

Karabagh is an Armenian-populated region that has declared its independence, but is still claimed by the neighboring Republic of Azerbaijan. A bloody war was fought earlier in this decade, with the Karabagh Armenians successfully defending their homelands. A ceasefire was accepted by both sides in 1994, but a political settlement has not been reached.

Under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States is a cochair of the negotiating group formed to resolve this conflict.

The United States and our OSCE partners have put forward a peace plan to resolve this conflict. Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh have both accepted the American-supported plan as a basis for negotiation, and Azerbaijan unfortunately has rejected the approach. Considering how policymakers in Congress and the administration have identified an establish the Caucasus region as a vital interest, we should do more to reward those countries which are willing to work constructively to resolve longstanding differences.

Mr. Speaker, President Kocharian's visit coincides with an important and tragic date. April 24 is solemnly commemorated as the anniversary of the unleashing of the genocide by the Ottoman Turkish empire of 1915 through 1923 that ultimately claimed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians.

There will be a reception tomorrow evening in commemoration of the genocide, as well as a series of speeches by Members of Congress. We cannot allow the world to forget the genocide. The lesson of the Armenian genocide should not be lost on us as we witness the heartbreaking TV images from Kosovo. Truly, a major justification for the NATO campaign is to try to ensure that the 20th century, which began in genocide, not end in genocide.

Back in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, when Armenians were being murdered and deported, and their homes and communities burned and destroyed, and all record of the Armenian presence erased, there was no Western alliance of democracies like NATO committed to stopping aggression, brutality and genocide.

I just want to say in conclusion, I want to take this opportunity to express my admiration for our men and women in uniform who are fighting to stop the horrible ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians. At the same time, I urge the administration to assert far more pressure on Azerbaijan to constructively participate in the Nagorno Karabagh peace process.

As we remember the martyrs of the Armenian genocide, and as we witness the tragic events unfolding today in the Balkans, we must do all in our power to prevent another genocide in the mountains and valleys of Nagorno-Karabagh.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the upcoming celebration this weekend of the 50th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, of course, on the ongoing military operation against Yugoslavia.

The NATO allies will also meet for its annual summit and formally welcome the three new members, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republics.

I was watching Nightline on Friday evening, Mr. Speaker, and the subject was NATO and its 50th anniversary. In one segment of the program, they went around Washington, D.C. and actually asked different citizens what they believed the role of NATO should be.

Most answered that NATO should be "peacekeepers for any conflict," or that NATO "should protect humanity," or they should stop genocide. With all due respect to their opinions, each of these Americans were not correct about what NATO's initial responsibility should be.

NATO was created to be solely a collective security arrangement for the Western allies against Soviet and Eastern Bloc aggression. NATO came into being 50 years ago when the U.S. joined its allies in signing the treaty on April 4, 1949. The U.S. Senate went on to ratify the treaty on July 21, 1949.

I am concerned with the current operations against Yugoslavia as a NATO operation. NATO does not have the authority under the current treaty terms to engage in the actions against Yugoslavia. By doing so, the stakes have been raised dramatically high. The President has allowed NATO to be put into a position that in order to prove its validity and effectiveness in a post-Cold War world, NATO has to win this war at all costs. This rigidity has prevented the administration and our NATO allies to take the sensible steps on seeking diplomatic solutions.

In fact, the administration last week flatly refused to consider a possible diplomatic opening that Germany was trying to seek with Yugoslavia.

Again, the President is intentionally raising the stakes in this engagement that makes anything less than our all-out victory a defeat. This strategy places U.S. prestige and ability to carry out our will in the world at tremendous risk. As stated before, this operation also brings into question the purpose of NATO in today's world.

The current operation against Yugoslavia is draining our military capability. There are some reports that the Navy was down to 200 cruise missiles in the theater of operation.

Nightline reported last night that out of over 6,000 sorties flown in the

last 28 days, only 1,700 have been bombing missions. After 6 years of stretching our military too thin, the administration has placed our Nation's military abilities at dangerously low levels.

The shrinking cruise missile supply, combined with our military having to convert our nuclear-tipped missiles to conventional warheads, places our abilities in a global scale at hazardous levels. If our Nation is faced with a second conflict, the security of the world is at great peril.

During this weekend's NATO summit, the NATO leaders will discuss changing the strategic concept of NATO from a defensive organization towards a more proactive force to combat new global risks such as proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. The administration seems to want NATO to be a global force ready to tackle any trouble in the world.

If this administration seeks to change the basic concept of NATO, it would violate the U.S. Constitution. Here is why. The treaty signed in 1949 was to provide for the defense of Western Europe. Any change to that treaty would require a new treaty, and therefore confirmation by the U.S. Senate by a two-thirds majority.

Mr. Speaker, it seems this administration is out to conduct a military action here. Secretary Madeleine Albright recently stated, "The military are our regulars now, so this is their job. What else would they be doing if we didn't give them their battles to fight?"

Secretary Albright also recently testified before Congress and said, "I would rather be up here defending myself for not having a plan than having to defend myself for not doing anything."

So, Mr. Speaker, when we have this kind of rhetoric from the White House, choosing to use our military in a questionable war because the military has "nothing better to do," or that their use without a strategy is better than "not doing anything," is when events like Vietnam occur.

AMERICA'S EXPORT CONTROL POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss our Nation's export control policy. Obviously, economic growth is a key to a prosperous future in this country, but that fact points out how important exports are.

When we look at the world right now, we have a unique situation where,