license for Milosevic to continue his heinous actions.

With this in mind, today we will debate and vote on four separate

bills dealing with Kosovo, and I would like to take this opportunity to

outline my thoughts on each of them.

First, I support H.R. 1569. The bill would prohibit the Department of

Defense from using appropriated funds for the deployment of ground

elements of American troops in Yugoslavia unless authorized by

Congress.

Our nation's first President, George Washington, said over 200 years

ago: ``The Constitution vests the power of declaring war in Congress;

therefore no expedition of importance can be undertaken until after

they have been deliberated upon the subject, and authorized such a

measure.''

George Washington's statement is as true today as it was 200 years

ago. As duly elected Members of Congress and as representatives of the

American people, it is our duty, and yes, it is our responsibility to

exercise our constitutional right to authorize military deployments of

this nature. As Stuart Taylor Jr. of the National Journal writes:

``Compliance with the Constitution should not be optional.'' Congress

should not relax our role as an equal partner with the Administration

in this decision-making process.

We must not allow ``compliance with the Constitution'' to devolve

into an option. We must assert our constitutional prerogatives, which

is why I support H.R. 1569.

Secondly, I oppose H. Con. Res. 82 and H.J. Res. 44, H. Con. Res. 82

would direct the President to remove American troops from their

positions and cease military operations against Yugoslavia within 30

days of passage, and H.J. Res. 44 would declare war on Yugoslavia.

While I certainly respect the gentleman from California's (Mr.

Campbell) keen intellect, I do not agree with the goals of either of

his bills. H. Con. Res. 82 would send a harmful message to our American

troops already there. It would undermine their efforts and our support

for American men and women in the armed services. H.J. Res. 44 would

just go too far.

The final bill to be considered on this floor today will be S. Con.

Res. 21. This resolution would authorize the President to continue to

conduct military air operations and missile strikes in cooperation with

NATO against Yugoslavia. I oppose this resolution, but this does not

mean that I want to stop the bombings.

Specifically, I do not support the current policy behind the

bombings. The five week long bombing campaign against Yugoslavia has

been an abject failure. NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, General Wesley

Clark, admitted as much at a news briefing yesterday. The bombs have so

far failed to stop the ethnic cleansing, failed to stop the buildup of

Serb troops, and failed to break Slobodan Milosevic's resolve.

I would support the bombing if it were effective. I would support it

if military professionals could carry out their mission unfettered by

political persons with little or no military experience. There is no

place for armchair generals here, only military professionals.

Perhaps it was doomed to fail from the start. There were questions

that should have been answered for a military campaign of this nature

such as what are the rules of engagement? How will we handle the

massive exodus of Albanian refugees? What is the exit strategy? What

are the goals? What will we do if air strikes prove to be ineffective?

Perhaps a political determination was made over the objections of the

Pentagon--a decision to gamble and hope that Milosevic would cave in

after a few days of air strikes. Unfortunately, the gamble failed, and

no contingencies were planned. And now, the Administration's

reactionary foreign policy has resulted in another situation.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain we will continue to debate this matter in

the months to come, and so I conclude my statement with one final

thought for my colleagues and for the Administration. It is fatal to

enter any war without the will to win. We must recognize the fact that

it's not tidy, and it's not clean, but if we're going to fight, we must

fight to win.