Mr. Speaker, over the last month this Congress could not

have been more irresponsible in the way it has dealt with the issue in

Kosovo if it had taken lessons. I would like to walk through with you

the quaint way in which this institution has stumble-

bummed its way through its efforts to try to deal with our

constitutional responsibilities.

First of all, it gratuitously decided to vote on the question of

whether or not the President could use peacekeepers in Kosovo. That is

not a constitutional prerogative of the Congress. The President as

Commander in Chief has the prerogative of deciding where to use troops

in noncombat situations.

Then, having gratuitously decided to support the placement of those

peacekeepers in Kosovo, when the war began this institution then did

not step up to its responsibilities to vote on whether or not the

combat should proceed. The Senate did. They passed, I believe, the

McCain-Warner motion which indicated their support for the ongoing

military operation in Kosovo.

Then, further compounding its backwards approach to this issue, this

House decided today that it was going to stipulate that under no

circumstances could ground troops be used in Kosovo. Again, that is not

a congressional prerogative. Once you are in a combat situation, it is

the President and his military advisers who have the constitutional

obligation to determine what the best way is to proceed militarily,

whether it is through the use of ground forces, whether it is through

the use of air power, whether it is through the use of naval power or a

combination of the three.

The Congress has the right and an obligation to address the question

of whether military activity should proceed, but when they are

proceeding it has no right to try to micromanage the combat situations.

That is a responsibility of our military leaders and the President.

Then, having compounded the confusion by gratuitously getting

involved in that issue, it then proceeded to turn down, by one vote,

the endorsement of the McCain-Warner language, good bipartisan language

with Republican leadership in the other body. It then turned down our

obligation to support troops in the field. I just find the way this

institution has approached this to be mind-boggling.

And now, tomorrow, after they have turned down their authorization

for what is going on in Kosovo, we will be marking up the supplemental

appropriation bill in the Committee on Appropriations. And guess what?

The same crowd that voted ``no'' on authorizing this military operation

today will be going into that committee and demanding that we double

the amount of money that the President asked to spend on it, taking it

from $6 billion to over $13 billion and creating an opportunity to pork

up the next year's defense bill in the process.

Never, never in the 30 years that I have served here have I seen less

vision. Never have I seen less leadership. Never have I seen more

confusion. And never have I seen the national interest being left in

the dust the way it is tonight. I want to see how many Members of the

majority party who today voted against authorizing this operation will

tomorrow then demand that we double the amount of spending for the

supplemental. It is very clear to me, based on the votes taken here

today, that that supplemental appropriation is dead.