

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number or words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the Fowler amendment. I absolutely agree with the last speaker. Let me tell my colleagues, I want to make quite clear where I come from. I regard Mr. Milosevic as a sociopath. If I had my way, NATO would have gone after him a long time ago. I think he ought to be tried as a war criminal. I think he is one of the most useless leaders to ever walk on the face of the earth. That is what I think about him when I am in a mild mood.

But let me tell my colleagues my problem today. My problem is that I totally agree with what the administration is trying to do in the region, but I am not happy, frankly, with their implementation.

□ 1815

I think they have not accurately gauged the position of the Russians in this situation, and I think that they misjudged the reliability of the Kosovars. And under those circumstances, I am not convinced, while I agree with what they are trying to negotiate, I am not yet convinced that their negotiating partners have demonstrated enough maturity to rely on them in a sensitive situation like this.

My problem is, like the gentleman from Alabama, I believe this should not be here today. And the reason I say that is this: I think it is here because a lot of us have a fundamental misunderstanding of our constitutional role. You can make a very respectable argument that we ought to have a vote before we do something such as bomb Mr. Milosevic. I would vote for such an explicit action. I think he has got it coming, and I think NATO needs to lead and we need to lead NATO. But I also do not believe that this Congress has any business whatsoever interposing its judgment on questions that involve the President's Commander-in-Chief responsibilities.

With all due respect to the Fowler amendment and the Gejdenson amendment, both of which I will vote against, there is not a Member on this floor who has any qualification whatsoever to say what our troop levels ought to be in a peacekeeping situation. The most dangerous human being on the face of the earth is a Member of Congress who has taken a 3-day trip somewhere and thinks that they have learned enough to tell the entire country what we ought to do on a crucial issue. Nine times out of ten they are more of a menace than a help.

I do not believe we have the personal expertise to make military decisions. I want the Joint Chiefs of Staff to decide what the level ought to be, if we do have a peacekeeping force. I do not want that decision made on a political basis by the Congress or the White House. And I certainly do not want it made on the basis of a budgetary question.

I do not want to have to look into the eyes of any more parents and explain

why their sons or daughters were killed in an operation. And sometimes, to protect those sons and daughters, we need more troops not less. I happen to think that this is probably one of those cases.

So I am going to vote against the Fowler amendment. I am going to vote against the Gejdenson amendment. I will not vote for the Gilman resolution because I do not believe in giving Presidents blank checks, and I am not going to endorse an agreement until I know what it is and until I have had an opportunity to gauge the reliability of the people that we are negotiating with.

But I also will not vote against it today, because if we vote against it, we help assure that those negotiations will not come to a constructive conclusion. And that is why, like the gentleman from Alabama, I will vote present. Because until we have an agreement to judge, Congress has no right to muck things up when the result will be lost lives.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Fowler amendment and in opposition to H. Con. Res. 42.

Today we are going to have a vote on whether or not troops should be authorized to go to Kosovo. If we vote in favor of this, we are voting for war. This is not a war resolution in the conventional sense of the Constitution, but in this day and age it is about as close as we are going to come to since we have ignored the Constitution with regards to war powers essentially since World War II. If we vote for troops to go to Kosovo, we are complicit in a potential war and the responsibility should be on the shoulders of those who vote to send the troops.

I strongly urge that we not send the troops. It is not our fight. We are not the policemen of the world. It weakens our national defense. There are numerous reasons why we do not need to send more troops into another country someplace around the world. Every time we do this it just leads to the next problem.

It is said that we should not have much to say about foreign policy because the Constitution has given responsibility to the President. The term "foreign policy" does not even exist in the Constitution. The President has been given the authority to be the Commander-in-Chief; to lead the troops after we direct him as to what he should do. He is the commander. We do not have a military commander, we have a civilian commander. But we do not forego our right to debate and be concerned about what is happening on issues of troop deployment and war.

A report put out by those who sponsor this resolution had this to say. "This measure does not address the underlying question of the merits or mis-

givings of sending U.S. forces into Kosovo." We are not even supposed to debate the merits and misgivings of sending troops. Why not? "Instead, the purpose of this resolution" they go on to say, "is to give the House an opportunity to fulfill its constitutional responsibility of authorizing the deployment of U.S. troops into potentially hostile situations." In other words, we are to do nothing more than rubber stamp what the President has asked for.

Where does the President claim he gets his authority? Does he come to us? Has he asked us for this? No, he assumes he has the authority. He has already threatened that what we do here will have no effect on his decision. He is going to do what he thinks he should do anyway. He does not come and ask for permission. Where does he get this authority? Sometimes the Presidents, since World War II, have assumed it comes from the United Nations. That means that Congress has reneged on its responsibility.

We do not just give it to the President, we give it to the President plus the United Nations or NATO. And when we joined NATO and the United Nations, it was explicitly said it was not to be inferred that this takes away the sovereignty and the decision-making powers of the individual countries and their legislative bodies. And yet we have now, for quite a few decades, allowed this power to gravitate into the hands of the President.

After Vietnam there was a great deal of concern about this power to wage war. First, we had Korea. We did not win that war. Next we had Vietnam. And with very sincere intent, the Congress in 1973 passed the War Powers Resolution. The tragedy of the War Powers Resolution, no matter how well motivated, is that it did exactly the opposite of what was intended.

What has actually happened is it has been interpreted by all our Presidents since then that they have the authority to wage war for 60-90 days before we can say anything. That is wrong. We have turned it upside down. So it is up to us to do something about getting the prerogative of waging war back into the hands of the Congress.

It is said that we do not have this authority; that we should give it to the President; that he has it under the Constitution based on his authority to formulate foreign policy. It is not there. The Congress has the responsibility to declare war, write letters of marks and reprisals, call up the militia, raise and train army and regulate foreign commerce. The President shares with the Senate treaty power as well as appointment of ambassadors. The President cannot even do that alone.

We have the ultimate power, and that is the power of the purse. If the power of the purse is given up, then we lose everything. Because we have not assumed our responsibilities up until this point, it is up to us to declare that

the President cannot spend money in this manner. I have legislation that would take care of this; that the President cannot place troops in Kosovo unless he gets explicit authority from us to do so. If he does it, the monies should be denied to the President, unless we want to be complicit in this dangerous military adventurism.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words and oppose the Fowler amendment in favor of the Turner amendment.

Mr. Chairman, why are we debating this issue at this point in time? We all recognize that it is political; politics that could come back to haunt us.

One of the biggest problems we have in Congress is the fact that we have an obligation and a duty. The only reason to debate this resolution today is to undercut the administration at the critical time of our negotiations. It is more than irony that some of those pushing for consideration of this resolution today fully intend to oppose the resolution. This is an exercise in rhetoric.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Chairman, is it improper, either in the full House or in the body, to characterize the reasons for why different people vote for things; to characterize and impugn?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I apologize if I have offended anybody.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will suspend.

The Chair will simply state that it is improper debate to question the personal motives of any Member.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Chairman, I will not demand the words be taken down, but I would ask the gentleman not to characterize.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Chairman, if I have offended anybody, I apologize. But as a member of this Congress, I recognize the fact that politics is played within the House floor, and I recognize that this particular resolution does undermine the administration's efforts at this point in time.

As a Member representing a community of more than 42,000 active duty service members and nearly 6,000 reservists and guard members, I do not take this issue lightly because the lives of those service members may be put in harm's way.

I deplore the timing of this resolution. This resolution is being set up for failure. At least 2,000 people have been killed and 400,000 displaced in the Balkans region. The United States clearly has a vested interest in peace in the region. Kosovo and the Balkans fall in between two allies, Greece and Turkey. The Balkans' historical role in Europe has been critical. We all recognize that we also have in jeopardy Macedonia, Montenegro, Northern Greece, Albania, as well as Turkey, and the possibility

of this particular situation going out of its boundaries.

Our interests are humanitarian, economic and military, and also an interest as it deals with the leadership of this country and the fact that we have not only an obligation but a duty to make sure that peace is obtained. By playing politics with sensitive peace negotiations that are set to resume March 15, the House of Representatives could jeopardize peace in the region. Failure to achieve peace now in Kosovo could cause significant instability in the already volatile region.

Secretary of State Albright stressed this point yesterday before the House Committee on International Relations saying that a new outbreak of fighting in Kosovo could expand into regional hostilities that could cause massive suffering, displace tens of thousands of people, undermine stability throughout South Central Europe, and directly affect key allies.

If we can secure peace, if we can end the slaughter, we have the duty to do so. If we can join our NATO friends and allies by providing those 4,000 troops as part of the large NATO force, then we have the duty to do so. The failure to obtain peace now could put greater numbers of potential U.S. and European troops in danger if broader hostilities break out.

Our Nation's modest personnel but crucial political investments in the Kosovo peace process is essential to achieving peace. Without the U.S. involvement, peace is unlikely. Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I also want to add, Mr. Chairman, that this is very different from Bosnia, and it is very different from Bosnia in the sense that in Bosnia we took the lead. Here only 14 percent of the troops will be from the United States. Europe is taking the lead, and we have an obligation and a duty, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BATEMAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I hopefully will not take the 5 minutes, but let me express to my colleagues the deep, deep anguish I feel in what we are doing and how we are doing it. I cannot rise in support of the base amendment, the Gilman resolution, nor the Gejdenson amendment to it, nor the amendment of my dear friend the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER), or substitute.

Much has been said about the timing of why we are here and that we should not be here at this time. I agree with that, but I am not sure that I attach the responsibility for that fact the way others have done so. If our President had assured us that, upon being able to negotiate an agreement, he would come to us and seek our approval for going forward with military deployments in Kosovo, it would have been the time for this debate to have taken place, after the agreement had been reached.

□ 1830

I almost certainly would have been one of those who would have supported doing what he asked if there was an agreement we could look at and know what it provided and that it was a bona fide agreement. But here we are with the certainty that he would not come to the Congress and yet he does not have an agreement and we do not even know whether or not at such time somebody in Paris signs their names to a stack of papers that it will indeed be an agreement of anyone.

How do you say you have the agreement of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia when you are saying, "If the Kosovo Albanians sign it and you don't, we're going to bomb you." Now, I am not sure that that is an agreement. How do we know that anyone who purports to be representing the people of Kosovo has any authority to represent the people of Kosovo? The chief political observer of the Kosovar Liberation Army left Paris and criticized those who even entertained the notion of signing the agreement. We do not have any basis for knowing that this agreement is real. If it is not real, then we have put ourselves in a very tenuous position to say that we will deploy American armed forces in the sovereign territory of another state against its will and conduct bombing or other military action. That certainly is an act of war. That requires us to declare it. It makes us an international outlaw if it has not been done that way and we do not in fact go there by agreement.

I do not like the fact that this debate is taking place now. But for anyone to say this Congress does not need to have a debate on matters of this kind and of this consequence I think denigrates the role of this Congress in the governance of the United States of America. I do not want to be in a position where someone has deployed forces, my constituents, and to have to go back to the people I represent and say, "Well, they've been sent there because we didn't think that the Yugoslavia Federal Republic had given Kosovo sufficient autonomy, but we certainly didn't send them there to fight for the independence of Kosovo." Those kind of subtle distinctions certainly escape me. I think they will escape my constituents. I wish this debate came later, when the President could say there is an agreement and we could test whether it was real and then support him. But unfortunately we are not in that position. I frankly do not know whether we are going to find anything that is going to be before us in the course of this debate that I will be in a position to vote for.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

I wonder if we vote not to deploy troops in Kosovo if the President would abide by it. I thought the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) made a good statement. I would like to concur.