Mr. President, I want

to call to the attention of my colleagues

some headlines that are in today’s

press in reference to the problems

that we are experiencing, the challenge

we face, what could be a real tragedy in

Kosovo. As I look at this, here is a

headline from the Washington Post, as

of this morning, written by R. Jeffrey

Smith of the Post foreign service:

‘‘Thousands Flee As Lawlessness

Spreads In Kosovo.’’ And it gives an

up-front and personal account in regards

to a particular Albanian citizen

who has lived there for 40 years and

was beaten in the middle of the night,

and what is going on in that country.

Here is another headline from the

Washington Times as of today, by Philip

Smucker of the Washington Times:

‘‘Kosovar Rebels Grow Bolder.’’

Here is another headline from the

European Stars and Stripes: ‘‘Fighting

Flares In Kosovo.’’

From the New York Times: ‘‘Rebels

Claim First Capture Of Kosovo City.’’

Last week I had an intelligence briefing

on Kosovo. They indicated if this

happened, in regards to Pristina, and

also in regards to Orahovac—I am having

a little trouble with the pronunciation,

but it is indicative of many of the

communities there. So we have the

fighting that has actually spread.

Here is another article from the European

Stars and Stripes: ‘‘SFOR Patrols

Bosnian Border for Gun-Running.’’

That is the situation in Bosnia.

Of course right down from Bosnia, we

have the situation in regards to

Kosovo.

I am concerned about this because I

think the United States and the rest of

our allies in Western Europe are on the

verge of a deep and expensive and very

dangerous involvement in yet another

area of the Balkans. Unfortunately,

and once again, I have yet to hear from

the executive, and from the administration—

more especially the President—

to explain to the Congress nor,

more important, the American people,

why is this in our vital national interest

to get in the middle of this growing

conflict.

I think I can make a pretty good case

in that regard, because I just returned

from the three new prospective NATO

countries—Poland, the Czech Republic

and Hungary—with the distinguished

chairman of the Senate Intelligence

Committee, Senator SHELBY. To a person,

every official whom we met with

in those three countries indicated that

what NATO does with regard to Kosovo

and what we continue to do in Bosnia

is the real test of NATO: What it will

be; what it will do; what our involvement

will be; if, in fact, we have a Palestinian

kind of situation in the middle

of Europe with Bosnia and Kosovo;

whether or not we can end this kind of

ethnic strife.

So I think you could probably make

a case for our involvement in Kosovo,

but I have yet to hear from anybody in

the administration other than reacting

to news accounts or to questions. I

think it is time we heard.

On the other side of it, we don’t want

to back into a situation where there is

no end in sight, no exit strategy, and

no real consideration in terms of cost

and involvement.

The media reports are very clear that

the Yugoslavian leader, Mr. Milosevic,

is taking very hard and brutal action

against the ethnic Albanians who are

living in Kosovo. They comprise 90 percent

of the population. This is the

same kind of activity that he promoted

in regards to Bosnia and the breakup

there.

We are making some diplomatic efforts.

We have people there working

overtime, but these efforts seem to

keep changing. We have drawn several

lines in the sand with threats of severe

reprisals if the Serbian action against

the Albanian population does not

cease, and those lines in the sand are

still there, they have been gone over,

and the activity continues. So much

for any kind of believability in regards

to our commitment.

The Albanian rebels, known as the

KLA, are simply growing in strength

and the fighting is growing more fierce.

There is no real peaceful solution in

sight. The United States and NATO

have threatened military action and

they have had a military demonstration.

It was a fly-over or fly-by. It was

called ‘‘Determined Falcon.’’ I really

don’t know how determined that falcon

is, but neither side has offered to end

the conflict and efforts to bring them

to the table to get a solution have

failed. In fact, the KLA is really, I

think, buoyed by the apparent Western

support for their cause. Obviously,

they are not interested in backing off

now.

Mr. Milosevic, having observed our

unwillingness to carry out our threats

in the past, and coupled with the

strong support of the Serbian people to

put an end to the rebel uprising in

Kosovo, has no reason to back off, either.

So we have a standoff.

We have now started an international

monitoring program in Kosovo ‘‘aimed

at bringing peace to this strife-torn region.’’

Mr. President, I want everybody to

understand this. This is a very important

development. This observer group

is comprised of about 40 diplomats and

‘‘military experts’’ attached to embassies

in Belgrade. Our ‘‘military experts’’

are unarmed U.S. military

forces from the European Command.

This means we have U.S. personnel now

in this kind of a situation.

I was reading press reports about it

several days ago, and they are in white

cars, very clearly marked. You hope,

obviously, the white cars will be very

clearly marked so they will avoid any

kind of hostilities. In other words, if

you are traveling in a white car and either

side wants to do great mischief—

and that is probably not the right word

for it—why certainly, obviously, they

would be highlighted.

I have several concerns, Mr. President,

about all of this: We are, once

again, backing into a military commitment

in regard to Kosovo. The term of

‘‘unarmed military observers or experts’’

certainly brings back some

memories of other situations where we

have backed into those conflicts. It is

deja vu all over again. We are running

a great risk that our ‘‘military experts’’

or diplomats could be in harm’s

way.

NATO is conducting contingency

planning that could involve thousands

of military troops to separate the warring

factions or impose peace. I must

tell you, in talking to a British general

at the ceremony celebrating the 50th

anniversary of the Berlin airlift, when

I was talking about this, I asked the

general, ‘‘How many people would it

take to really maintain order on that

border?’’ And there have been estimates

of anywhere from 7,000 to 25,000.

It is very difficult terrain.

He said, ‘‘Oh, my no, it would take

upwards of 70,000.’’

‘‘Seventy thousand?’’ My mouth, obviously,

dropped a little bit.

He said, ‘‘Of course, we don’t intend

on doing that.’’ But, of course, then we

didn’t intend on doing that in other

rather political involvements of gradualism

that we have had around the

world, and I am not going to spell

those out in specific terms. I think everybody

here knows what we are talking

about. So we have those contingency

plans that could involve thousands

of military troops.

The costs, both in dollars and the impact

on our already-stressed military,

are potentially very devastating. I remember

the briefing that we had in regard

to India and Pakistan, and our esteemed

Secretary of State Madeleine

Albright was talking about the related

situation in regard to Kosovo and indicated

that we might have to become

much more involved there.

Senator STEVENS, the distinguished

chairman of the Senate Appropriations

Committee, said, ‘‘Wait a minute, we

do not have the money, we do not have

the funds, we do not have the materiel,

we do not have the men and women in

uniform to get the job done. We are already

committed in the gulf. We are already

committed in Bosnia. Most of

those funds in the past have been taken

out of the readiness account—we are

not paying for it—and that is a real

problem.’’ I think the Senator’s sense

of urgency in his response to the Secretary

was well taken.

There are many unanswered questions

on how this conflict in Kosovo is

in our vital national interest. Let me

stress vital national interest. I do

think it is in the best interest of

NATO. I think we have to be very careful;

I think we have to be very firm.

Senator LIEBERMAN, the distinguished

Senator from Connecticut, and

the former distinguished majority

leader in the Senate and my colleague

and longtime friend, Bob Dole, indicated

we must take aggressive and

very positive action. There are unexplained

scenarios of Kosovo leading to

a larger war in Europe if this conflict

is not ended now.

But my primary concern in bringing

this up, Mr. President, is this: This

whole issue has yet to be addressed by

the President and, for that matter, to

some extent by this Congress in any

way. Yet, here we are backing into a

situation with ‘‘military observers’’

and with contingency plans that could

involve thousands more. The President

should not, nor will the Congress let

him, commit the men and women of

our Armed Forces without defining our

national interests. That is fundamental,

and I think we ought to spell that

out. I call for the President to do so

and to outline the objectives in the

exit strategy for any involvement in

that part of the world and in regard to

Kosovo in particular.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the

floor and suggest the absence of a

quorum.