Mr. President, at this

moment, U.S. forces under NATO command

are conducting air strikes

against Serbia. And they have my full

support and endorsement as they go

into battle. We all hope that bombing

Serbia ends the cycle of violence between

the Serbs and ethnic Albanians

in that region.

Yesterday, I voted against authorizing

the use of force because the President

refused to explain to Congress and

the American people how his goals

would be achieved by bombing, and

what our plan would be after the bombing

stops—if Milosevic refuses to yield.

I still do not see how bombing Serbia

will bring about peace or end the atrocities

being committed. I do not see how

bombing Serbia will lead to the Administration’s

goals of greater political autonomy

to Kosovo, the withdrawal of

most Serbian military forces, protection

of minorities, and a more equitable

ethnic representation among

local police. That being said, I fully

support our troops and I’m confident

they will carry out their mission successfully.

We should all support our troops and

hope that we have not started down a

slippery slope where the President insists

that in order to protect our credibility

or NATO’s credibility we have to

send in U.S. ground troops. The U.S. officially

recognizes that Kosovo is part

of Serbia, which along with Montenegro,

forms the sovereign state of the

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. And

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic

has made it clear that Serbia does not

want foreign troops on its soil. President

Clinton, however, is bombing Serbia

in order to force Serbia to agree to

a peace accord which U.S. troops would

be put on the ground to enforce—as an

occupation force, not a peacekeeping

force.

There is an ongoing civil war between

the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians

and the combatants have not exhausted

their will to fight. So when the

President talks about sending 4,000

American military men and women to

Kosovo, he is talking about making

peace not keeping peace. The Kosovo

Liberation Army is fighting for independence;

the Serbs are fighting for

complete control by Belgrade. While

the Kosovars have accepted the U.S.-

supported plan, neither side enthusiastically

embraces the U.S.-supported

plan of limited autonomy. This

is a recipe for disaster.

The President’s decision to use NATO

to attack Serbia fundamentally

changes the nature of NATO. NATO has

never attacked a country that has not

threatened its neighbors or a member

of the alliance. I do not think we

should fundamentally change the nature

of one of the most successful military

alliances in history without a debate.

Mr. President, I support our troops.

And the best way that I can support

them at this time is to declare that I

will do everything in my power to

make sure that U.S. troops are not put

on the ground in Kosovo.