Mr. Speaker, on March 24, the day the bombing began,

this Member stood on the floor and said, this is a tragic day,

undoubtedly the beginning of a tragic scenario, and that is exactly

what it was. We have heard today about hamstringing the President. But

I would like to point out that, in fact, no authorization was requested

by the President before the bombing began, and he has not asked for

that authorization to this day.

This is a gratuitous authorization. I do not think it is wise that it

is brought up. I wish even at this late date that it would be

withdrawn. Bombing for peace, bombing for peace is wrong, and it is not

working. I regret the fact that any of our colleagues would suggest

that decisions of this gravity are based upon partisan considerations.

I say to my colleagues, we have a war, in Yugoslavia. We can call it

whatever we want, but it is a euphemism unless we recognize it is a

war. It is an unmitigated disaster. Our and NATO's involvement in this

war is an unmitigated disaster. That is the ugly truth, and everybody

knows it. They certainly know and talk about it in the Pentagon.

In the past, NATO, the 12 members, the 16 members, now the 19

members, were a defensive pact, and for the first time NATO has used

those forces aggressively. We can imagine what the Soviet Union said,

and now what the Russians say about NATO as an aggressive force. Well,

we have just confirmed their worst suspicions and, in fact, we set back

Russian-American relations dramatically for years to come. We have

reinforced the wrong people in Russia in the process.

We cannot say that this war has unintended or unanticipated

consequences. They were entirely predictable. I had hoped that people

in the administration would have looked at and understood the history

of the Balkans. I would have hoped they would have talked to people who

know Mr. Milosevic and how he came to power.

I had a chance to visit with the Secretary of State, Secretary of

Defense, and General Shelton in a meeting convened by the Speaker, a

bipartisan meeting, and I laid out the dire consequences that I thought

would prevail if, in fact, the bombing campaign began, and all of those

predictions but one have come true. The remaining prediction is that

after starting to bomb we would have combat troops involved in

Yugoslavia in 2 months. We are a little over a month and counting, and

we are headed for those combat troops in Yugoslavia.

Now, look at it from the side of the Albanian militants, the KLA.

They never wanted autonomy, they wanted independence, and that is what

they want today. Look at it from the side of the Serbians. We have to

recognize that Kosovo is sacred ground for the Serbs. It is where they

all came together in an infamous but courageous defeat in 1389, and

they have not forgotten what happened on the Field of Blackbirds.

It is for them the same as if Lexington, Bunker Hill and Yorktown are

rolled up into one. It is like asking a Texan to give back the Alamo,

site of another courageous defeat, to the Republic of Mexico. That is

what it means to the Serbs. Milosevic had no option to give up his

Serbian control over Kosovo. He did not have that option. And what we

have predicted, that the Serbs would coalesce around Milosevic, has

happened. Yes, I say to my colleagues, as negative and terrible an

individual as Milosevic is, he would now be followed by more Serbian

leaders who have this very kind of militant, aggressive Serbian

nationalism re-aroused.

What has happened, of course, is that Milosevic made his reputation

in

Kosovo by jumping right over his mentor by speaking to the abuses,

real, alleged and exaggerated, that were taking place against the

Serbian minority in Kosovo. And that is how he played upon their

emotions, and that is what has been further ignited by the bombing

campaign.

What happened when we threatened we would bomb, and then we held off,

and we threatened and we threatened? Well, of course, it provided time

for him to deploy his troops in and around Kosovo, in fact right on the

Macedonian border, for that matter. And all of the NGOs and independent

observers, they went out of Kosovo, naturally, and so no one is there

to report on the atrocities and the ethnic cleansing that were

accelerated when we began that air war, just as predicted.

Some people have said, and in fact the Secretary of State said before

our committee, well, we had no idea he would be so brutal and thorough

and energetic in the ethnic cleansing. I say to my colleagues, we had

an object example in Bosnia with Croatian and Serbian ethnic cleansing

like we had not seen since World War II in Europe. Of course, we had an

idea of what he would do.

Were we ready for it? Did we anticipate it? Did the people that

launched this war have this in mind? Look at the refugees coming out of

Kosovo into Macedonia and Albania and Montenegro. Look at the people

dying from all kinds of disease and from hypothermia. NATO was not able

to take care of them. It is obvious NATO was not ready for it. The

Administration and NATO did not anticipate this result.

One of the frustrating things about being on the Permanent Select

Committee on Intelligence at a period of time when Yugoslavia was in

danger of disintegration was that we had the best information about

what would happen with the disintegration of Yugoslavia. We knew a

blood bath was coming in Bosnia where three religious/ethnic groups

live side by side, and we knew that Kosovo was a tinderbox waiting to

explode with its Albanian majority, but our vital national interests

were not involved yet. Where they are and still remain involved is in

Macedonia. And we should have gone to great lengths never to

destabilize Macedonia. This air war is, in fact, pushing us towards a

destabilization of Macedonia. Why is that so important? Because it is

likely to bring Greece and Turkey, overtly or covertly, in on opposite

sides, fracturing the NATO alliance, and that, I say to my colleagues,

is very much against our vital national interests.

But we have taken steps inadvertently, but predictably, to

destabilize Macedonia. And yet today, the Yugoslavian military is

basically intact. All the armor units are setting there; they are not

using their engines, they are not using fuel, they are in hiding. And

they have not used their air defense systems at this point. We have

been attacking, but we have been attacking refineries and bridges and a

whole variety of things that are important to the long term, but the

Yugolavians or Serbians military is basically setting there intact. And

what are we assured on the other side? We have assured the rule of the

KLA militants in Kosovo beyond this.

I urge all of my colleagues to take a look at the May-June 1999 issue

of Foreign Affairs and read the article by Chris Hedges, the former

Balkan Bureau Chief of the New York Times.

Mr. Speaker, I urge opposition to the resolution. Vote against it. I

voted against the War Powers Act; for strategic and tactical reasons we

do not want to give that 30-day warning before a withdrawal would

theoretically be required under the invocations of the War Powers Act.

I urge my colleagues, do not take this gratuitous step to authorize the

bombing war.