Mr. Speaker, war is a serious undertaking.

It should not be used for political reasons, ever. War is a last resort

and only used to protect America, her citizens and our vital interests.

Despite the humanitarian atrocities in Kosovo, the loss of even one

life for a cause that has yet to be articulated or defined for the

people of the United States is one too many. The plight of the refugees

is tragic, and America should help them. We are a country that can

provide relief and direction, ease pain and suffering, and we should

provide help.

Mr. Speaker, I fought in a war where politicians were afraid to win

because of the political fallout. That fear caused me to spend nearly 7

years of my life as a prisoner of war. I would fight again tomorrow for

America's vital interests, but the answer in Kosovo is not to waste

American lives. The answer is stop the bombing and provide relief for

the refugees.

Mr. Speaker, there is a wall among the trees near the Lincoln

Memorial that is engraved with the names of many brave soldiers, many

of whom were my friends. Families go there to grieve and remember their

fathers, their mothers, their sons and daughters. Stop the bombing. We

do not need another wall.

Mr. Speaker, I opposed the President when

he pushed NATO to attack the sovereign Nation of Yugoslavia, and I

oppose the deployment of ground troops in that region. The atrocities

that Slobodan Milosevic has committed are heinous, but the President's

decision to use military force was hastily decided and has been poorly

implemented.

This war brings back strong and painful memories of another war,

Vietnam, in which I was called to fight in and where I spent nearly 7

years as a prisoner of war. We might have succeeded in Vietnam except

that what we did there we are doing here, we are allowing the

politicians instead of the seasoned military officers to fight the war.

The President has never established a defined military objective. No

one can tell us why we are there, what are we fighting for, and what is

our end objective. Simply put, there is no defined mission. We must end

this devastation. It is up to this Congress to save lives, not take

them.

Mr. Speaker, I opposed the President when he pushed NATO to attack

the sovereign nation of Yugoslavia. I also oppose the deployment of any

U.S. ground troops in this region.

The atrocities that Slobodan Milosevic has committed are heinous. But

the President's decision to use military force was hastily decided and

has been poorly implemented.

This war brings back strong and painful memories of another war--

Vietnam, which I was called to fight in and where I spent nearly 7

years of my life as a prisoner of war. There was a reason for fighting

in Vietnam. It was to prevent the spread of communism. We might have

succeeded, except that we did there, what we are doing here. We are

allowing politicians instead of seasoned military officers, to fight

the war.

The President has never established a defined military objective in

Kosovo. No one can tell us why we are there, what we are fighting for,

and what our end objective is. Simply put, there is no defined mission.

We must end this devastation and save lives, not take them.

When waging war, the President should ask several questions--are you

willing to win at any cost? Is this in America's best interest? Is

there a goal, and is there a plan to achieve that goal? To all of these

questions, the answer is a resounding no.

And what about NATO? We have seen over and over again, the President

and his aides scrambling to defend NATO and NATO's credibility. What

about our fighting men and women, who will be the ones to give their

lives? Are their lives worth the credibility of NATO?

When I was flying bombing missions over North Vietnam, the

politicians were picking my targets. Twenty-five years later, here we

go again, we're in the same situation.

When our allied commander must submit every target to 18 other

countries for permission to bomb, the only result is chaos. And what

will we say if American soldiers start coming home in flag-draped

coffins?

I have listened to the reasons the President, his administration, and

Members of both houses of Congress have given for supporting this war.

But I keep asking the same question. Is this war worth the death of

one single U.S. soldier? The answer keeps coming up no.

Let me tell you something, as an Air Force veteran, I can tell you

that air power alone cannot win a war. And history confirms it.

Our pilots face many difficulties in the former Yugoslavia--difficult

terrain, constant bad weather, and a quickly disappearing arsenal of

our own weapons.

Furthermore, we are pulling ships and planes from other spots around

the globe to fight this war. We are even stripping our aircraft for

spare parts to keep our combat planes in the air.

And, today, the President called up 33,000 reservists to help meet

our current shortfalls.

War is a serious undertaking. It should not be used for political

reasons--ever. War is a last resort and should only be used to protect

America, her citizens and our vital interests.

Despite the humanitarian atrocities in Kosovo, the loss of even one

life for a cause that has yet to be articulated or defined for the

people of the United States, is one too many.

Everyone of you must ask yourselves this question--would you send

your own son or your own daughter to die to resolve a centuries old

civil war between two peoples in a sovereign nation? Would you send

them to die when you yourself could not answer the question ``why''?

The plight of the refugees is tragic and America should help them. We

are a country that can provide relief and direction, ease pain and

suffering. We should provide help to end the refugee crisis.

I fought in a war where politicians were afraid to win because of the

political fallout. That fear caused me to spend nearly 7 years of my

life in a prisoner of war camp. I would fight again tomorrow for

America's vital interests, but the answer in Kosovo is not to waste

American lives.

The answer is--stop the bombing and provide relief to the refugees.

Please think about your vote today.

You know, there is a wall among the trees near the Lincoln Memorial

that is engraved with the names of brave soldiers. Many, of whom, were

my friends. Families go there to grieve and remember their fathers,

their mothers, their sons and daughters, sisters and brothers.

Stop the bombing today. America does not need another wall.