Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished

chairman for yielding time to me.

I rise in strong opposition to this particular resolution, and I

especially am concerned about the timing of these votes. I understand

the reasons why my friend and colleague from California did what he did

to maintain the integrity of the process and the responsibility that we

have as parliamentarians to engage in that process. I, however, went to

the leadership and asked if we could postpone these votes at least

until next week, as a group of Members of this body, in fact 10 of us,

travel to Austria, Vienna, Austria tomorrow evening to meet with the

senior leadership of the Russian Duma and their major factions to try

to find some common ground to provide leverage to convince Milosevic

that it is time to come to the table and end this conflict.

We have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We have not used that

opportunity before this debate and this vote, and that is extremely

unfortunate. We should not be locked into an artificial vote time frame

that tells us when to come forward and have Members in such disarray as

we are going to see today watch the results of this vote. And that will

tell us the problem that Members have in terms of what we are doing.

I understand the process is important, but I also understand the

substance of what we are about is even more important, because we are

talking about an issue and decisions and votes that could affect our

ability to bring Russia in in a way that helps us bring this to a

resolution peacefully. In my mind, Mr. Speaker, that is the top

priority. Keeping our ground troops, keeping NATO ground troops from

having to confront the Russian military, and from those Serbs in a

confrontational way that will lead to additional bloodshed.

It is unfortunate we are having these votes today. In my opinion, it

is not in our country's best interests that we have these votes. I wish

we could have avoided that. I think the vote results will show the

concern that Members have, not necessarily with just the issue of what

we are about, because anyone could argue that, in fact, we are in war

today with the things that are occurring. But rather, the timing, the

sequence, and the way this is being done without full consideration to

what I think is one very real opportunity.