

I strongly believe that America should seize opportunities for peace rather than to seek opportunities to escalate the violence. We have to honestly ask ourselves whether we would pursue the same policy if we could turn the calendar back to March 24. Our bombing did not initiate ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, but we have to be candid in recognizing that it aggravated what was already a humanitarian tragedy. An important element of the Hippocratic oath in medicine is, first, do no harm. If U.S. policy was based on humanitarian considerations, it has clearly failed on that score.

Having embarked on this policy, the United States has now assumed a moral obligation to get Milosevic to withdraw his forces from Kosovo. He should help return the refugees in an orderly manner and work with us to generally assist in reconstruction, along with all of our allies and friends throughout the world. Just as surely, we need to help Albania and Macedonia economically, for they are bearing the brunt of the refugee crisis. But we must ask ourselves whether military escalation is the best means of achieving that. I have come to the conclusion that military escalation is neither in the national interest nor can it achieve a stable, long-term peace in the region.

□ 1700

Those who have called for ground troops usually do not specify the goal. Is it to take Kosovo and occupy it for years, perhaps decades, against the threat of Serbian guerrilla warfare; or should the goal be to conquer Serbia with unforeseen consequences to wider Balkan instability, our relationship with Russia and our ability to respond to other regional flash points around the world? Do those who advocate such a course understand that it may take months to properly build up such an invasion and force? How much more misery and devastation will have occurred by then, and does that serve the interests of refugees and innocent civilians?

I am not impressed by foreign leaders who take it upon themselves to lecture the American people about where our duty lies or how we must not be so misguided as to slip into isolationism. This argument is simply not warranted in light of the history of the last 50 years or in reference to the present situation. Responsible internationalism does not mean we must be stampeded into using force when our national interest is not well defined and other means short of force have not been exhausted.

I plan to offer a resolution with my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), a resolution that would neither mandate withdrawal on the one hand nor escalate the war and do a ground invasion on the other. This resolution would bar the introduction of ground forces from Kosovo and the rest of Yugoslavia. Why is such a course pref-

erable? Because once having initiated hostilities, even if it was a policy based on flawed premises, we cannot simply walk away and wash our hands of the problem. The bombing has created certain facts: for our own policy, the perception of Yugoslavian government, and not least for the refugees. At the same time, however, we should avoid military escalation in a region where the only rational and durable solutions are political in nature.

I use the term "escalation" with good reason, because the parallels with Vietnam are striking. For that very reason this resolution would prohibit ground combat operations in Yugoslavia without specific authorization in law because the mission creep in Kosovo is similar to U.S. force deployments in the early stages of Vietnam. Viewed through the lens of history, our force buildup in the region and our edging towards ground combat operations could be the prelude to another Gulf of Tonkin incident. Members also should be aware that this resolution specifically exempts search-and-rescue missions.

But drawing a legislative bright line between bombing and boots on the ground is only one element of the solution. The problem is now bigger than Kosovo, and I believe America should actively encourage the mediation of a settlement before this crisis becomes a wider conflict. To the objection that mediation will not work, I say we will never know unless we, the United States, throw greater weight behind such efforts.

I do not underestimate the difficulties that are involved, but should Milosevic balk, we will retain the ability to apply military pressure from the air. Once a settlement is reached, an international force may be necessary to assist the refugee return and oversee reconstruction. We should be more flexible about the makeup of this force than we have been in the past. Rather than making its composition a non-negotiable end in itself, we should bear in mind that the international force is the means to an end; that means to an end, peace and stability in Kosovo where ethnic Albanians can live in safety and with autonomy.

Last week I urged the President to call for a special meeting of the G-8 countries to begin a formal effort to achieve a peaceful settlement. This G-8 meeting could help initiate a framework for a diplomatic solution of the crisis and begin to put in place the foundation for economic assistance to the region. Delegations from the Ukraine and other affected regional countries could also be invited. Such a meeting is only the beginning of a long and difficult process, but it is a step our country should not be afraid to take.

I am pleased that the President appears to be responding positively. This week Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, was dispatched to Moscow for discussions on Kosovo, and I

hope that these talks are a prelude to the heads of governments of the affected countries making a concerted effort at a political settlement.

The United States can and should remain strongly engaged internationally because regional instability will not solve itself. But we must choose our tools very carefully, for the stakes do not allow for failure. I believe America needs to draw a careful balance between our military and diplomatic efforts. Right now there is an imbalance in favor of military means. While maintaining the option of military pressure from the air, we should avoid boots on the ground or rather boots in a Balkan quagmire. That is why the Fowler-Kasich-Goodling resolution is the right approach and deserves the support of this House. In the longer term, however, we should seek opportunities for a lasting and enforceable political settlement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Washington addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEMINT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ABERCROMBIE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GANSKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)