Mr. Speaker, today, Congress is faced with one of its most

important and difficult constitutional duties. Article I, Section 8 of

the U.S. Constitution clearly states that Congress shall have the power

to declare war and to raise and support armies. Today, our Armed Forces

are engaged in a NATO-led bombing campaign designed to force Yugoslav

President Slobodan Milosevic to the negotiating table. The choices we

must make are what actions we must take, declaring war, continuing on

our current course or removing our troops, and what are our

international responsibilities in the region.

We face a stark reality and a difficult decision. The reality is that

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian military forces

are engaged in ethnic cleansing--attempting to systematically

exterminate the Kosovar citizens. Reports have confirmed this and the

atrocities have intensified since the NATO bombing campaign began on

March 24, 1999.

Since the bombing campaign began, hundreds of thousands of Kosovars

have fled the fighting. The pictures and stories of their escape are

both tragic and disturbing. The decision facing Congress today is how

to put an end to Slobodan Milosevic's organized efforts to harm these

innocent people, how to return the refugees to their homeland and how

to restore stability to the region.

President Clinton has put our Armed Forces on an unfamiliar and

unclear path. His stated goals are to end the ethnic cleansing and to

restore stability to the region. As news reports have shown, the

bombing campaign is having little impact on the Serbian military's

infrastructure. More importantly, it is doing little to prevent his

systematic extermination of the Kosovar people. It can be argued that

far from restoring peace and stability to the region, the bombing

campaign is causing further disruption and intensifying Milosevic's

ethnic cleansing efforts.

President Clinton has expressed concern about the introduction of

ground troops into the region. I agree with his assessment. However,

President Clinton recently authorized the mobilization of up to 33,000

reservists for deployment to the region--an act that could be

interpreted as the first move toward the introduction of ground troops.

I question the efficacy of the bombing campaign and our current

course of action. No military action can be won by limiting military

options and creating a convoluted and confusing decision making process.

President Clinton's poll-driven policies ignore his military advisor's

advice, endanger our servicemen and women and may involve the U.S. in a

long-term military occupation with an ever increasing escalation

reminiscent of Vietnam.

Our decision today is among the most important votes I've cast.

Declaring war should be the last act of the Congress and the

Administration after all diplomatic efforts have been exhausted and

every avenue possible to resolve the conflict has been pursued. I don't

believe we've exhausted these options at this time and that's why I

will vote against declaring war.

The introduction of ground troops escalates our involvement to an

unnecessary level at this time. I'm not prepared to put our servicemen

and women in a hostile situation and will vote to remove our troops.

The situation in Kosovo is the result of centuries of conflict and will

not and cannot be quickly resolved using military force.

Any military victory will be offset by the fact that U.S. troops will

remain a part of a long-term occupation force. As any neighboring

nation should, the European nations have a responsibility to take a

leadership role in working toward a permanent solution instead of

temporary answers to this regional dispute.

Finally, the U.S. Constitution is clear that Congress has the ability

to declare war and raise and provide funding for our nation's Armed

Forces. That's why I will support the Fowler Resolution, which

clarifies the role of Congress and which outlines that no U.S. ground

troops will be deployed unless such deployment is authorized by law.