Mr. President, the

closing hours of the 105th Congress are

fast approaching. I could not let this

Congress end without coming to the

Senate floor to address the tragedy in

Kosovo. It is a human crisis of immense

proportion, and it poses an increasing

threat to the United States

and the global community.

The last several years have been

marked by Yugoslavian President

Milosevic’s steady escalation of political

repression and violence against the

people of Kosovo. Acting at Milosevic’s

behest, Yugoslav forces have driven

nearly 400,000 Kosovar Albanians from

their homes. Fourteen thousand homes

and 400 villages have been razed. Over

700 Kosovar Albanian men, women, and

children have been killed.

Within the last several weeks our

newspapers have been filled with accounts

of atrocities committed by

Milosevic’s units against scores of unarmed

civilians. Among the list of

crimes documented by international

observers are politically motivated

killings; massacres of women, children

and elderly persons; torture; arbitrary

arrest; detention without cause; denial

of fair, public trial; and destruction of

private homes.

Further exacerbating this man-made

crisis is the fact that winter is fast approaching,

placing at peril the health

and well being of tens of thousands of

displaced persons who have managed to

survive Milosevic’s cruelties.

After watching this recent string of

atrocities, the international community

was compelled to respond. On September

23, the United Nations Security

Council adopted a resolution condemning

the excessive use of force by

Milosevic’s thugs and demanding that

he cease military actions against civilians,

withdraw his security units, facilitate

the safe return of refugees and

displaced persons to their homes, permit

unimpeded access of humanitarian

organizations to the people of Kosovo,

and engage in meaningful negotiations

on Kosovo’s final status.

Diplomacy has been and should continue

to be a major component of our

response to this situation. But we must

also acknowledge reality. The reality

is that meaningful negotiations toward

a settlement of Kosovo’s status cannot

take place in the current environment.

Furthermore, words alone have never

been enough to slow Milosevic and his

henchmen. This was demonstrated to

the world all too painfully in Bosnia.

Despite numerous appeals from the

international community to end his

support for the war in Bosnia,

Milosevic repeatedly turned a deaf ear,

and the hostilities continued unabated.

It was only after NATO carried out a

series of airstrikes against military

forces supported by Milosevic that a

cease-fire became possible.

The circumstances appear to be similar

in Kosovo. And, if Milosevic fails to

fully and immediately comply with the

terms of the U.N. resolution, I believe

the time has come for NATO to respond

similarly.

The United States and our NATO allies

must be prepared to carry out airstrikes

against the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia if such action is determined

to be the only means of enforcing the

U.N. resolution.

I say this for three reasons. First and

foremost, continued repression, violence,

and instability in Kosovo directly

threaten the national security

interests of the United States. Kosovo

is a tinderbox in the heart of one of the

most unstable and critical regions of

the world. Balkan history has clearly

demonstrated that a spark in this region

can rapidly spread into a blaze

that engulfs the world. We have already

seen refugee outflows into Albania

and Macedonia. Two NATO allies,

Greece and Turkey, with their competing

regional interests, could easily and

quickly get enmeshed in this crisis if it

continues and widens.

Second, the credibility of NATO, still

our most important alliance, hangs in

the balance. For nearly 50 years, NATO

has been the organization most responsible

for keeping the peace in Europe.

NATO had great success in the years

after World War II and the Cold War.

Its post-Cold War utility was proven

earlier this decade in Bosnia. What

NATO does in Kosovo will go a long

way toward determining this crucial

alliance’s role in the 21st century. A

strong, unified NATO is still the best

insurance policy we have against largescale

conflict in Europe.

Third, as the west’s history with

Milosevic in Bosnia proves, if words are

to have the desired effect on his behavior,

they must be backed up with a

credible threat to use force. Indeed, our

recent experience in Kosovo itself

bears this out. In the past week or two,

Milosevic has launched an effort to

convince the world that he is fully

complying with the requirements of

the September 23 U.N. resolution. Not

surprisingly, this behavior occurred

precisely as the specter of NATO military

action began to loom over him. In

fact, there may only be one way to

achieve peace in Kosovo without the

use of force. NATO must demonstrate

to Milosevic that it is prepared to use

force to compel his compliance. This is

precisely the policy toward which this

Administration and our NATO allies

appear to be moving.

Mr. President, in offering my endorsement

for this approach, let me be

clear. If air operations and missile

strikes against the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia are necessary to force

Milosevic to the negotiating table, the

United States and our NATO allies

should demonstrate that we are prepared

to pursue that option. Certainly

we should not give the Administration

a blank check, but we must accept our

responsibility as a world leader and acknowledge

that stronger measures may

be required. The Administration should

continue to consult closely with Congress

every step of the way as events

unfold.

Milosevic’s atrocities have gone on

too long. It’s time for the United

States to defend its national interests

and help restore peace to this troubled

region. It’s time for the world to say no

to the torture and slaughter of innocent

civilians in Kosovo.