

clear delineation of the operational aspects, its mission, the rules of engagement, and the exit strategy.

Until those cases are made, I think the President is asking too much of us to commit U.S. ground troops to this operation. Therefore, Mr. President, it would be my hope that after we have had a full debate, after there have been hearings, after there have been briefings by the administration, and after we have had an opportunity to consider within this body and the House has had an opportunity to consider it, that we would have a vote on the matter; that we be able to express ourselves either to support the President's request or to reject it.

At this point, my own view is that we reject it. I invite any debate and any rationale that can be expressed in support of the President's position. As I said, at this point, I think it is far too serious a matter for the United States Congress to support the President's request that 20,000 ground troops be sent to Bosnia, in addition to all the other things which we have already done and which we continue to do.

I close with this point. Nobody wants this tragedy to continue. Everybody wants peace to succeed. We all commend the President and those who negotiated on his behalf for this peace agreement, and I would want to do everything we could to support that agreement, short of the commitment of these ground troops. They are not the necessary ingredient to make it work. If they were, it would be destined to fail.

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator from Vermont.

AMERICAN TROOPS IN BOSNIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the debate over whether the United States should contribute its troops to a NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia will be the focus of many speeches on this floor in the coming days. It is a subject all of us have anticipated and pondered and wrestled with for some months now, and it is one of those decisions that no one likes to make. It is fraught with uncertainties and the undeniable likelihood that Americans will be injured or killed.

There will be many chances to speak on this, but having thought about it for some time and discussed it with the President and Secretary of Defense and others over the past weeks, and after listening to the President's speech last night and the responses of some of those who oppose sending troops, I want to say a few words as the debate begins.

Mr. President, even before the peace agreement was signed at Dayton, the House of Representatives passed legislation to prevent the President from deploying U.S. troops to enforce a peace agreement without the consent of Congress. I believe the President should seek the approval of Congress

before sending troops to Bosnia, although I do not believe the Constitution requires it in this instance where the parties have signed a peace agreement. I felt it was both unhelpful and unnecessary for the House to pass legislation in the midst of the negotiations and before a peace agreement was signed.

But just as President Bush sought congressional approval for sending U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf—although half a million were there before approval was given—President Clinton has sought congressional approval, and there will be ample time to debate it before the formal signing of the agreement.

The decision to send Americans into harms way is the most difficult and dangerous that any President has to make. It should be done only when a compelling national interest is at stake, and when there is no other alternative.

Like many or perhaps even most Senators, the majority of my constituents, at least of those Vermonters who have contacted me, do not believe that it is in our national interest to send Americans to Bosnia. They genuinely fear another costly, drawn out quagmire like Vietnam. Some of them fought in that war, or had family members who died there. Others fear a debacle like Somalia, where in a matter of days a well-intentioned humanitarian mission became a poorly thought-out, ill-prepared peacemaking mission that ended in tragedy.

It is the President's job to convince the American people that Bosnia is not Vietnam, it is not Somalia, and that our national interests compel us to take part. He made a good start last night. There are still important questions that need answers—the President said as much himself—but I am convinced that the case for sending Americans to Bosnia can be made, and I intend to help the President make it.

Mr. President, in the past 4 years, a quarter of a million people, the vast majority defenseless civilians, have lost their lives in the former Yugoslavia. We have all read the blood curdling reports of hundreds and even thousands of people being rounded up at gunpoint and systematically executed or even buried alive.

Countless others have had their throats cut after being horribly tortured. Some have been made to eat the flesh and drink the blood of their countrymen. Thousands of women have been raped. Men have been forced to watch their wives and daughters raped and killed before their eyes. All simply because of their ethnicity, or because they lived on land others wanted for themselves.

The war has produced 2 million refugees, victims of ethnic cleansing. Hundreds of thousands more have lived in squalor for years in the rubble of what remains of their homes, without electricity, heat, or running water.

There are many, including myself, who believe that NATO should have

acted much earlier and with far greater force to stop the genocide in Bosnia. I opposed the use of American ground troops to try to win the war, but we gave too much deference to those who said that airpower would never compel the Serbs to negotiate peace. NATO should have been given the authority to use unrelenting force when U.N. resolutions were violated time and again with impunity.

Our greatest collective failure was to put the United Nations in charge of a peacekeeping mission where there was no peace to keep, and when it was unwilling or unable to back up its own threats. These failures, which caused grievous damage to NATO's credibility, will haunt us for years to come.

But the situation has changed dramatically since then. Sustained NATO bombing, coupled with gains by the Moslem and Croat forces on the battlefield, have shown the Serbs that they cannot win what they set out to achieve. The exhaustion of the warring factions, coupled with a period of extraordinarily forceful American diplomacy, has created an unprecedented opportunity to end one of the most brutal wars the world has seen in half a century.

There should be no mistake. The credibility of the U.S. Government is deeply invested in the success of the peace agreement, and success of the agreement depends absolutely on NATO's enforcement of it. The parties signed with that understanding. At the same time, NATO's own credibility and effectiveness depend on U.S. leadership. Indeed, without U.S. participation, there will be no NATO force, and the peace agreement will almost certainly collapse.

Mr. President, since the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, NATO's future has been uncertain. Some have suggested that NATO has outlived its usefulness. Others say that since the rationale for NATO—deterring a Soviet invasion of Europe—is gone, NATO should become a political alliance. Still others want to quickly expand NATO to include all or most of Eastern Europe, and perhaps even some of the former Soviet republics.

I mention this because NATO's future is one of the most compelling reasons why it is essential for the United States to participate in a NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia.

I have been among the strongest supporters of assistance to Russia and the other former Soviet States. A democratic Russia is obviously a major foreign policy priority for the United States. Despite many setbacks, there has been remarkable progress in Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. But who can predict the next decade? Who can say that the fervent nationalism that remains strong there will not increase to a point when it becomes threatening? It is simply too soon to say what lies beyond this transitional period.

I have been reluctant to support the rapid expansion of NATO without a thorough discussion of the implications, for fear that it could fuel the very nationalism in Russia that we seek to discourage.

But neither am I among those who see no role for NATO today. On the contrary, the United States has an enormous stake in preserving NATO's strength. While NATO's focus will undoubtedly shift over time, the future holds too many uncertainties, and there are too many areas of potential conflict around the world where important interests of the United States and our allies are at stake, to allow NATO's strength to erode.

There is no other alliance that comes close to NATO, in power, in readiness, and in importance to the United States. NATO may not have sought the role of peacekeeper in Bosnia, but neither can it avoid it.

Mr. President, I cannot say whether this peace agreement will survive the test of time. Perhaps no one can. There is ample reason to be pessimistic, given the history of broken promises and ethnic hatred in the former Yugoslavia. Since the agreement was signed, it has become clear that no party is completely satisfied, and some have expressed grave misgivings with some aspects of it. If the agreement unravels, NATO forces may be forced to withdraw, rather than be drawn into the fighting. Even withdrawal would be risky.

But virtually everyone knowledgeable about the situation there agrees that this is by far the best chance for peace since the war began 4 years ago. We and our European allies have an immense interest in preventing the continuation of a destabilizing war in Europe, and I believe we must take this chance.

The President has taken a courageous step, a step that reflects the best of this country. Every American should consider the alternative. More mass murder. More towns shelled and burned. More starving children. More orphans. More horrifying atrocities that are reminiscent of the dark ages. If this does not compel us to help enforce an agreement we brokered to end this calamity, what further amount of inhuman brutality would it take? Should we wait for the slaughter of another 100,000, or 200,000?

The President is right. We have a moral responsibility to take part. The Europeans were unable to end the war themselves. United States leadership was not the only factor, but without it there would be no peace agreement, and the war would go on indefinitely. We should be proud of it, and stand behind it.

Some have suggested that we can lead without sending troops. I disagree. We cannot maintain our credibility as the leader of NATO if we are not prepared to assume some of the risk. We should remember that two-thirds of the NATO force will be troops from our NATO allies and others.

Mr. President, our troops are the best trained in the world, but we cannot eliminate the risks. There are 2 million landmines in Bosnia alone, hidden under mud and snow. Each one cost only a few dollars, but one false step could mean the loss of any American soldier's legs or life. The Pentagon says that landmines are among the most serious threats our troops will face there.

This is ironic, since the Pentagon has been actively lobbying against my efforts to show leadership by halting the use of antipersonnel landmines, which claim hundreds of innocent lives each week. Two-thirds of the Senate voted for it, but the Pentagon refuses. In the past few months, several of our European allies have stopped their use and production of these indiscriminate weapons, but the Pentagon refuses.

A quarter of the Americans killed in the Persian Gulf died from landmines. A quarter of American casualties in Vietnam were from mines. I can only wonder how many more Americans will needlessly lose their legs or their lives from landmines before the Pentagon gets the message.

We cannot eliminate the risks, but President Clinton has established the right conditions before US troops can be deployed. If the mission is limited in time, clear in scope, and achievable, as the President has insisted, we should support it. Our troops must be backed by broad rules of engagement that enable them to defend themselves with whatever amount of preemptive force is needed in any circumstance. That does not mean waiting to shoot until they are shot at.

Mr. President, I expect to speak again as the debate on this unfolds. I intend to support the President, and I expect there will be Senators I deeply respect who are on the other side. But at the end of the day, if Americans are sent to Bosnia as I believe they will be, I have no doubt that we all will support them, and we will all be proud of them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

TRIBUTE TO MAURICE "FOOTSIE" BRITT, AN AMERICAN HERO

Mr. BUMPERS. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to one of America's greatest heroes, and certainly one of Arkansas' greatest, if not the greatest, hero in the history of our State. He is Maurice "Footsie" Britt, born in the small town of Carlisle, AR, and raised in the small town of Lonoke, AR. He was a football star at the University of Arkansas and Honorable Mention, All American.

I first met Footsie in the barbershop of my hometown of Charleston, population 1,200. He had his campaign literature under his right arm—or his right stub. He did not have a right arm. He was running for Lieutenant Governor on the Republican ticket with Winthrop Rockefeller. He had all his literature under his stub and would use his left hand to pull it out and hand it to you.

As I got out of the barber's chair and paid the barber 50 cents for the haircut, this was 1966, Footsie Britt walked in. He had been a real hero to me, and I was honored to meet him. Winthrop Rockefeller became the first Republican Governor since Reconstruction in my State. In my opinion, he would have never been elected if he had not had Footsie Britt as his running mate.

But to go back, he was the first American to ever receive the three highest awards the American military can grant for valor and bravery in one war. He held the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, and the Silver Star. I do not know whether anybody has ever equaled that since then or not.

What happened to the right arm? It lay on the battlefield near Anzio, Italy, where he had been a lieutenant in World War II. As I walked around the battlefield at Anzio last year, as the President and numerous Members of Congress went to Normandy and Anzio, I thought "Where did Footsie lose his arm?"

Madam President, he not only received the three highest honors that our military can bestow, he received the highest honor that Britain bestows on any non-Englishman, the Military Cross, and the highest award that can be bestowed by Italy on any non-Italian, the Cross of Valor.

He was in charge of a platoon and leading a group of men near the beach at Anzio. He saw that some of his men were getting out in front of the others. He knew that the Germans were ahead of them and on either side of them. And as he had feared, the others got so far ahead of the rest of the group that the Germans had them surrounded. They knew it, and they surrendered.

The Germans took the American soldiers as shields, as hostages, and began to march them toward the other Americans that Footsie commanded. The Americans held their fire, obviously. And just as they got close enough, Footsie shouted, "Now hear this order by me. Hit the mud!" And every one of the American hostages immediately fell down and lay in a prone position. The Germans, not speaking English and being dumbfounded by the order, were confused just long enough for Footsie and his men to mow all the Germans down, saving all the hostages.

If Footsie Britt had an enemy in this country, I am not aware of it. He was a beloved public servant, not a strident partisan, just an all-around good guy. He saw his duty and did it. He was later appointed head of the Arkansas Small Business Administration where he served for 14 years. His wife, Pat, preceded him in death several years ago.

Two weeks ago I went to the John L. McClellan Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, as I do every Veterans Day. The first room I went to was Footsie Britt's. He had lost a piece of a foot as