Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong opposition

to American participation in Operation Allied Force.

This Administration's policy in the Balkans has been completely

misguided from the outset. While I feel great sympathy for the innocent

people on both sides of this conflict, I firmly believe that American

military intervention is not the answer. The divisions that plague

Yugoslavia are centuries-old grievances that no external force may ever

be able to control.

Mr. Speaker, too many questions remain unanswered regarding our

participation in this mission. The Administration's effort to counter

Serbian aggression lacks a coherent design, a fixed timetable for

engagement, a well-defined exit strategy, and a clear final objective.

Administration officials continue to argue that American military

intervention is absolutely necessary to end Slobodan Milosevic's brutal

ethnic cleansing campaign. But if the purpose in striking Yugoslavia

was to end humanitarian abuses, then NATO has surely failed. All

indications are that Milosevic has actually accelerated his ethnic

cleansing program since air strikes began, and NATO's own military

commander today acknowledged that Operation Allied Force has failed to

reduce the size of the Serbian force in Kosovo or its operations

against Albanians.

Mr. Speaker, this President is now preparing to fully engage our

Armed Forces in a conflict that pre-dates Columbus' first trip to the

Americas. Despite his continued claims that he has no intention of

deploying American ground troops to this bloody conflict, every move

this President now makes points to this ever-growing possibility. Just

yesterday, the President ordered over 33,000 U.S. reserves back into

active duty, the biggest call-up since the Persian Gulf War. In

addition, the President has put into effect an order that prevents Air

Force pilots and other critical personnel from retiring or leaving the

Air Force before the Kosovo air war ends.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot in good conscience support risking American

lives to fight a war that seems to have more to do with ensuring this

president's legacy than protecting our national security interests

abroad.