Ladies and gentlemen, I will call this hearing to

order. We expect the arrival of some other Senators soon, when

their conferences, lunches, break up, but we welcome you all.

Today the Foreign Relations Committee is convened to discuss

the crisis in Kosovo and its potential ramifications on stability

throughout the region. Our first panel will consist of Ambassador

Robert Gelbard, Special Representative of the President and the

Secretary of State for implementation of the Dayton Accords.

After we hear from Ambassador Gelbard, the committee will welcome

Mr. James Hooper from the Balkan Institute, Mr. John Fox

of the Open Society Institute, and former Congressman Joseph Dio-

Guardi, who currently is the volunteer president of the Albanian-

American Civic League.

I appreciate the willingness of all of our witnesses to appear before

our committee this afternoon. I confess that I am deeply concerned

about the situation in Kosovo today. Since February of this

year approximately 150 people have been killed in a particularly

appalling fashion, and the Serbian police have attacked and murdered

innocent women and children in their effort to crack down

on the Kosovar Albanian separatist movement.

The Albanian movement in Kosovo has shown remarkable reserve

in their pursuit of the autonomy that was revoked in 1989

and 1990, but as we have all seen, that patience has worn thin.

The gathering strength of the Kosovo Liberation Army and their

quest for an independent Kosovo and their violent tactics to

achieve their goals leads me to believe that things in Kosovo yet

get even worse.

The Serbs have shown in recent months that they are more than

willing to use overwhelming force in response to separatist activity

in Kosovo, and I do not expect that attitude to change.

I sincerely hope that our administration does not consider President

Milosevic’s role in the Bosnian peace process, however great

or small, as justification for leniency with regard to his abhorrent

behavior in Kosovo.

The Contact Group established to coordinate policy on the conflict

in the former Yugoslavia has met several times since the violence

in Kosovo broke out in February. Despite statements of outrage

and condemnation from the Contact Group, the Serbs have

continually ignored its limited demands.

President Milosevic thus far has successfully exploited the historical

and economic interest in Serbia that shade the views of some

of our friends in Europe. Though there are merits to using the Contact

Group in dealing with the situation in Kosovo, at some point

in the future the Contact Group may yet prove to be an unsuccessful

at contributing to the resolution of the conflict. Then the United

States must pursue an appropriate policy unilaterally.

I realize the policy challenges facing the United States and the

international community in responding to the Kosovo crisis. Secretary

of State Madeleine Albright has used strong words of warning

to President Milosevic, but I must say, the direction of the

United States policy on this issue is unfortunately unclear.

As I mentioned earlier, the Contact Group has been ineffective

at forcing Mr. Milosevic to cease his terrorist tactics in Kosovo.

Given the potential this conflict has to spread to the rest of the

Balkans and beyond, even involving our NATO allies, Greece and

Turkey, I think it is critical for the administration to clearly state

its policy on this question.

In December 1992, then President Bush delivered an unequivocal

warning in a letter to President Milosevic that the United States

was prepared to intervene militarily if Serbia attacked the ethnic

Albanians in Kosovo. President Clinton repeated this so-called

Christmas warning after he took office in 1993. It would serve the

interests in furthering public debate on the issue if, Ambassador

Gelbard, you will publicly state what this warning consists of, and

whether this will continue to be U.S. policy.

I look forward to discussing these issues and other questions

with all of our distinguished witnesses before us. So, Mr. Ambassador,

we especially welcome you and invite your statement.

Without objection.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I have a statement

provided to the subcommittee from Senator Robert Dole, former

Majority Leader. If there is no objection, I will include it in the record.

Mr. Ambassador, before we hear from Senator

Biden, I must ask you, is there a Christmas warning that is a policy

of this Government, and are there any steps being taken to implement

that warning?

It seems to me history shows Mr. Milosevic will

respond to force, and that force used early may well prevent a

great deal of difficulty later, as we have learned in Bosnia. I just

wonder if perhaps we ought to be more visible with preparations

backing up a Christmas warning.

I appreciate that. It is not U.S. policy to support

the creation of a Kosovo State, opening up many boundary issues

all around, I suppose, if we were to do so, but are there some conditions

where, if this gets out of control and there is territory occupied,

at what point would we be prepared to recognize Kosovo as a State?

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I would invite you

to talk with me privately, Senator Biden I am sure would also appreciate

it, privately if necessary, as to whether or not there is a

Christmas warning, if it is in effect, the policy of this Government,

and what we are going to do about it. Senator Biden.

Thank you, Senator Biden.

Mr. Ambassador, Senator D’Amato of New York had hoped to be

with us to ask you a few questions. He is tied up in another hearing,

but if there is no objection I will leave the record open and he

will submit to you some written questions.

Mr. Ambassador, we thank you. We appreciate your time and

your work, and we will now call up our second panel. We recognize

James Hooper with the Balkan Institute, John Fox with the Open

Society Institute, and former Congressman Joseph DioGuardi with

the Albanian-American Civic League.

We would ask each witness to limit their opening statement to

5 or 10 minutes to allow time for questions.

We welcome our second panel, and if the room can come to order,

let’s begin with Mr. Hooper. Sir, we thank you for coming and invite

your statement.

Thank you very much, Mr. Hooper. Mr. Fox.

We would be happy to receive it.

Thank you, gentlemen, all of you.

I must confess, I am uncertain as to what the policy of the administration

is in terms of a Christmas message, and what, if anything,

we are doing to prepare to enforce such a policy. I hope to

find out some answers myself on that, whether private or otherwise.

But the Congressman has laid out some specific proposals, that

we declare a no-fly zone, ring the area with NATO troops and park

an aircraft carrier off the coast. I wonder if either of you two would

care to comment on that, how long it would be, how effective it

would be, and whether we ought to be doing it unilaterally or involving

all of NATO, and what spillover there might be toward the

peacekeeping in Bosnia.

Are these proposals adequate?

Do you believe, Mr. Fox, anything short of that

may lead us to holding a hearing here, say, in 5 or 6 years, after

lots of bloodshed, and trying to rally support for a NATO peacekeeping

force to expand into that area?

The Congressman has raised the issue of the

overlay of Russia’s influence on Serbia or alliance with Serbia. I

wonder if either of you have a comment on that. How does that impact

American action?

Mr. Hooper, do you have any comment?

Thank you, gentlemen.

Senator Biden.

Mr. Fox, I think we are going to need to leave

you with the last word on it.

The purpose of calling this hearing was simply to focus the debate

and to get some minds to working, and the part of the role

of the U.S. Senate is advising, not just consenting, and hopefully

we have the attention of our Government and we can stimulate

some resolve.

So we thank you all for participating, and with that we are adjourned.