Madam President, I rise

at this moment to deplore the ongoing,

brutal Serbian repression of the people

of Kosovo and to lay out principles for

American policy to deal with the crisis.

Analysts have known for years that

the Serbian province of Kosovo is a potential

tinderbox for the entire southern

Balkans. Approximately ninety

percent of Kosovo’s population is ethnic

Albanian, known as Kosovars. Because

of emigration to—not from—to

other parts of Serbia and because of a

low birth rate, ethnic Serbs now

constitutute only about 7 percent of

the province’s population, down from a

quarter of the population in the early

1970’s.

Kosovo is revered, as you know,

Madam President, by Serbs as the cradle

of their culture. Near the provincial

capital Pristina lies Kosovo Plain, the

site of the epic battle of June 28, 1389 in

which medieval Serb knights and other

Europeans were defeated by the Ottoman

Turks, who remained in control of

much of the Balkans into this century.

Many of the holiest monasteries of the

Serbian Orthodox Church lie within

Kosovo’s borders.

The ethnic Albanians also have long

historical ties to Kosovo, tracing, in

fact, their origins to the Illyrians who

inhabited the area in ancient times.

Senator BYRD often talks of this heritage

when he recites, as he does better

than anyone, the history of Rome and

its impact on the region.

In 1974, Yugoslav President Tito

made Kosovo, along with Vojvodina in

the north, an autonomous region within

Serbia.

After Tito’s death as the old Yugoslav

Federation was beginning to disintegrate,

an ambitious, demagogic

Serbian politician named Slobodan

Milosevic used Serbian nationalism

and resentment of the Kosovo Albanians

as a springboard to national

power.

In 1989, Milosevic abrogated Kosovo’s

constitutional autonomy, concurrently

launching a purge of ethnic Albanians

from the province’s civil service and

curtailing government funding for public

institutions, including the schools.

In response, the Kosovars, led by Dr.

Ibrahim Rugova, a Sorbonne-educated

intellectual, set up a shadow government

and began a campaign of non-violent

resistance to the Serbian oppression.

The Kosovars set up and ran a

system of public schools and maintained

other public services. Rugova

advocated attaining independence for

Kosovo through Gandhian tactics. For

most of this decade he was able to keep

the lid on popular resentment and prevent

violence.

Rugova’s position began to be undermined

when the Kosovo Question was

left off the agenda at the Dayton Peace

talks in November 1995. Younger

Kosovars increasingly began to ask

why they should hold fast to nonviolence

when the Bosnian Serbs were

rewarded for their violence and brutality

with their own quasi-state within

Bosnia.

In 1996 the beginnings of armed resistance

to the Serbs appeared. A clandestine

group calling itself the Kosova

Liberation Army—KLA in English acronym

or UCK in the Albanian acronym—

carried out isolated attacks on

Serbian police.

By this past winter the frequency of

KLA attacks increased, and Milosevic

decided to respond. In late February

his special police units, backed up by

the Yugoslav Army, stormed into the

Drenica area, killing and mutilating

civilians who they said were harboring

KLA militants.

Some of you will remember, some of

the people listening will remember,

that’s the circumstance in which the

Yugoslav authorities would not allow

the international community to examine

the bodies. They rapidly buried

them in mass graves and would not let

outsiders come in and see what they

had done.

But, Madam President, it is essential

not to fall into the trap that some have

done by making false parallels to

Milosevic’s vicious military repression.

These people, either for want of logic

or perhaps as Serbian apologists, assert

that Milosevic’s storm troopers were

only doing what any state would do

against rebels.

But, Madam President, if Milosevic

had not robbed Kosovo of its legal autonomy,

had not closed its schools and

other institutions, and had not summarily

brutalized and fired thousands

of Kosovars, the armed resistance

never would have materialized.

Just yesterday in Moscow, Milosevic

refused to deal with the KLA saying, ‘‘I

see no reason to conduct negotiations

with terrorists.’’ I will return to these

prospects for negotiations in a minute,

but let me just respond to Milosevic’s

comment by saying that acting just as

he did in Croatia and Bosnia, as he is

acting in Kosovo, I ask the rhetorical

question: Who is the terrorist?

Milosevic is a terrorist and a war

criminal. He has demonstrated that

over the past 5 to 6 years in Bosnia,

and he is revealing it again in Kosovo.

Since the February and early March

massacres by his troops, Milosevic has

diddled the Western world, utilizing his

classic ‘‘bait-and-switch’’ tactics.

First, he agreed to negotiate with Dr.

Rugova and, thereby, earned from the

United States an ill-advised postponement

of a ban on foreign investments

in Serbia.

While talking, but not seriously negotiating

with Rugova, Milosevic was

busy setting in motion the next step in

his state of terrorism. Late last month,

his notorious special police sealed off

western Kosovo and began a murderous

campaign of ethnic cleansing, driving

some 65,000 refugees into neighboring

Albania and others into Montenegro.

After killing hundreds and burning entire

towns to the ground, Milosevic’s

forces have reportedly even resorted to

strafing fleeing refugees from Yugoslav

helicopters.

One would hope that the West has

learned something from its pathetic

temporizing in Bosnia earlier in this

decade. Perhaps we have, but maybe we

have not. The so-called Contact Group,

made up of the United States, the

United Kingdom, Germany, France,

Italy, and Russia, has met regularly to

try to hammer out a unified policy on

Kosovo before it spins out of control.

In spite of the fact that it operates by

consensus, which means the ‘‘lowest

common denominator,’’ the Contact

Group has agreed upon economic sanctions

which, given time, will worsen

the already catastrophic conditions of

the Serbian economy.

But, Madam President, time is of the

essence. Not only are thousands of innocent

civilians—most of them

Kosovars, but also some ethnic Serbs—

being killed or driven from their

homes, but the continuing fighting

threatens the stability of neighboring

Albania and also of the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia, which

itself has restive ethnic Albanians who

constitute between one-quarter and

one-third of its population.

Maintaining the integrity of Macedonia—

a fragile democracy with a Slavic

leadership genuinely committed to

interethnic reconciliation—must be

the cornerstone of U.S. policy. Above

all, however, is the stark obvious fact

that everyone should have learned

from Bosnia, and that is, Slobodan

Milosevic will only react to superior

force being employed against him. He

will not react otherwise.

Lest anyone forget, while economic

sanctions against Yugoslavia may have

modified Milosevic’s position in Bosnia,

it was only the use of American

airpower for 3 weeks in the fall of 1995

that brought Milosevic and his Bosnian

Serb puppets to the bargaining table in

Dayton. So now, Madam President, we,

once again, are faced with an

unpalatable fact that force may have

to be employed in order to prevent the

need for even greater force later. But

there is no decision more difficult than

considering whether to send American

troops into action.

I have been a Senator for 25 years. I

started here when the Vietnam war

was still underway, and I am here

today. I find the single most intimidating

decision that need be made by any

of us is when we vote, as we have in the

past, to put American forces in harm’s

way, and Kosovo is no exception.

Let me outline some of the basic

principles that have to be part of that

decision, outline whether or not that

the decision, although difficult, will

have to be made.

First, I believe that, except for those

who prefer to withdraw to a ‘‘Fortress

America’’ posture, no one doubts the

strategic importance of the south Balkans

to the United States.

Second, before we embark upon any

military or political action, we must

have our goals firmly established.

Third, I also believe that most of my

colleagues will agree that NATO remains

the cornerstone of American policy

in Europe and should be the vehicle

by which we act in Kosovo.

Fourth, it goes without saying that a

primary concern in any military planning

is to minimize the risk of American

lives while ensuring the success of

the mission.

With these principles in mind, let me

examine our options in the Kosovo crisis

now.

The United States has declared itself

against independence for Kosovo,

thereby putting itself at odds with the

Kosovar leadership and people, the

very ones who are currently being brutalized.

Madam President, I agree with the

position our nation is taking. Whatever

one may think of a broader decision

made at the beginning of the 20th century

as the Turks were pushed out of

most of the Balkans, the ethnographic

mix of the area simply precludes homogenous

states, except through ethnic

cleansing, which we must oppose.

To put it bluntly, I would use force to

stop massacres of innocent civilians. I

would use force to prevent cross-border

invasions. I would use peacekeepers

backed up by force to guarantee the

rights of minorities. But I would not

risk American lives in a cause of a

‘‘greater Albania’’ which would probably

destroy the Macedonian state and

set off a chain reaction of incalculable

proportions in the south Balkans.

On the other hand, I cannot imagine

asking the Kosovars to accept a return

to the pre-1989 autonomy with Serbia.

If Milosevic could summarily revoke

the autonomy one time, he can do it

again.

Therefore, my own preference as a

political goal would be giving Kosovo

full republic status within the Yugoslav

federation, on an equal footing

with Serbia and Montenegro. Perhaps

we would also have to have republic

status for other parts of Serbia.

I recognize there are problems with

such a solution. Milosevic will be dead

set against it, since a Kosovo Republic

would ipso facto consign Serbia to a

minority role in the upper house of the

Yugoslav Parliament and probably

mean the end of Milosevic’s quasi-dictatorial

rule.

My response is that we and the

Kosovars and the democratic leadership

of Montenegro and the remaining

democrats in Serbia should look at the

probable outcome as an opportunity,

not a problem.

Both Dr. Rugova and the KLA have

insisted upon independence for Kosovo,

but if they keep in mind the scenario I

just outlined, they might, in the course

of negotiations, agree to a ‘‘third republic’’

or ‘‘fourth republic’’ compromise.

But how about Milosevic? It is clear

to me that only one principle continues

to guide his policy, and that is clinging

to power. In fact, since he took power

in Serbia, Milosevic has been a dismal

failure at everything, except staying in

power.

His wars of aggression in pursuit of a

goal of a ‘‘greater Serbia’’ have resulted

in the extinguishing of hundreds

of years of Serbian culture in the

Krajina and in Slavonia, and hundreds

of thousands of Serbian refugees, and

in the impoverishment of most Bosnian

Serbs, and all this at a cost of over

300,000 persons killed.

Meanwhile, under Milosevic’s stewardship

Serbia itself has plummeted

from having been one of the wealthiest

countries of Central and Eastern Europe

to a near basket-case.

But Milosevic clings to power. And it

is, I regret to have to repeat, only the

use of countervailing policy and force,

power, that will remove Milosevic.

And this is the central point. While

there is no panacea for the Balkan ills,

the necessary precondition for restoration

of peace is a democratic government

in Belgrade that is prepared to

coexist with the non-Serb peoples of

the area.

In order to move events in that direction

the Clinton administration has

wisely supported the democratic reformist

regime in Montenegro—of

which Milo Djukanovic is the president—

which is already posing a serious

challenge to Milosevic within the

Yugoslav parliament.

We must now apply all necessary

pressure on Milosevic in Kosovo.

The Contact Group has issued four

demands: a cessation of fighting; the

unconditional withdrawal of Serbian

special police forces and Yugoslav

Army forces from Kosovo; a return of

refugees; and unlimited access for

international monitors.

Milosevic’s statement on Tuesday in

Moscow after his talks with Russian

President Yeltsin did not go far

enough. He refused to withdraw his

troops or to talk with the KLA—two

conditions the Contact Group is asking

for.

Milosevic’s usual half-way tactics

must not dilute the West’s resolve to

force him to meet all the demands.

NATO has already tasked its military

experts to come up with military

options for moving against the Serbs

and Milosevic.

Reportedly, nine preliminary options

have been submitted. They range from

stationing troops along Kosovo’s borders,

to imposing a new ‘‘no-fly zone’’

and a ‘‘weapons-exclusion zone’’ over

part of Yugoslavia, to air strikes, and

even ground invasions.

In this planning, the possible political

ramifications of any military action

are, I am sure, being factored in

by this administration.

In the immediate future, though, the

NATO military planners will flesh out

the details of these options. So, I think

it would be imprudent for me or for

any other Senator to second-guess the

NATO military planners who have the

relevant expertise and are in possession

of the vital intelligence data needed to

make a judgment.

What I can say is that the use of

force must remain on the table, and

that, if at all possible, it must be exercised

through NATO.

Within NATO, however, there exists

a serious problem. It does not revolve

so much around whether or not to use

force; for most of our European allies

seem to have learned from our Bosnian

experience that the use of force in

Kosovo may well be necessary.

The dispute is rather over the question

of whether approval by the U.N.

Security Council is necessary before

NATO acts outside the territory of its

members. The United States has always

maintained that it is not. As recently

as our expansion vote on NATO

we insisted that that is not a neessary

precondition. A U.N. Security Council

mandate is not a necessary precondition

to use NATO forces.

This is a position reinforced, as I

said, by the U.S. Senate in the Resolution

of Ratification of NATO enlargement

overwhelmingly passed on April

30 of this year.

Most—perhaps all—of our European

NATO allies, including the British, assert

that U.N. approval is necessary.

Madam President, this difference of

opinion strikes at the heart of the Alliance,

for if the European allies’ position

wins out, the Russians—and even

the Chinese—will have a veto power

over NATO action in Central and Eastern

Europe. This is precisely where

Bosnia and Kosovo-like ethnic conflicts

are likely to pose the biggest

threats to regional security in the

coming decades. As much as I support

the U.N., I, for one, am not about to

yield to the Security Council, the Russians,

and the Chinese the decision of

whether or not we are able to protect

the interests of Europe—requiring

their approval ahead of time.

We must make clear to our European

allies, and to the Russians, that while

we prefer to act within NATO, we see

Kosovo as a vital national security interest

of the United States and, hence,

are prepared to act alone if necessary.

This is an unpleasant exercise, but it

is preferable to face it now, rather than

to postpone the issue. In fact, it would

be good to resolve this intra-alliance

dispute in the newest revision of

NATO’s Strategic Concept, which is

now being discussed.

Finally, Madam President, I believe

it is absolutely essential for the United

States immediately to make contact

with the Kosovo Liberation Army.

A withdrawal of Serbian special

forces and Yugoslav Army troops, or a

NATO bombing campaign, must not be

done unless the KLA first agrees to a

ceasefire. For I must repeat—the object

of U.S. policy is not only to stop the

movement toward a greater Serbia on

the part of Mr. Milosevic, but it is also

not to become a tool for a greater Albania

in the South Balkans. It is to

halt the fighting and then to start serious

negotiations involving all the parties.

I have already made clear my preferred

political solution, but the outcome

is for the parties to thrash out.

We are approaching the moment of

truth in Kosovo. As usual, the

indispensible element in solving the

crisis is the active involvement of the

United States, just as it was in Bosnia.

As the U.S. Government continues

its negotiations with its allies and its

Contact Group partners, and as NATO

military planners continue to refine

possible military options, I urge my

colleagues to recognize the gravity of

the situation and to make clear their

support for resolute American leadership.

Madam President, I yield the floor.