Mr. President, it seems

we are about to go to war with Yugoslavia.

Our stated purpose is to stop

the humanitarian disaster there caused

by a civil war. If we do not act, we are

told, innocent people will be killed,

will be wounded, will be displaced from

their homes. Indeed, over 2,000 have already

been killed in the Kosovo civil

war in just the last year. Many more

have been uprooted. There are serious

problems there. No one disputes that.

My question is, Where is the vital

U.S. national interest?

The National Defense Council Foundation

recently reported that there are

at least 60 conflicts going on in the

world involving humanitarian suffering

of one kind or another. There are 30

wars being waged—civil wars, guerrilla

wars, major terrorist campaigns. Many

are driven by ethnic quarrels and religious

disputes which have raged for

decades, if not for centuries.

Just consider a partial list from recent

years: 800,000 to 1 million people

have been brutally murdered in Rwanda

alone; tens of thousands killed in

civil wars in Sudan, Algeria and Angola;

thousands killed in civil war in

Ethiopia; in January, 140 civilians

killed by paramilitary squads in Colombia;

including 27 worshipers slain

during a village church service.

Why is there no outcry for these millions

of people who are being brutally

murdered in other places in the world,

but we are all concerned about the humanitarian

problems in Kosovo?

I have to say this, and I know it is

very unpopular to say it, but I am

going to quote a guy whose name is

Roger Wilkins. He is a professor of history

and American culture at George

Mason University:

And this is all in that same timeframe.

Further quoting the Minneapolis-St.

Paul Star Tribune:

So now the President wants us to

send the U.S. military into Kosovo, not

to enforce a peace agreement—we do

not have a peace agreement, as we were

told 2 weeks ago—but to inject ourselves

into the middle of an ongoing

civil war, with no clearly defined military

objective, no assurance of success,

no exit strategy and great, great risk

to our pilots and men and women in

uniform.

We know that the Yugoslav leader,

Mr. Milosevic, is a bad guy. No one disputes

that. But are we absolutely sure

that there are some good guys, too?

Are there any good guys in the fight

that stretches back over 500 years?

When I was in Kosovo recently, I was

horrified as I was going through the

main road—Kosovo is only 75 miles

wide and 75 miles long, and there is one

road going all the way through it. I was

only able to see two dead people at the

time. They turned them over and both

of them were Serbs. They had been executed

at pointblank range. And they

were Serbs, not Kosovars, not Albanians.

So the national interest here is

not at all clear.

Let me quote Dr. Henry Kissinger,

the former Secretary of State and National

Security Adviser. In an op-ed

piece in the Washington Post on February

24, Kissinger said he was opposed

to U.S. military involvement in

Kosovo. He is not unaware of the humanitarian

concerns that the President

and others talk about. Here are

just a few of the highlights of what he

said:

I think this is very, very significant,

the last two points.

First of all, I have asked the Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I have

asked the Chiefs, I have asked the

CINCs, the commanders in chief, this

question: If we have to send troops into

Kosovo—keep in mind that people may

lie to you and say this is going to be an

airstrike. Anybody who knows anything

about military strategy and warfare

knows you can’t do it all from the

air. You have to ultimately send in

ground troops. So we are talking about

sending in ground troops. That is in a

theater where the logistics support for

ground troops is handled out of the 21st

TACOM in Germany. I was over in the

21st TACOM. Right now, they are at 110

percent capacity just supporting Bosnia.

They don’t have any more capacity.

The commander in chief there said,

if we send ground troops into Iraq or

Kosovo, we are going to be 100 percent

dependent upon Guard and Reserve to

support those troops. And look what

has happened to the Guard and Reserve

now because of the decimation of our

military through its budget, finding

ourselves only half the size we were in

1991.

Right now, we don’t have the capacity.

We have to depend on Guard and

Reserves, and in doing this we don’t

have the critical MOSs. You can’t expect

doctors in the Guard to be deployed

for 270 days and maintain their

practice, so we now have ourselves

faced with a problem, a serious problem,

and that is we cannot carry out

the national military strategy, which

is to be able to defend America on two

regional fronts. We don’t have the capacity

to do it. If we could do it on

nearly simultaneous fronts within 45

days between each conflict, then we go

up from low-medium risk to a medium high

risk, which is translated in lives

of Americans.

Going into Kosovo for an unlimited

duration at who knows what cost, who

knows the amount of risk, the risk will

be higher.

I chair the readiness subcommittee of

the Senate Armed Services Committee,

Mr. President, and I can tell you right

now that we are in the same situation

we were in in the late 1970s with the

hollow force. We can’t afford to dilute

our military strength anymore. And

that is not even mentioning the immediate

risk to our forces that they will

face in Yugoslavia where the Serbs

have sophisticated Russian-made air

defense and thousands of well-trained

and equipped troops motivated to fight

and die for their country.

In recent testimony before the Senate

Armed Services Committee, some

of our top military leaders were very

frank about what they expected for any

U.S. military operation in Kosovo.

Air Force Chief of Staff General

Ryan said, ‘‘There stands a very good

chance that we will lose aircraft

against Yugoslavian air defense.’’

Navy Chief of Staff, Admiral Johnson,

said, ‘‘We must be prepared to

take losses.’’

Marine Commandant, General

Krulak, said it will be ‘‘tremendously

dangerous.’’

And then George Tenet, the Director

of Central Intelligence, said this is not

Bosnia we are talking about, this is

Kosovo where they are not tired, they

are not worn out, and they are ready to

fight and kill Americans.

So we are faced with that serious

problem, Mr. President. We should not

under any circumstances go into

Kosovo. Our vital security interests are

not at stake, where we don’t have a

clear military objective or an exit

strategy, or where our policy doesn’t

fit into any coherent broader foreign

policy vision.

So let me go back to my opening

statement. Since we have no national

security risks at stake, there must be

another reason for our involvement. It

is not humanitarian because of the following:

800,000 to 1 million killed in ethnic

strife in Rwanda;

tens of thousands killed in civil wars

in Sudan, Algeria, and Angola;

thousands killed in civil war in Ethiopia;

in January, 140 civilians killed by

paramilitary squads in Colombia, including

27 worshipers slain during a

village church service.

Why is there no outcry for U.S. involvement

in these obvious humanitarian

situations?

‘‘I think it’s pretty clear,’’ said

Roger Wilkins, professor of history and

American culture at George Mason

University. ‘‘U.S. foreign policy is

geared to the European-American sensibility

which takes the lives of white

people much more seriously than the

lives of people who aren’t white.’’

Anyone who supports our sending

American troops into Kosovo must be

aware this will come back and haunt

them. Mr. President, I suggest the absence

of a quorum.