Mr. Speaker, the vote today on S. Con. Res. 21--

although largely symbolic because of its timing--presents every Member

of this House with a grave dilemma. On the one hand, we can vote

against this resolution and the deeply flawed policy that it

represents, even though doing so risks undermining our troops and

giving comfort to Slobodan Milosevic, Europe's last Communist dictator.

On the other hand, we can vote for this resolution and ratify a flawed

policy which has failed to make any progress towards stopping the

ethnic cleansing of Kosovo.

Neither of these choices is attractive. But I believe that my duty as

Member of the United States Congress compels me not to undercut our

current policy, flawed as it might be, but to focus on finding a

credible diplomatic alternative.

I support a negotiated solution to the conflict in the Balkans, and I

was one of 15 Democrats in this body who last month voted against

authorizing the use of U.S. troops in Kosovo. I warned back then that a

continued escalation of military action would only serve to undermine

conditions for lasting peace in the region. Regrettably, these fears

have been borne out.

With all that said, Mr. Speaker, I cannot in good conscience vote

against the efforts of our Nation's Armed Forces when a military

operation is already underway. Our soldiers are in the Balkans doing

the job we sent them to do. A unilateral halt to the bombing at this

stage in the conflict would not bring us closer to a lasting peace in

the Balkans. Instead, it would give the Milosevic regime a boost and

deprive the NATO alliance of critical negotiating leverage.

However, the sooner we begin negotiations, the sooner the air strikes

can stop. Continuing to seek a military solution to a political problem

will only mean that more Albanian Kosovar, Serb, and American lives are

lost in vain. Just yesterday, General Wesley Clark, commander of NATO

forces, acknowledged that NATO air strikes have not slowed the ethnic

cleansing of Kosovo's Albanian population. And just yesterday, NATO

forces again mistakenly struck a civilian target in Serbia, killing 17

people including 11 children.

The United States of America believes very strongly in doing the

right thing--and we have an exemplary record of fighting for what is

right around the world. But as Henry Kissinger has pointed out, a

supremely moral foreign policy is useless if it is not effective.

As difficult as it may be, we must acknowledge that the bombing

campaign has not been effective--and we must immediately begin to seek

a negotiated solution to this conflict. The sooner negotiations start,

the sooner the bombs will stop, and the sooner the Kosovo refugees can

return home.