Mr. President, I

rise today to talk about the situation

in Kosovo. We have been watching this

situation unfold for days, actually

months—actually, you could say thousands

of years. But it is coming to a

head in the very near future, perhaps

in hours. As I speak today, Richard

Holbrooke is talking to Slobodan

Milosevic and trying to encourage him

to come to the peace table. I hope he is

successful, and I know every American

hopes that he is successful. But what I

think we must talk about today is

what happens if he is not.

What happens if Mr. Milosevic says,

‘‘No, I am not going to allow foreign

troops in my country,’’ and if he says

he is going to move forward with whatever

he intends to do in the governance

of that country? I think we have to

step back and look at the situation and

the dilemma which we face, because

there is no question, this is not an easy

decision. What comes next?

Basically, the President has committed

the United States to a policy in

NATO to which he really does not have

the authority to commit. The consequences

are that we have to make a

decision that would appear to walk

away from the commitment he made

without coming to Congress, and that

is not a good situation. I do not like

having to make such a choice, because

I want our word to be good. When the

United States speaks, I want our word

to be good. Whether it is to our ally or

to our enemy, they need to know what

we say we will do.

But the problem here is, the President

has gone out with a commitment

before he talked to Congress about it,

and now we have really changed the

whole nature of NATO without congressional

approval. We are saying that

we are going to bomb a sovereign country

because of their mistreatment of

people within their country, the province

of Kosovo, and we are going to

take this action, basically declaring

war on a country that should not be an

enemy of the United States and in fact

was a partner at the peace table in the

Dayton accords on Bosnia.

So now we are taking sides. We are

turning NATO, which was a defense alliance—

is a defense alliance—into an

aggressive, perhaps, declarer-of-war on

a country that is not in NATO. Mr.

President, I just do not think we can

take a step like that without the Congress

and the American people understanding

what we are doing and, furthermore,

approving of it.

There is no question that Mr.

Milosevic is not our kind of person. We

have seen atrocities that he has committed

in Kosovo. But, in fact, there

have been other atrocities committed

by the parties with whom we are purporting

to be taking sides. The Albanians

have committed atrocities as

well, the Kosovar Albanians. So we are

now picking sides in a civil war where

I think the U.S. security interest is not

clear.

I think it is incumbent on the President

to come to Congress, before he

takes any military action in Kosovo, to

lay out the case and to get congressional

approval. What would he tell

Congress? First of all, before we put

one American in harm’s way, I want to

know: What is the intention here?

What is the commitment? What happens

in the eventuality that Mr.

Milosevic does not respond to bombing,

that he declares he is going to go forward

without responding to an intervention

in his country? What do we do

then? Do we send ground troops in to

force him to come to the peace table?

And if we did, could we consider that is

really a peace? What if NATO decides

to strike and an American plane is shot

down? What if there is an American

POW? What then? What is our commitment

then?

My concern here is that the administration

has not looked at the third,

fourth, and fifth steps in a plan. They

have only addressed step 1, which is, we

are going to bomb because they will

not come to the peace table and accept

the agreement that we have hammered

out. I just say, before we go bombing

sovereign nations, we ought to have a

plan. We ought to know what steps 3, 4,

and 5 are, because I believe Congress

has a right to know what this commitment

is. How many people from the

United States of America are going to

be put in harm’s way? What is it going

to cost and where is the money going

to come from? Is it going to come from

other defense accounts, so other places

in the world where we have troops are

put at risk? Is it going to come at the

risk of our Strategic Defense Initiative?

Just where is the money going to

come from? Most of all, most important

of all, what is the mission? How

much are we going to be required to do

and what is the timetable?

Mr. President, I would support a plan

that would say when the two parties

come to a real peace agreement, we

would put our troops, along with our

European allies in NATO, together in a

peacekeeping mission of a short duration

which would make sure that

things settle down until we could have

others rotate in and take our place. I

would support a plan that went that

far.

I would also support a plan of helping

the Kosovars, but without putting

American troops in harm’s way. You

know, the difference between the Clinton

doctrine and the Reagan doctrine

is that President Reagan would support

freedom fighters with arms, with monetary

contributions, with intelligence—

many, many forms of support

for freedom fighters—but he would

never put a U.S. military person in the

middle of a civil war. He would help,

but he would not make that commitment.

Under the Reagan doctrine, therefore,

we could help Afghan rebels and

Nicaraguan freedom fighters. At the

same time, we could also continue to

remain strong in Europe and Asia because

we could allocate our resources

and we would not drain our resources

in small civil conflicts in chosen places

around the world.

What bothers me about what has

been happening in the last 3 or 4 years

is that we have been putting troops

into civil conflicts in certain parts of

the world but not all parts of the

world. So every time we do it, it makes

the decision not to do it somewhere

else a little harder. We practically invaded

Haiti and we still have 500 troops

in Haiti today. We had 18 Army Rangers

killed in Somalia in a mission that

was ill-defined and was actually mission

creep. The original mission of

feeding starving people had been accomplished,

but we didn’t leave. We decided

to capture a warlord, something

our military is not trained to do and,

therefore, the miscalculation cost us

the lives of 18 great young Americans.

We have inserted ourselves into

places like Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia,

but we have not inserted ourselves into

Algeria, where there are just as many

atrocities as there have been in any

place in the Balkans. We have not inserted

ourselves into Turkey, where

there is mistreatment of the Kurds. We

aren’t getting involved in the Basque

separatist movement in Spain. We

didn’t step into Iran when the Ayatollah

took over from the Shah and

was assassinating almost every military

leader that couldn’t get out of the

country, plus the religious minorities

that were still there and their leadership.

It is very difficult, when you start

choosing where you are going to involve

yourselves, to extricate yourself

when there is no clear policy.

That is why so many of us in Congress

are concerned and why we realize

the dilemma. We understand that this

is not an easy black and white decision.

We are talking about a commitment

that the President has made. I do

not like stepping in and saying that we

shouldn’t keep a commitment the

President has made. Overriding that

great concern is the consequence of not

requiring the President to have a plan

and a policy that will set a precedent

for the future. I think we could explain

it by sitting down with our European

allies and saying, first of all, if we are

going to change the mission of NATO,

this must be fully debated and fully accepted

by every member of NATO within

their own constitutional framework.

If we are going to turn NATO from a

defense alliance into an affirmative

war-making machine, I think we need

to talk about it.

I will support some affirmative action

on the part of NATO, if we are

able to determine exactly what would

trigger that and not go off on one mission

without having a precedent for a

different mission and, therefore, creating

expectations among more and

more people that we will step in to defend

the autonomy of a country such as

Kosovo or Bosnia. We must not allow

the expectations to be such that we are

drawn into every conflict, because we

will not be able to survive with the

strength that we must have when only

the United States will be the one

standing between a real attack from a

ballistic missile or a nuclear warhead

or an invasion of another country

where we do have a strategic interest.

We cannot allow there to be so many

questions because there is so little policy.

That is the responsibility of Congress,

to work with the President.

We will work together. Congress will

work with the President to hammer

out a new mission for NATO. We will

always do our fair share in the world.

We will never walk away from that. We

have to determine what is our fair

share, what is our allocation. I submit

that the United States will always be

the leader in technology, and we will

create a ballistic missile defense that

will shield not only the United States

and our troops wherever they may be

in any theater in the world, but we also

will protect our allies, if we have the

strength to go forward. We will not

have the strength to go forward if we

continue to spend $3 and $4 billion a

year on conflicts that do not rise to the

level of a U.S. security interest.

We must be able to choose where we

spend our defense dollars so that we

will all be protected, ourselves and our

allies, from a rogue nation with a

ballistic missile capability that can

put a chemical or biological or nuclear

warhead on it and undermine the integrity

of people living in our country.

Mr. President, the consequences are

too great for us to sit back and let the

President commit U.S. forces in a situation

that I can’t remember us ever

having before; that is, to take an affirmative

military action against a

sovereign nation that has not committed

a security threat to the United

States. Before we would sit back and

let the President do that, I cannot in

good conscience say, well, he has made

the commitment, even though he

didn’t have the right to do it, so we

have got to let him go forward. Perhaps

if we aren’t lucky and if Milosevic

does not come to the table, we would

have more and more and more responsibilities

because of the potential consequences

that could occur if he does

not come to the table.

We must know what those consequences

are and what we are prepared

to do in the eventuality that an

American plane is shot down, that we

have an American prisoner on the

ground or that we bomb and bomb and

bomb and bomb and he still does not do

what we have asked him to do. We have

to determine what we do in that eventuality.

I certainly hope that we will

consult with the Russians so that this

war does not escalate into something

that we haven’t thought about. If Russia

decides to step in on the side of Serbia,

we could have grief beyond what

anyone is saying right now.

I hope the President will work with

Congress to fashion a new mission for

NATO that will have the full support of

Congress and the American people. I

believe we could do that, because I

don’t think we are far apart at all. We

cannot do it on an ad hoc basis. We

cannot all of a sudden attack another

country on an ad hoc basis and call

that a policy.

I hope the President will come together

with Congress and have hearings.

Let’s hear from the American

people on just what they believe is the

role of the United States. Let’s hear

from Congress about what our commitments

should be and what is a ready division

of responsibility for keeping the

world as safe as we can make it, given

that 30 countries have ballistic missile

technology, some of whom are rogue

nations. Let us step back with our European

allies and determine if this is

the right decision to make, or are there

other ways that we could be helpful to

the Kosovar Albanians.

I remember hour after hour after

hour, over a 2-year period, talking

about letting the Muslims have a fair

fight in Bosnia, because they didn’t

have arms when two of their adversaries

did. We never took that step.

Now there is a cease-fire in Bosnia, but

there are also many years to go before

we will know what the cost is and if it

can be lasting, because today, Bosnia is

still as ethnically divided as it ever

was because it is not safe for the refugees

to move back in.

One can say there is disagreement on

just how successful was the Bosnian

mission. We do not see fighting, but

NATO has just toppled a duly elected

president of one of the provinces. It is

pretty hard to understand. I think it is

tenuous that we would go in and forcibly

remove an elected president while

we are touting democratic ideals.

There was a way to go into Bosnia,

but Kosovo is very different. Kosovo is

a civil war in a sovereign nation. There

are atrocities. There have been atrocities

on both sides. We are picking one

side, and we are doing it without a vote

of Congress. I do not think we can do

it. I do not think the President has the

right to declare war, and under the

Constitution, he certainly does not.

And under the War Powers Act, it

takes an emergency. This is not an

emergency. We are not being attacked.

United States troops are not in harm’s

way at this point.

We can take the time to talk about

it, and the consequences are so great I

think it is worth the time to set a policy

that allows us to have some continuity

for the next 25 years, so that

our enemies and our allies will know

what the greatest superpower in the

world is going to do and they will not

have to guess.

Mr. President, it is a dilemma, and I

realize it is. I do not feel comfortable

with the choice. I do not feel comfortable

at a time when we have gone

out on a limb, through our President

who made a commitment for us, even

though we were not part of it. Nevertheless,

I would like to give the President

that support, but it is worth it to

take the time and do it right and ask

the President to come forward to give

us his plan, to tell us what happens

when American troops are prisoners of

war or on the ground or shot down. We

need to know what we would do in that

eventuality before we send them there.

That is the least that we can expect.

I hope we can debate this resolution.

I hope people will give their views. I

have heard great debates already on it,

not on the Senate floor, though. The

time has come for us to have this debate,

and let’s vote up or down. There

will be people voting on both sides in

good conscience, seeing it a different

way but with the same goal. So let’s

have that debate. Let’s do it right.

Let’s don’t haul off bombing an independent

nation before the Senate and

the House of Representatives has a

plan and approves it or disapproves it.

That is what our Founding Fathers intended

when they wrote the Constitution,

and it is more appropriate today

than ever.

I hope we will do that, because then

the American people will know what is

going on and they will support it or not

support it. If we are going to have a

long-term commitment, which I hope

we do not, but if we do, at least it will

be with the support of Congress as

Desert Storm was. That was a tough

debate. People spoke from the heart on

both sides. They took a vote, and Congress

supported the President going

into Desert Storm. That is the way it

should be, Mr. President. That is the

way it should be under our Constitution,

under our democracy. That is the

way our Government works. I hope it

will again as we face the crisis today

that could have very long-term consequences

for our country and for every

one of our young men and women in

the field wearing the uniform of the

United States of America. Their lives

are worth a debate and a policy, and

that is what we are going to try to give

them in the next 24 hours.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

I just say to the

Senator from North Dakota that I understand

the concern about timing.

And I could not agree with him more

about the timing. But I will just point

out that the amendment I offered was

actually offered early last week as an

amendment that I thought should be

considered in a supplemental appropriations

bill because, of course, it will

require a supplemental appropriation.

As you know, after the bill was laid

down and other amendments were considered,

this second-degree amendment

was put on Friday. And now so much

has happened in the last 48 hours that

the timing is not perfect; there is no

question about it.

I just say to the Senator from North

Dakota that we have been trying to

talk about this for quite a while. And

the House took up an amendment 2

weeks ago that now is totally obsolete,

because the Serbs have refused to come

to the table. So I concede that the timing

is bad, but I do not know when it

gets better. We certainly are not going

to influence Mr. Milosevic right this

minute in that Mr. Holbrooke is talking

to him right this minute.

But I do think that we have to have

this debate, because if we do start an

action before we have had this debate,

and before the American people fully

understand what the issues are and can

weigh in, I do not think that would be

acceptable, particularly if it is a long term

commitment. So I do not disagree

at all with what seems to be very bad

timing. I just do not know when it gets

better. The Senator is

correct, it was laid down Friday. But

this amendment does not prohibit the

airstrikes. It just says that we must

come to Congress first, that the President

must come to Congress and

present a full plan first. And I think

that is warranted before this type of

action would be taken in this very unusual

circumstance.

But as the Senator said, it is coming

to a head very quickly. This amendment

was offered last week. The second-

degree was also offered last week.

So we are trying to have a clear plan,

certainly, before we get into a situation

which could be very long term,

with very dire consequences. And I

think the full debate is what we are

looking for, not necessarily a cutoff,

but certainly having all the facts before

us before we make such an important

decision.