Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this

time to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is very clear. It is the United States

Congress which has the power to determine issues of war and peace and

to decide whether our young men and women are put in harm's way. It is

the President who is the Commander in Chief of the military; it is the

Congress which determines whether we use that military.

I have heard today that some people think that the U.S. participation

in Kosovo now is unconstitutional. They are right. But the U.S.

participation in Vietnam, Grenada, Panama and many other conflicts

which took place without congressional authorization were also

unconstitutional.

The time is now for this Congress to stop abrogating its

constitutional responsibility to the White House and to start seriously

addressing the issues of war and peace.

Frankly, I am extremely concerned about the process that has taken

place today on an issue of such enormous consequence and at a time when

Congress has an inactive schedule. It is an outrage that we only have a

few hours to discuss the issues of war, the expenditure of billions,

and the potential loss of life of American military personnel, and I

hope we rectify this situation in the coming days and weeks. This

should not be the last debate on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, my assessment of this situation at the present moment is

that Mr. Milosevic is a war criminal and that ethnic cleansing, mass

murder, rape and the forced evacuation of hundreds of thousands of

innocent people from their homes is unacceptable and cannot be ignored.

Sadly, because Mr. Milosevic has negotiated agreements which he has

then ignored, I have supported the NATO bombings of military targets. I

believe that the Serb military and police must be withdrawn from

Kosovo, that the hundreds of thousands of people uprooted from their

homes must be allowed to return, that Kosovo must be given some kind of

self-rule and that an international peacekeeping force should be

established to maintain order.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we must strive as hard as we possibly can

to find an alternative between doing nothing and allowing ethnic

cleansing and mass murder to continue and the continuation of a war

which will certainly result in terrible destruction, large numbers of

casualties and the expenditure of great sums of money. I believe that

the United States must be as active as we possibly can in finding a

road to peace.

I believe that Germany and the United Nations have brought forth

proposals which might be able to form the basis of a negotiated peace.

I believe that Russia, a long-term ally of Serbia, should be asked to

play a more active role in the process and to supply troops for an

international peacekeeping force.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution is very clear. It is the

United States Congress, which has the power to determine issues of war

and peace and to decide whether our young men and women are asked to

put their lives in harms way. It is the President who is the Commander

and Chief of the military. It is the Congress who determines whether we

use the military. I have heard today that some people think that the

U.S. participation in Kosovo is unconstitutional. They are right--but

the U.S. participation in Vietnam, Granada, Panama, and many other

conflicts which took place without congressional authorization were

also unconstitutional.

The time is now for this Congress, which represents the American

people, to stop abrogating its Constitutional responsibility to the

White House and start seriously addressing the issues of war and peace.

Frankly, I am extremely concerned about the process that has taken

place today. On an issue of such enormous consequence, and at a time

when Congress has a very inactive schedule, it is an outrage that we

have only a few hours to discuss the issue of war, the expenditure of

billions, and the potential loss of life of American military

personnel--and I hope we rectify this situation in the coming days and

weeks. This should not be the last debate on this issue.

Frankly, at a time when American pilots have been undertaking massive

air attacks in Yugoslavia, when three members of the United States

military are being held prisoner, and when we have spent billions of

taxpayer dollars it is an outrage that the President of the United

States has not come before the Congress to tell us and the nation what

the goals of his policy are--and to ask this institution for support of

those proposals.

It is an outrage that a terrible rule passed this afternoon on an

almost totally partisan basis limiting the time of debate, limiting

amendments and severely limiting the role that Congress should be

playing in determining this country's course of action. We should not

be acting in a partisan way on issues like this.

Mr. Speaker, my assessment of the situation at the present moment is

that Mr. Milosevic is a war criminal, and that ethnic cleansing, mass

murder, rape and the forced evacuation of hundreds of thousands of

innocent people from their homes is unacceptable and cannot be ignored.

Sadly, because Mr. Milosevic has negotiated agreements which he has

then ignored, I have supported the NATO bombing of military targets--

not civilian targets. I believe that the Serb military and police must

be withdrawn from Kosovo, that the hundreds of thousands of people

uprooted from their homes must be allowed to return, that Kosovo must

be given some kind of self-rule, and that an international peace

keeping force should be established to maintain order.

I believe that we must strive as hard as we possibly can to find an

alternative between doing nothing, and allowing ethnic cleansing and

mass murder to continue, and the continuation of a war which will

certainly result in terrible destruction, large numbers of casualties,

and the expenditure of great sums of money.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the United States must be as active as we

possibly can in finding a road to peace. I believe that Germany and the

United Nations have brought forth proposals which might be able to form

the basis of a negotiated peace. I believe that Russia, a long time

ally of Serbia, should be asked to play a more active role in the

process and to supply troops for an international peace keeping force.

And finally, I believe that Congress must not duck its constitutional

responsibilities--about developing a short and long policy with regard

to Kosovo. Let's not just blame the President. That's too easy. Let us

have the courage to seriously confront this issue.