Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to

this resolution, which would prohibit funding for ground forces unless

deployment is specifically authorized. The only narrow exception

provided in this measure is for rescuing US service personnel.

This resolution would undermine our ability to achieve NATO

objectives in Kosovo and, more importantly, would send the wrong signal

to President Milosevic about our resolve in the Balkans.

I encourage my colleagues to consider the ramifications of this

resolution, which limits our country's military leaders. If we are to

ensure a stable Europe and stop the atrocities, then we must destroy

Milosevic's ability to wage his campaigns of ethnic cleansing.

I believe that the United States should continue to support the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) efforts in the Balkans. NATO has

been principally responsible for the relative stability and economic

prosperity that Europe has enjoyed over the last fifty years. Our

experience in two world wars clearly demonstrates that a stable Europe

is in the national interest of the United States.

By putting unwise restrictions on our armed forces, this resolution

could ultimately jeopardize our involvement in the 19-nation NATO

operation.

In attempting to make a political statement, the Republican

leadership hastily put this resolution together without involving the

minority and has circumvented the committee process.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution, which could do more

to harm our national security interests and jeopardize our men and

women in uniform involved with this operation.

Mr. Speaker, there are three reasons why it is

legitimate, why our actions in Yugoslavia should be authorized by this

Congress: Number one, the strength of NATO; number two, our experience

with Milosevic; and number 3, the alternative of doing nothing.

It is in our vital interest that there be a strong and resolute NATO.

Think of the hundreds of thousands of innocent soldiers, sailors, and

airmen that were lost in Europe because we did not have NATO when we

needed NATO.

We need NATO now. We need to act with NATO. We need a strong NATO.

And if we do, we will not have to be the world's peacekeeper in the

future.

Secondly, our experience with Milosevic, because NATO did not get

involved when it had an opportunity, such as in 1992, when it was

recommended; what resulted, with the same leadership, Mr. Milosevic,

200,000 lives were lost, 2\1/2\ million people were displaced, 40,000

women were raped. It could have been prevented had NATO acted when it

had the opportunity.

But thirdly, think of the alternative. This is the fault line, my

colleagues, between the Muslim and the Orthodox worlds. This is the

fault line that has existed for generations. If we had not gotten

involved in a multilateral action, NATO taking the leadership, think

what would have happened. Extremists would have been involved.

We know what Milosevic was going to do, why he had 40,000 troops

amassed on the border, why he did not want to compromise at

Rambouillet, because he knew exactly what he was going to do; and he

did it. But if he had done that and NATO had not gotten involved, do my

colleagues really think other nations would have stood by? Of course

they would not have. We would have had the Mujahidin getting involved.

We would have had Islamic extremists getting involved.

And do my colleagues really think Russia then would not have gotten

involved if there had not been the strength of NATO taking the

leadership here?

My colleagues, we are doing the only responsible thing. This is not

the United States acting unilaterally. We are acting multilaterally. We

are acting with NATO. We are acting in the long-term interests of this

country. We are doing the right thing, for a number of reasons. And the

Congress should be supporting it. They should vote ``aye'' today.