Mr. Speaker, what we have to understand in debating

this is there is a false dichotomy that is being presented. And the

American people can understand that. The option is not doing nothing or

sending in our U.S. troops to do the fighting. That is not the option.

The American people need no longer bear the burden for maintaining

stability throughout the world, especially in Europe's backyard. Our

forces right now are flying 9 out of 10 combat missions, and we

Americans are paying two-thirds of the cost.

We have done our part in this conflict already. If the Balkans are so

important, let the Europeans step forward and finish the job. Let them

deploy their troops if they think it is so important.

This operation has been confused since its inception. The Kosovars

were willing to fight for their own freedom, for their own stability,

for the protection of their families. Helping them do this would have

cost us a pittance compared to the tens of billions of dollars this

will drain from our coffers.

There goes Social Security reform. There goes our surplus. No,

America need not bear this burden itself. People are willing to fight

for themselves. Other people can pick up the cost and meet the

responsibilities.

We can be the arsenal of democracy, yes, and help others. But we

cannot be the policemen of the world or it will break our banks and put

us in jeopardy in other places in the world

Mr. Speaker, the United States has been blessed in

so many ways, and not the least of which is the good sense that our

Founding Fathers had in keeping us out of foreign entanglements and

military engagements overseas. George Washington threatened us of these

foreign entanglements that would drain our Treasury and drain our

national will. So it has been written into our Constitution that we

have such limitations on foreign commitments. We have not obviously

declared war. This administration is unwilling to declare war even

though it is clearly written into our Constitution that we need to come

to Congress.

Now, realizing that during the Cold War we gave certain powers to the

executive branch for the security of our country and during this four

decades of Cold War we felt we needed to centralize this power and give

the President a little more authority. The Cold War is over. What we

are engaging in now is a process of evolving back. That is what we are

doing this very moment, evolving back the power as defined in our

Constitution, what our Founding Fathers wanted us to have, and that is

the legislative branch must have a check and a balance to the decisions

of the Federal branch when it comes to foreign commitments and military

operations, and this is something that is part of our Constitution. We

are demanding that the Constitution be followed. We are demanding that

the War Powers Act, which of course came about after the Vietnam

debacle, the War Powers Act is still part of our law, we demand that

that part of the law be followed.

Obviously the President of the United States and those people in this

body that agree with him do not believe that that part of our law and

that part of our Constitution need to be followed. Well, this is what

the debate is about. The American people should understand that no one

person, as our Founding Fathers so demanded it in writing the

Constitution, no one person, whether he be or she be the President of

the United States or any other officeholder, should be able to get us

into war and cause the deaths of tens of thousands of people. We all

must be part of that process.

That is what our Constitution is about. That is why I support the

efforts of the gentleman from California (Mr. Campbell) to ensure this

type of congressional participation.

I rise in support of Mr. Campbell's position on this resolution.

Seriously, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Campbell for

giving us this opportunity to discuss, through this declaration of war

resolution, the legal ramifications of the Balkan conflict.

Here in the United States we have been blessed in so many ways, not

the least of which was a product of the good sense of our founding

fathers and mothers in keeping us out of foreign conflicts and

entanglements.

George Washington warned of the threat of military alliances that

would lead to foreign adventures that would drain our treasury and

undermine our national will to meet the serious challenges to our own

security. Written into our Constitution are limitations on power and

hurdles that must be dealt with in order to engage the United States in

war.

In World War One and the Second World War we followed those

constitutional requirements. During that second great conflagration

that engulfed this planet we permitted, for the safety of our country

and the cause of peace, power to be centralized in the hands of the

executive branch as never before. Then, during the decades of, what

John Kennedy described as the twilight struggle, Congress acquiesced

and endorsed the policy of a strong executive in order to deal with the

dangers of the cold war.

My friends and colleagues, the cold war is over. What we do today is

part of the process in evolving back to the constitutional system that

served our country so well in the past. First and foremost we must

reestablish the checks and balances in our federal system, checks and

balances that apply to foreign and military commitments as well as

domestic policy.

There is no doubt that the intent of our Constitution was to assure

that one person, whatever his or her office, could not get our country

into war. We had revolted against the power of a king to rule. Congress

must declare war, or it is illegal for our President or military

commanders to spend our treasure and spill the blood of our defenders

in fighting a war.

Yes, during the cold war, which was an uncommon and unique period in

our history, the legal necessity of such declarations of war was

intentionally by consensus, overlooked. The frustrations of Korea and

Vietnam, perhaps, call into question that strategy. And in the

aftermath of Vietnam, the War Powers Act was enacted into law to

prevent the very kind of questionable foreign military commitments that

we debate today.

So in this debate let us as law makers admit that the law is not

being followed and that it should be. The Constitutional requirements

for conducting war have not been met because the majority of this

Congress and more importantly, the President, are unwilling to declare

war.

The legal requirements to an extended military operation, as mandated

by the War Powers Act, have not been met, because this President and

his allies, who represent a majority in this Congress, are not

concerned with this law.

Mr. Speaker, the crisis of the cold war is over and the Constitution

and the law, as reflected in the body of the Constitution and in the

War Powers Act, should be obeyed. If it cannot be obeyed, it should be

changed. As it stands, we are making a mockery of the law, which is

evident when the Secretary of State testified at the International

Relations Committee. Secretary Albright has to speak in convoluted

rhetoric, twisting and turning like a semantical acrobat, in order to

prevent a legal case that can be easily made against her. There is

something wrong if a Secretary of State cannot speak directly to the

congressional body which has the constitutional mandate of overseeing

American foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this

resolution, even though I am not opposed to air strikes philosophically

in the Balkans as a vehicle to achieving American policy.

Unfortunately, the policy of this administration, which includes air

strikes, has been confusing and sometimes incoherent. Air strikes as

part of a policy that would recognize Kosovo, and part of that policy

would be arming the Kosovars to defend themselves, certainly might have

been a respectable plan at one point.

Instead, this administration is using bombing to force both parties

into accepting a plan in which American troops would be garrisoned in

the Balkans for years and years to come. This is total nonsense. And we

will be spending tens of billions of dollars and putting American lives

at stake in order to achieve what? The garrisoning of troops, leaving

the troops in the Balkans all of those years?

This is a blank check, my colleagues. This resolution is a blank

check for an air war which will lead to tens of billions of dollars and

American blood being shed. And do my colleagues know where that check

is going to be cashed? It will be cashed at the bank that is holding

the money for the Social Security Trust Fund. It is going to be cashed

at the bank that is supposed to be paying for the defense of our

country all over the world. Because we are going to be spending the

money, instead of buying ammunition and making sure our defenders are

safe overseas, we are going to be wasting that money in the Balkans on

big explosions. It is going to make us worse off. We are not going to

be as safe.

And as far as NATO goes, this is an organization that did its job.

Are we now to be the policemen of the world? And because we are part of

NATO, to keep an organization going, finding a purpose for it, we are

going to spend our money all over the world, send our troops all over

the world, in order to create stability wherever there is not

stability? American lives are going to be put on the line?

This will, in the end, cost American lives. It will break our bank.

We will not be able to deter the aggression in Asia and from China and

elsewhere where there are serious threats. Oppose this resolution.