Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1569, which is not an amendment, this

is a freestanding bill, would make it clear that this body has a vital

role in determining whether U.S. military forces should be dispatched

to participate in a ground war in Yugoslavia.

Last month the Congress authorized the President to send peacekeeping

troops into Kosovo in the context of Rambouillet and a permissive

environment. Now, since that time, Rambouillet has collapsed and we

have engaged in hostilities, changing the context for any such

deployment.

Today our Nation is fighting an air war against Yugoslavia and

dictator Slobodan Milosevic. The President commenced U.S. participation

in hostilities without any congressional authorization. Today our

airmen are in harm's way as a result.

Now, while the President and his national security team have stated

that they do not intend to deploy ground forces to Yugoslavia, there is

a real possibility that this conflict will escalate to involve them.

Administration officials have clearly indicated that contingency

planning is proceeding. Heavy armor and several thousand ground troops

have been deployed to countries that neighbor Yugoslavia, and could

become the nucleus of an invasion force. Meanwhile, questions about the

air campaign's efficacy have led several NATO allies to push for ground

forces.

The situation in Kosovo is a tragedy. My heart truly aches for the

people there, just as it does for so many who are victims of war and

hatred around this world. But it simply is not within our power to

solve all of the world's problems. We should not compound the tragedy

in Kosovo by deploying American ground troops there and subjecting them

to virtually certain casualties.

Simply put, I do not believe that our national security interests in

Kosovo rise to a level that warrants the commitment of U.S. ground

troops.

Moreover, I am deeply concerned that this administration has not

articulated an exit strategy for U.S. forces.

I would also note that U.S. ground operations would severely

undermine our ability to meet the requirements of the national military

strategy which calls for being able to fight and win two major regional

wars, in Korea and the Persian Gulf, not in the Balkans. Yesterday the

administration authorized the call-up of 33,000 reservists. The Joint

Chiefs have apparently formally determined that the air war against

Yugoslavia has increased the level of risk associated with meeting

these requirements from high to very high. Ground operations there will

further erode our ability to meet vital national security commitments.

Now, let me clarify that the intent of this bill is to preclude the

deployment of a large-scale invasion ground force unless and until

Congress authorizes it. This bill does not tie the President's hands.

It simply requires him to come to the Congress first. It will not

impair search and rescue missions, the use of Apache helicopters or,

hypothetically, small numbers of personnel for intelligence or

targeting functions. These are not invasion forces. Also, because our

NATO allies have limited search and rescue capabilities, we allow U.S.

forces to perform that mission.

Whether one believes that the air operation in Yugoslavia is in the

Nation's best interests or not, it is only appropriate that this body

exercise its prerogatives with regard to the expansion of this conflict

to a full-blown ground war. I urge support for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify the statement made by my

good friend from Missouri (Mr. Skelton). As we all have dealt with the

Legislative Counsel, and this is where the language came from, whenever

we submit a bill to this body and it goes through that process, the

legislative counsel informed us that the term ``ground elements'' has

been used for many, many years in this body to refer to our ground

forces, just like we used the words ``aviation elements'' of the U.S.

Army to refer to the aviation part of the Armed Forces of the U.S.

Army.

This language is from the Legislative Counsel. They said this has

been used for years and years and years in this body to refer to our

ground forces. That is where it came from. That is clearly the intent

of this bill, to refer to the ground forces, as opposed to the aviation

elements of our U.S. Army. I want to clarify that for the record, that

that is clearly the intent and meaning of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

First, as was expressed by some of my colleagues in their concern

earlier today on our first resolution when they had concerns with

wording, I believe this resolution is very poorly drafted, and those

that had that concern earlier I am sure must share that concern on this

resolution, because it authorizes the President ``to conduct military

air operations and missile strikes against the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia.''

Now, this appears to authorize the President to conduct airborne

operations; in other words, drop paratroopers into the Federal Republic

of Yugoslavia.

It also authorizes the President to pursue ``missile strikes'' of an

unspecified variety, which theoretically could include strategic

weapons.

Moreover, I oppose this measure because, as one of those in the

leadership who met with the President twice prior to the bombing, I

joined many of my colleagues from both parties in asking the President

face-to-face to seek specific authorization from the Congress before

proceeding with any air campaign. He ignored that request. Today I

cannot in good conscience retroactively authorize him to do something

that I did not support and that he undertook without regard for the

Congress' responsibilities under the Constitution and the very direct

bipartisan

advice he received before he began the bombing.

I urge a ``no'' vote on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to address the House in

relation to some of the comments that my colleagues have just made.

This has been a very serious day today. We have had some serious

debate. Some people really have really been struggling with their

consciences and their decisions because we have been talking about

young Americans' lives, because we have young American lives at risk

today. There are young men and women from my district that are flying

over Yugoslavia tonight, dropping some of those bombs.

The message that I think was sent today was twofold. One was to the

President of the United States, that whenever he is going to send our

young people into harm's way, he needs to come to this Congress, he

needs to consult with the Congress, and he needs to go to the American

people.

This is not a unilateral decision that should be made by the

President. He needs to come to the Congress, the representatives of the

people. This is not about whether we support the troops or not. We all

support our troops, and we are going to give them every resource they

need. But the President of the United States needs to come to this

Congress.

And second is that we do have a democracy that works. Our forefathers

were so wise because this is an institution that works. And while we

disagree and sometimes we like the way the vote comes out and sometimes

we do not, the institution of our government works and it will continue

to work for as long as this country lasts.