Mr. President, I

thank Senator WARNER for speaking

about Kosovo. I am disappointed that

the Senate has not brought a resolution

to the floor and had a debate

about what our response should be as a

Nation to what is happening in Kosovo.

I think it is a profound mistake on our

part not to have this discussion given

the fact that we are going to adjourn

within the next couple of days.

Mr. President, I want to be held accountable.

I think we should all be held

accountable as to what our viewpoints

are and what we think our country

should or should not do.

Mr. President, while there have been

some indications in recent days that

the slaughter of innocent civilians has

slowed—at least temporarily—we cannot

afford to turn our attention away

from the situation there.

President Milosevic claims to have

ordered some units of his army back to

their barracks, but it is too early to

tell exactly what these actions mean

and whether Milosevic actually intends

to cease his brutal offensive against

the Albanian Kosovars. There is considerable

evidence that he may not be

truly pulling back in accordance with

Western demands, but rather taking

halfway measures that would allow his

troops and tanks to return to the fighting

almost immediately. UN Secretary

General Annan reported earlier this

week that there is still a significant

presence of Serb armed forces in

Kosovo, and that some special police

units are continuing punitive operations

against the local population. I

remain deeply skeptical about

Milosevic’s intentions.

We have had too much experience

with Milosevic to take his statements

at face value and to assume that the

killing has really ended. We have seen

his defiance of world opinion and international

law for years. Recently we

were all shocked by the horrific massacres

of civilians—the massacre of

women, elderly men, even young children

and infants. These killings, attributed

to Serb security forces, are an affront

to the international community.

Now it looks as if Milosevic may

have ordered a partial withdrawal of

his attack forces, hoping to avoid imminent

military action by NATO. He

may believe that if the killings stop for

a time, the attention of NATO and the

U.S. will turn elsewhere. We must not

allow that to happen. We must keep

our focus on the crisis in Kosovo, and

not become distracted by other issues.

Unless immediate action is taken to

forestall a humanitarian tragedy, we

may soon see even more disturbing and

gruesome pictures from Kosovo. With

an estimated 150,000 people in Kosovo

living out in the open without any

shelter and with winter approaching,

international relief agencies now fear

that tens of thousands of those displaced

persons could face severe hardship

and some even death from exposure

unless they can return to their

homes or be provided adequate shelter

within the next couple of weeks.

The situation on the ground in

Kosovo is heartbreaking. According to

a report from a representative of the

International Rescue Committee who

recently visited the Kosovo countryside,

young children are wandering

around in the hills barefoot or in

ripped sandals. Extended families of

several generations are sleeping 15 to

20 to a tent. The tents are clear plastic

supported only by bent saplings. Mothers

are desperate to return home. Even

if their houses are burned they would

rather sleep in tents in their own yards

then in the inhospitable hills. But they

are afraid to return home, because

every time they try to return snipers

shoot at them.

As the IRC report relates, these displaced

Kosovars are trying to survive

in areas where there is no food, no shelter,

no schools for the children, no latrine

system, and no other basic infrastructure.

They have only the clothes

they were wearing when they fled in

the summer. The children have diarrhea

from the dirty water and lack of

sanitation. Parents watch, worried, as

their children vomit all night and become

dehydrated. Soon they will also

have to face snow and freezing cold.

These appalling conditions cannot

continue. We must get aid to this terrorized

population swiftly. But we can

only get relief to them if Milosevic

ceases his repression and allows relief

agencies unfettered access.

The Administration and our NATO

allies must keep the pressure on

Milosevic to put an end to Serb military

action in Kosovo and to comply

with the demands of the UN Security

Council resolution of September 23.

That resolution demands that both

parties cease hostilities and maintain a

cease-fire. The resolution also calls on

Belgrade to (1) cease all action by the

security forces affecting the civilian

population and order the withdrawal of

security forces used for civilian repression;

(2) allow free access for international

diplomatic monitors in

Kosovo and unimpeded access for humanitarian

organizations and supplies

to Kosovo and; (3) make rapid progress

on a clear timetable in conducting autonomy

talks with the Kosovo Albanian

community.

I have also been encouraged that

NATO has instructed its military commanders

to begin preparations for possible

military action and that NATO

members have informed NATO Command

what forces and equipment they

are prepared to supply for actions in

the Kosovo region.

I have always been a Senator who insists

that military actions abroad

should always be a last resort. I still

hope and pray, as a Senator from Minnesota,

that in this situation we will

not have to resort to force. I view it as

a last option if we cannot resolve this

situation by diplomatic means. But I

also recognize that we cannot rule out

the use of force, including the use of

air strikes, in this situation. If the

killing resumes or if Milosevic prevents

relief from getting to the displaced

Kosovars and fails to comply

with the UN resolution and the demands

of the international community,

we may have to resort to military action.

I met with Milosevic once. I wanted

to see firsthand the genocide of several

years ago. He was the first and only

person I have met that I would not

shake hands with. I don’t think he can

be believed, and I think that we have

to send him a forceful message.

To prepare for possible implementation

of more forceful options developed

by NATO planners, we should continue

to move forward now, under NATO auspices,

with pre-deployment in the region

of appropriate levels of NATO

military equipment and forces. This

would include such actions as pre-positioning

aircraft and naval vessels, and

deployment of necessary materiel to

support NATO troops.

These moves would be intended to

send another clear message to

Milosevic that he must comply with

the UN Security Council Resolution

immediately. If he does not respond we

must be ready to take further steps to

force compliance as necessary.

At the same time, we need to take

other actions to keep the pressure on

Milosevic. The U.S. should press forward

on an intensified multilateral effort,

at the United Nations and through

regional bodies like the European

Union, to firmly tighten the existing

sanctions regime on Serbia, to re-impose

other sanctions lifted after signing

of the Dayton Peace Accord, and to

otherwise increase pressure on

Milosevic to comply.

We must also accelerate U.S. and

NATO logistical support for the ongoing

international humanitarian aid effort

in Kosovo, including pre-deployment

of humanitarian supplies in

Kosovo in anticipation of winter distribution

by non-governmental organizations,

while ensuring the safety and

security of those who will rely on such

aid.

There must be no repeat of the disgraceful

Bosnian ‘‘safe haven’’ disaster

of Srebrenica.

The U.S. and NATO must also press

for immediate and unrestricted access

in Kosovo for internationally-recognized

human rights monitoring organizations,

including the Organization for

Security and Cooperation in Europe,

and increase aid and intelligence support

to the International Criminal Tribunal

for the Former Yugoslavia.

Mr. President, the U.S. and NATO are

right to move forward now to send a

clear and forceful message to Milosevic

that he can no longer brazenly defy

world opinion. The brutal slaughter of

innocent non-combatants in Kosovo

must stop now. If it continues, the

West must have the resolve to do what

is necessary to bring it to an end. And,

if necessary, I want to say as a U.S.

Senator, I think there should be airstrikes.

I wanted to speak out before we leave

and I want the RECORD to show that I

have spoken out. I wish that the U.S.

Senate had brought this matter up.

Other Senators would have very different

points of view, and I understand

that. But it really troubles me, saddens

me, that the Senate as a body has not

had a thorough discussion and debate

about what is a life-or-death matter. I

wanted to at least have a chance to

speak out. I thank my colleague from

Oklahoma for giving me some time.