Mr. President, in a 1985

speech attended by President Ronald

Reagan, the acclaimed writer and lecturer

Elie Wiesel, a witness and survivor

of the Holocaust, recounted the

lessons he learned over the years since

this dark chapter in our history. He

said:

Mr. President, years from now, we

may hear similar words from some of

the survivors of the recent atrocities

committed in the former Yugoslavia.

This past week, Americans and people

from all over the world have been witness

to some horrific images coming

from the tiny province of Kosovo in the

Republic of Serbia. These images, of

murdered ethnic Albanian civilians,

from the very young to the very old,

are the latest in a series of systematic

attacks over the last 7 months by Serbian

military and security forces

against Albanian Kosovars—both rebel

insurgents and unarmed civilians.

The victims of this latest massacre

included old men, women, and children.

The death toll since last February is

estimated to be as low as 500 and as

many as 1,000 although, frankly, no one

knows how many victims there have

been. Homes have been firebombed. Entire

villages have been bulldozed to the

ground. Hundreds of thousands of Albanian

Kosovars literally have run for

their lives and are seeking refuge in

the forests and mountains of Kosovo,

or in the neighboring states of Albania,

Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bosnia.

Mr. President, what perhaps makes

last weekend’s attack more difficult to

bear is that it causes us to pause and

wonder if these lives could have been

saved if NATO had stepped in sooner. I

think we all know the answer to that.

Congress has struggled with the issue

of brutal violence in the Balkans for

the better part of this decade. The images

broadcast this week are a somber

reminder of very similar pictures that

came from places not far from

Kosovo—places like Mostar or Tuzla in

Bosnia. I can recall, as I am sure can

many of my colleagues, during our

many discussions on Bosnia in 1995,

several of our colleagues, including our

former Majority Leader, Bob Dole,

warning us that tensions in Kosovo

could lead to the level of outright violence

and ethnic cruelty that crippled

Bosnia.

I am certain that this is one instance

in which Senator Dole today wishes he

had been wrong.

It has long been thought that Kosovo

was an area where America’s national

resolve was clear. In 1992, President

George Bush warned President

Milosevic that violent acts against Albanian

Kosovars would lead to military

intervention.

President Bush’s warning was

prompted by President Milosevic’s single-

handed efforts to strip Kosovo of its

autonomy in 1989, and abolish Kosovo’s

parliament and government 1 year

later.

At that time, the Albanian Kosovars,

which represent 90 percent of the total

population of Kosovo, chose to exercise

a form of nonviolent protest against

the Serbian government. A shadow

government, parliament, and society

emerged. Besides electing their own

President and legislature, Kosovars established

their own education and medical

systems.

Although there were scattered reports

of human rights violations

against Albanian Kosovars during this

period, they were not connected with

the reports of an extensive ethnic

cleansing campaign underway in Bosnia.

Many factors were involved, but

perhaps most important was the threat

of a larger regional war that could be

sparked if the carnage in Bosnia spread

to Kosovo. Besides the United States,

the countries of Albania, Macedonia,

Turkey, and Greece at one time or another

warned that violence in Kosovo

could force any one of these countries,

if not all of them, to intervene. Certainly,

with his resources engaged in

the conflict in Bosnia, Serbian President

Milosevic could not risk taking

action in Kosovo.

Now, with instability in Albania and

Macedonia, and the growth of the proindependence

faction of Kosovars

known as the Kosovo Liberation Army,

or KLA, President Milosevic has engaged

his security and military forces

in Kosova under the guise of putting

down the KLA.

Mr. President, from the evidence that

we have, Mr. Milosevic has gone beyond

a simple police action. This has

been a seven month campaign of intimidation

and conquest.

Our government, as well as European

governments, vowed not to allow in

Kosovo a repeat of the vicious war

crimes we found in Bosnia. Yet, some

who have recently visited the region,

believe these crimes have already happened.

The extent of these crimes cannot

be confirmed. Relief workers and

humanitarian organizations are being

barred from reaching victims and refugees.

Should this be a surprise to any of

us? Certainly not. Slobodan Milosevic

is a cold, calculating tyrant. He is a

war criminal. He was not moved by diplomatic

threats in Bosnia—what drove

him to the Dayton peace talks was the

military success of the Bosniak-Croat

alliance in reclaiming land once held

by the Serbs.

Kosovo is no different. Milosevic and

his subordinates often have pledged to

end the carnage in Kosova. Yet, no

pledge has been followed by a clear cessation

of hostilities. Mr. Milosevic has

demonstrated that he will not withdraw

his forces until he feels he has

achieved the most from the use of violence.

And he will not engage in peace

talks unless he believes that no other

course of action will preserve his position

or advance his goals.

So it should not be a surprise to any

of us that now, as NATO prepares for a

military response, the Serbian government

has declared victory and now is

making plans to reduce its military

and police presence in the region.

We have been witness to a brutal

military and police action against unarmed

civilians that was done with the

expectation, if not certainty, that both

Europe and the United States would

not respond, or indeed would not even

know how to respond.

There is little to ponder about what

must occur.

The threat or actual use of military

action by NATO, such as air strikes, is

needed if some form of Serbian withdrawal

or cease fire in the Kosovo province

is going to occur.

I believe we cannot escape the fact

that, in the short term, some form of

NATO or United Nations presence on

the ground will be needed to police any

cease fire or withdrawal, or to ensure

the transport of needed food, medical

and other supplies to the refugees. In

addition, war crime investigators will

need to be able to determine the actual

atrocities committed and who is responsible.

It is uncertain if ground forces will

be called for by NATO. In fact, we

know very little of what NATO plans

to do beyond air strikes. That is of concern

to me because a number of uncertainties

remain—uncertainties that if

left unresolved will not deal with the

root cause of the conflict between the

Serbs and Albanian Kosovars. The administration

needs to articulate a clear

strategy or plan to address the current

humanitarian crisis, and the even larger

questions about the political future

of the Kosovars over the long term.

For example, what fate lies ahead for

the estimated 300,000 Kosovars who

were uprooted from their homes and

villages and forced to seek refuge as far

away as Albania, Macedonia, or Bosnia?

And of those refugees, what lies

ahead for the 50,000 or more who are in

hiding in the hills within the province—

without shelter, food, or medicine—

with winter just around the corner?

Clearly, our first and foremost goal is

to achieve a cease-fire. I am hopeful

NATO air strikes can ensure a ceasefire.

Second, we must ensure humanitarian

organizations can safely reach

out to these refugee populations without

fear of obstruction or even destruction

by hostile Serbian forces.

And once they get cared for, when

can the displaced Kosovars return

home? And what kind of home do they

expect to see when they return? It is

estimated that approximately 200 villages

in the province have been completely

destroyed or heavily damaged.

When can they expect to see some restoration

of the kind of livelihood that

affords them the chance to live in

peace?

These are the harder questions, but

right now, it seems that NATO has yet

to consider how they are to be answered.

These issues must be addressed

and answered if this conflict is going to

be contained over the long term.

I’m sure we all agree that these

issues must be addressed and answered

not at either end of a rifle, but at a

conference table. Yet, how can NATO

get both sides—the Kosovars and the

Serbs—to the conference table? That

remains unclear.

And should some kind of long-term

agreement be reached, how will that be

enforced? What role, if any, can we expect

NATO to play to ensure long-term

peace in Kosovo? That too remains unclear.

What is clear is that the actions we

take in the next few weeks have implications

for long-term peace not just in

the province but throughout the Balkans.

That’s why it’s in NATO’s interest

to act, and act with resolve. Unfortunately,

the only resolve we see is to

strike at the Serbs by air, but nothing

more beyond that.

NATO needs to begin to look at these

larger questions and soon if our resolve

for peace will achieve results and be

real over the long-term. It’s in our interests

to do so. We still risk the

threat of a larger conflict in the region,

involving Albania, Macedonia,

Turkey, and Greece. We also put in

jeopardy the progress we have made

thus far to maintain peace in Bosnia.

Mr. President, we cannot and should

not dictate the terms of any agreement

between the Serbs and Kosovars, but

NATO can insist—through force if necessary—

that peace be achieved through

cooperation, not conquest.

This, Mr. President, ought to be the

U.S. policy. I thank the chair and yield

the floor.