Mr. President, I

thank the Senator from Virginia very

much. I am sorry to assert myself at

this point, but I have to preside shortly.

Mr. President, I think the Senate and

the American people, hopefully, heard

a number of strong arguments questioning

whether or not we should start

this bombing campaign at this point in

time.

Let me say categorically, I am concerned

about the carnage that is taking

place in Kosovo and in Europe and

the number of people who are displaced

that the newspapers put at 45,000, the

number of people who have been killed,

and the possibility of refugees in the

surrounding area.

Let me also say that if our troops are

engaged and are starting to bomb or

are put there, I will support the troops.

If they go to battle, I will support

them. But this action at this point in

time seems to me to be ill-advised. If

the Senate has not been properly consulted,

the American people have not

been properly consulted and brought

along, and we should back up and

rethink what we are about to do in this

area. We are making an act of war

against a sovereign nation, with likely

loss of U.S. life, and neither the Senate

nor this Nation has been adequately

consulted.

The Senator from Delaware previously

spoke and talked about the objective

is to stop oppression that is occurring.

I am supportive of stopping

oppression, but if we are looking at oppression,

that occurs a number of

places around the world.

If we want to stop oppression, I have

a better suggestion. Let’s engage in the

Sudan, not with troops, not with bombing,

but let’s support the southern Sudanese.

They have 4 million people displaced

at the present time. Two million

have had a loss of life, and there you

have a government in Khartoum that

is supporting terrorism in the surrounding

region in Uganda, Eritrea,

and Congo, that is expanding, that is a

militant fundamentalist regime that

seeks to do us harm. There you have a

vital strategic United States interest.

If we want to stop oppression, let’s

supply and support the southern Sudanese.

If that is what the objective is,

then let’s do something there where we

can help save more lives, help more

people, and also a vital and strategic

U.S. interest.

I do not see us doing that. The situation

taking place in Europe is a sad situation,

but one where I really question

whether we should put forth the loss of

U.S. lives which is contemplated at

this point in time.

Perhaps this can be explained over

some period of time. Perhaps the administration

can engage the American

public and the Congress to get that

kind of support. But I cannot give that

at this point in time on the basis of the

information I have to date.

Plus, what is the plan? The Senator

from Kentucky just asked a number of

very simple and very basic questions.

Here is a Member of the Senate asking

these sorts of simple and basic questions,

saying, ‘‘I don’t know the answers

to these things.’’ Nor do I.

Have we been sufficiently brought

along and engaged and had discussions

on these items that we can have such

basic questions and not even know the

answers to them? We have been told

there is going to be a bombing campaign,

maybe several ways of bombing.

What if Mr. Milosevic does not blink at

that point in time and says, ‘‘OK, we

are going to support some kind of autonomy

in Kosovo? What then? What

is the plan at that point in time? Are

we engaging ground troops not in a

peacekeeping but aggressive fashion? I

do not think people will support that.

After Kosovo, is it Montenegro next

where we will be going in and supporting,

supplying people who want a

separatist movement, if that were to

happen in that region of the former

Yugoslavia? What next? And what is

the full plan?

We just do not have the answers to

these questions, and we are about to

take an act against a sovereign nation

that is likely to result in the loss of

U.S. lives.

Now is the time to debate and discuss

and to back up and slow down on this,

have the administration engage the

American public, engage the Congress

in answering the simple questions that

my colleagues have put forward. Now is

the time to do that.

I ask the President, please, let’s have

that sort of discussion on those sorts of

specifics with the American public before

we move in to what I think could

be a very ill-fated, ill-timed, and inappropriate

action at this point in time

by the United States.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.