Mr. President, I rise to

speak about the issue of Kosovo. It is

obviously a topic of extreme importance.

It appears that the administration

and the President have decided to

use American military force in Kosovo

in conjunction with NATO. This, to

me, is a serious mistake.

I wish this administration had a set

policy we could turn to and say, ‘‘This

is why they have decided to do this.’’

But they do not. In fact, the Kosovo decision

has many parallels to the Haiti

decision, and the Haiti decision, as we

know, has turned into a complete disaster,

costing millions of dollars—potentially,

I think, billions of dollars—

although luckily no American lives,

but it has not corrected the problem in

Haiti in any significant way.

Kosovo, on the other hand, has the

potential of not only to cost billions of

dollars, but also to cost American

lives. It is a mistake to pursue a policy

of using American force without a doctrine

or a guideline or a theorem as to

why you are using that force.

My belief is that before we use American

force in this world today to address

issues which are ethnically driven,

religiously driven, or which involve

civil war type of instances, which are

the new threats we so often seem to get

involved in—I am not talking about

issues of terrorism, which is a separate

issue, or state-sponsored terrorism,

which is a separate issue. I am talking

about regions of the world where we

are seeing ethnic, civil, and political

violence of such a nature that American

forces are considered to be sent

into that region.

It is my belief that before we make a

decision to pursue the use of American

force and put American lives at risk,

we need to answer three basic questions.

The first question is this: Is there a

national interest, is there an American

interest, which is significant enough to

justify risking American lives? Is there

a national interest which can be clearly

and concisely explained, if it has to

be explained, regrettably, to a parent,

to a wife, to a child of an American

service man or woman who may lose

their life because we have pursued the

use of American force? Is there a definable

American interest of such significance

that we are willing to put at risk

the cream of America’s young people—

our service individuals?

So far, this administration has set

forth absolutely no presentation of

doctrine or ideas or position which establishes

that there is such an American

interest. There may be a European

interest, no question about that. Clearly,

what is going on in that part of the

world is horrific in many instances.

But is there an American interest that

justifies using American force and

risking American life? We have not

heard that explained to us.

If people are being indiscriminately

killed by a group of thugs, then are we

not also supposed to be in Georgia or

Azerbaijan or Rwanda or any number

of other places in this world? In fact, I

think there was some tallying up of

this, and there is something like 39

places in the world today where there

is this type of activity going on, and

some of it involving much larger

deaths in the way of civilian casualties

than is occurring in Kosovo. Of course,

any death is a tragedy.

The fact is that there has to be a reason

for Americans stepping in to try to

stop that conflict. In this instance, we

have not seen a differentiation that

justifies us going into Kosovo versus

going into some other of these 39 confrontations

around the world. There

has been no definition given to the purpose

of the use of American military

force, other than that this conflict appears

on television. This conflict involves

a European state. This conflict,

therefore, maybe attracts more sympathy

from a country which has always

identified itself with Europe, but sympathy

is not a good reason for putting

at risk American lives.

The Balkans represent no strategic

issue for the United States today of

any significance. It is a strategic issue

for the European nations, and it is a

European issue which should be addressed

by the European nations, but

clearly there is no definable American

purpose for going into Kosovo, and this

administration has presented none.

I was at a briefing where I heard the

Secretary of State say something to

the effect, this might lead to World

War III if we let this conflict ensue between

Serbia and Kosovo, because she

was referring back to World War II and

World War I which started in this region

of the world.

The dynamics of the world have

changed. There are no alliances which

are going to cause the domino effect

that is going to bring the death of the

Archduke of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

into play with Germany, with

Prussia. There are no such alliances

that exist today. There is no Adolf Hitler

who has the capacity to project

force throughout Europe as a result of

actions occurring in the Sudetenland of

Czechoslovakia. In fact, the Balkans

have been, for all intents and purposes,

strategically bypassed.

There are other regions of the world

where America has significant strategic

interest—Iraq is obviously the

most apparent at this time, but there

are others also—where, if we have to

use American force, we should use

American force. But to use American

force arbitrarily and simply because

the region happens to be European and

because it happens to be on television,

and for no other apparent reason, is a

very hard explanation to make, should

American lives be lost, to the parent or

the spouse or the child.

That is the first point we must test.

The first test of engagement is, Is

there a vital national interest for us?

No, there is not. I want to come back

to that because there are a couple of

other points on that.

Let’s go on to the second point. The

second point is, Can the use of American

force stabilize or terminate the

conflict?

When we are looking at these racial,

political, religious, civil war type situations,

can the introduction of American

force have a long, lasting effect?

That has to be the second question.

And if it cannot, then why would we

put the force in?

I think anybody who has done even a

cursory study of the Balkans knows

that these folks, these cultures, regrettably,

have a historic, almost a genetic,

attitude which causes constant

conflict and which creates tremendous

antagonism which leads to violence between

these different cultures.

I have tried to trace it back a little

bit. I was reading the history of the

Ottoman Empire. Ironically, it goes

back, I think, to Kosovo and a battle

that was fought, I think, in 1555 or 1585

where Solyman ‘‘the Great’’ fought the

Serbs in Kosovo. In fact, just a few

years ago, the Serbs dug up their hero

of that battle and took his body all

around Serbia as an expression of support

for that battle and for their hatred

of the Moslem empire which had

caused that fight to occur. And those

hatreds have developed and evolved and

have gone forward in every generation,

been passed down from generation to

generation to generation.

We cannot understand it as Americans

because we are a melting pot, and

we do not have that type of hatred in

our Nation. A lot of people came to the

United States, however, to get away

from it and immigrated here for that

purpose.

But I remember, I worked in Montenegro

one summer, and I would meet

people—and this was back a long time

ago, back in 1970-something—and I

would meet people, the local folks who

I was working with, and they would

tell me, forthrightly, that as soon as

Tito died there was going to be a genocide

in that part of the world because

the Serbs hated the Croatians. And it

was just a matter of fact, a matter of

their lives that as soon as this stabilizing

force, Tito, died, this was going

to occur. They knew it as a culture.

So what arrogance do we have as a

nation, sitting here across the ocean,

that we think we can project arms into

a region, putting American lives at

risk, and stabilize that region which

has not been able to settle things out

for hundreds of years—hundreds of

years. I think it is foolish for us to presume

that.

But equally important, I think we

have to understand that, in this instance,

to put American forces in there

is essentially an act of war on our part,

because this is a freestanding nation

and Kosovo is a province of that freestanding

nation. It is as if Canada decided

to put troops in Vermont because

New Hampshire and Vermont were not

getting along. That may be too glib a

statement, but the fact is, from a physical

standpoint and a political standpoint,

that is essentially the same situation.

This is a nation which is at civil

war. What if the English during our

Civil War had decided to set troops

down in North Carolina? I don’t think

the North would have taken that very

well.

Granted, in this instance, the Serbs

are led by a malicious and malignant

individual who is acting in a manner

which is outside, in many ways, the

bounds of any type of confrontation

that should occur in the 20th century

or the 21st century. But the fact is, for

us to put American troops in there will

be legally, at least, an act of war because

we will be invading a sovereign

nation which is fighting within itself

relative to a province in that nation

which is trying to create independence,

and we will be deciding to separate

that country by our use of military

force.

Of course, this administration has

not come to this Congress and suggested

that. In fact, this administration

has not come to the Congress at

all. It has violated all sorts of directives,

but it has just marched down

this road of arbitrary evolution into a

position of confrontation in Serbia and

Kosovo. It has set our prestige at risk

without having any idea why our prestige

should be at risk, in my opinion.

But that is the second point: Can you

resolve the conflict by the use of American

force? I would have to say that

history tells us we cannot. A lot like

Haiti. When we went into Haiti, a lot of

people asked, Are we going to correct

this situation? Is this going to improve

this situation? Are we putting our people

at risk? Are we spending all this

money and getting something out of

this that is better after we leave? Is it

going to change the culture?

We have seen it did not. Haiti is back

to almost the exact position it was before

we put our troops in, except that it

has absolutely no private enterprise

now because we basically wiped out the

private enterprise when we went in and

closed all the private enterprise down

and pushed it offshore. We wiped out

their private sector workforce and capitalist

base. So we actually put them in

a worse position economically. And politically

they are in the same position.

I suspect that no matter how long we

put American troops in there—and

there is no definition coming; and that

is the third point of how long we will

be there—no matter how long American

troops are in that region, there

will be no resolution of this problem by

the introduction of American troops

into that region which will have any

long-term impact. They will be back at

each other’s throat as soon as the opportunity

arises, unless we wish to stay

there forever, which brings us to the

third point.

The first point is: Is there a vital national

interest for us? The second point

is: Can the conflict be resolved by the

use of American forces? The third

point: Is there an exit strategy or are

we committing Americans’ tax dollars

and the lives of American troops without

any—any—idea as to how we are

going to get out of this situation?

As far as I know, this administration

has not really defined an entrance

strategy. They have sort of stumbled

into that, so, clearly, they have not

found any exit strategy. In fact, if you

ask them, all they have thought about

is the first bombing raids. They have

not even thought about the second—

they may have thought about the second

series of bombing raids, but they

have not thought about what they do

after that. There is no exit strategy. In

fact, there is very little strategy at all

other than what the military has been

willing to do and has to do in order to

prepare itself to execute public policy

which is so haphazardly designed.

We could be there a long time. I

mean, since 1385 or 1355, it has been 600

years. Are we going to stick around another

600 years in order to pacify this

region? I think we might have to if our

intention is to accomplish that goal.

And for what purpose? What is the

national interest that justifies that?

And remember, this is not like Haiti in

many ways. This is a country where

people do fight, where people are under

arms. This is a country of militarytype

individuals. This is a country

which fought the German army to a

standstill; the greatest army in the

world at the time they invaded, fought

them to a standstill through guerrilla

tactics. These are proud people, proud

people and militaristic people. I know

that. I was there for awhile. It was a

long time ago, but I do not think they

have changed. They do not seem to

change much.

So where is this policy going? It appears

that it is a policy that is undefined,

that cannot give us a legitimate

national reason, that cannot proclaim

that the introduction of American

forces will settle the situation. And it

cannot give us a definition as to how

they are going to get out of the situation

once we get into the situation.

It is a bad policy. It is one that, unfortunately,

puts many American lives

at risk if it is pursued. But this administration

seems insistent on going

down that road. And I think that is

wrong.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and

suggest the absence of a quorum.