

AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO CONDUCT MILITARY AIR OPERATIONS AND MISSILE STRIKES AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 21) authorizing the President of the United States to conduct military air operations and missile strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STEVENS. Parliamentary inquiry: How much time is involved?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty minutes equally divided.

Mr. STEVENS. Who is handling the opposition?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The two leaders or their designees.

Mr. WARNER. I am, of course, in favor, as the cosponsor with Mr. BIDEN, so I suggest that the Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAIG, be a manager.

Mr. BIDEN. I yield myself 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, this is a very straightforward concurrent resolution, but I think it bears reading again.

It says,

Authorizing the President of the United States to conduct military air operations and missile strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the President of the United States is authorized to conduct military air operations and missile strikes in cooperation with our NATO allies against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

It is straightforward and simple. It is a clear up-or-down vote on whether or not we support the action that is contemplated by the President, that NATO, through its action order—so-called action order—has authorized Solana to call for at his discretion and concurrence with the leaders of the 19 NATO countries.

I think we have debated this a lot. There are very strong views on this. I happen to think this is an authority that Congress should be giving the President, but at a minimum I think most of us agree that the President needs to hear from the Congress as to what our position is.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the remainder of the time.

Mr. WELLSTONE. May I ask the Senator a question?

Mr. BIDEN. I am happy to respond to a question.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank my colleague.

Could my colleague, for the purposes of the legislative record, spell out the objective? The President is authorized to “conduct military operations.” Could my colleague spell out what his understanding is?

Mr. BIDEN. My understanding of the objective stated by the President is that his objective is to end the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and the persecution of the Albanian minority population in Kosovo and to maintain security and stability in the Balkans as a consequence of slowing up, stopping, or curtailing the ability of Milosevic and the Serbian VJ and the MUP to be able to go in and cause circumstances which provide for the likelihood of a half-million refugees to destabilize the region.

The objective at the end of the day: Hopefully, this will bring Milosevic back to the table. Hopefully, he will agree to what all of NATO said they wanted him to agree to, and hopefully that will occur. In the event that it does not occur, the objective will be to degrade his military capability so significantly that he will not be able to impose his will upon Kosovo, as he is doing now.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for his response and would like to make it clear that I believe my support would be based upon these kinds of objectives.

Mr. BIDEN. I thank the Senator. Does the opposition wish more time?

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I stand in opposition to the Senate concurrent resolution and yield 2 minutes to Senator BROWNBACK.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate our colleague from Idaho recognizing me to speak briefly on this amendment.

I rise in opposition to this amendment to this resolution. I think this is an ill-advised, ill-timed, inappropriate action to take, given the situation that we have, given the potential and the actual probable loss of U.S. lives, the lack of involving the entire United States in this and saying to the American people: Why are we doing this? We don't know where it is going on step 2, step 3, and step 4.

This is step 1. We go in and we bomb a sovereign nation involved in a civil war. What if he doesn't fall back? What if Milosevic doesn't say: OK, I give up, and you can have autonomy in Kosovo? What if we go ahead into Montenegro and say we want to split off. Will the United States bomb and support Montenegro in that process?

This is a very, very serious step we are taking of such foreign policy, and we have not had sufficient debate about what the U.S. position is. This is not in our strategic and vital interest of what is taking place. Yet we are going to go forward and start a bombing campaign. We need to have a thorough, extensive debate here, involving the American people, as to whether or not this is in our vital and strategic in-

terests. I submit that has not taken place to date. The administration has not brought the Congress along, and this is an inappropriate, ill-timed event and action for us to take and is not being supported by the American people.

For those reasons, I will be opposing this resolution.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I believe that the way we have arrived here is less than ideal. However, the choices we have are also not ideal. The choice of doing nothing is absolutely unacceptable.

While I will have more to say about the process by which we got here, there are powerful strategic, humanitarian, and historical reasons that the United States, in a broad-based, NATO-based effort, ought to be doing what it is engaged in.

I think it is important for all of our colleagues to reflect on the fact, this is not the United States acting unilaterally; this is all of the allies, all together, all of them coming together, with a preponderance ultimately of European involvement if there ever is a peace process to enforce.

I want to emphasize one thing with respect to the goals and objectives. I view these as very limited in their current structure. I view it as essentially an effort to try to minimize Milosevic's capacity militarily to ethnically cleanse. It is hoped that you might also secure the peace. It is hoped that you might also be able to move to a more broad-based enforcement process. But I don't view that as the essential objective. The essential objective is to minimize his capacity to work his will without any contravening forces that would equalize the battlefield, if you will, and minimize the capacity for ethnic cleansing. That is the overpowering strategic and, I think also, humanitarian interest here, and I think it is important for the Senate to stay focused on the limitations.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Alaska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, we are in this situation because sometime last year the administration authorized our representatives of NATO to enter into an agreement that would allow NATO forces to conduct strike operations against the Serbs if they did not sign an agreement that was sought—the “peace agreement” so-called. That did not occur. Suddenly, we find that now here we are with one sentence, one sentence approving the concept of sending in airstrikes against that nation. We do not have a prohibition against the use of ground forces, and I told the President this morning I would support this resolution if it did.

But beyond that, I am constrained to say that I remember standing here on the floor in 1991 when Iraq invaded Kuwait, when racial cleansing was not

only taking place, they were murdering people in public. They had taken over a nation and they were obviously going to go into Saudi Arabia. We were in the minority and we sought to support our President, and we got very little support. I put in the RECORD already the letter that President Bush sent. He said if the Congress did not agree, he would not dispatch forces. Today, I looked in the eye of a President that had already made up his mind on the air war. I seriously regret that we have not put a parameter around this war so it will prevent the use of our forces on the ground. I believe we are coming close to starting World War III. At least I know we are starting a process that is almost going to be never-ending, unless it never starts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I cosponsor this resolution because, year after year, we have asked Europe to take the lead before we are leading in their own back yard, to become united, to take care of troubles before they spread. They have done so. They are now waiting for us. It has been asked, will our European allies stay with us? That is not the question. The question is whether we will now join our European allies who are waiting for us to sound a clear call that we will not permit ethnic cleansing to spread to destabilize a region and to destabilize Europe.

The stakes here are huge. The objective here, we should be very clear, is to reduce the military capability of Milosevic to "ethnically cleanse" Kosovo and thereby touch off a broader war and massive instability in Europe. That is our military objective—to reduce that military capability to ethnically cleanse Kosovo.

If we had acted earlier in Bosnia, we could have avoided that genocide. We did not act. NATO has now decided to act, and it is the future stability of Europe which we are going to help determine here tonight, as well as the support for our troops. It was asked of the President, "Request our support, Mr. President." We heard that at the White House over and over again. The President has now requested our support. Our military leaders have set forth a clear military objective. They have done so before the Armed Services Committee. They have done so before other committees and each of us. So now it is up to us to decide whether or not we will support our troops, and whether we will support NATO. The risks of not acting are greater than the risks of acting.

Mr. President, I believe it is important for the United States to participate in NATO air and missile strikes. NATO is ready to act because of the threat that the conflict in Kosovo could spread to the neighboring countries of Macedonia, Albania, and Bos-

nia and could involve nations such as Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, and to prevent a humanitarian disaster.

I believe the military mission for our forces should be clearly and carefully stated as to reduce the military capability of the Serbian special police and Yugoslav Army to ethnically cleanse Kosovo and touch off a broader war and major instability in Europe.

It is tempting and would be easy to justify NATO action against the Serbian police and Yugoslav Army forces as a way to punish Milosevic. He has destroyed the economy of former Yugoslavia; shut down its independent media; ousted all democracy-learning professors from its universities and substituted his cronies; has threatened President Djukanovic of the Yugoslav Republic of Montenegro, who favors democracy and a free market economy; has seized privately-owned property, including property owned by an American citizen; and has violated every agreement he has ever made, including, in particular, the Dayton Peace Accords and the October 12, 1998 agreement with Richard Holbrooke.

But it is the threat to regional peace and security that justifies NATO air strikes.

The United States is the leader of NATO and the credibility of NATO is on the line; the future stability of Europe is on the line; and the ethnic cleansing of the population of Kosovo is on the line. With all of these important interests on the line, I believe the United States must do its part, in cooperation with our NATO allies, to carry out air operations and missile strikes to reduce the military capability of the Serbian special police and Yugoslav Army to ethnically cleanse Kosovo and touch off a broader war and create major instability in Europe.

I have been a strong supporter of the development of the European Security and Defense Identity within NATO and I want to take particular note of the role that our NATO allies have been and are playing with respect to Kosovo. First of all, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE—a European dominated Organization of 55 nations—stepped up to the plate and established the Kosovo Verification Mission or KVM. The KVM has as its mission the monitoring of compliance with the October 1998 agreement negotiated between Ambassador Holbrooke and President Milosevic.

Because the OSCEs KVM is unarmed, NATO established an Extraction Force, which, as the name implies, is designed to come to the aid of KVM personnel and to remove them from situations in which their safety might be imperiled. The Extraction Force is led by a French general and is made up entirely of forces provided by our NATO allies. The United States has provided 2 military personnel to serve in the Extraction Force headquarters, but no combat forces. Once again, our NATO allies delivered.

When NATO was planning for a ground force to implement an interim peace agreement in Kosovo with the consent of the parties, it was decided that approximately 28,000 troops would be needed. Our NATO allies agreed to provide more than 24,000 troops. The United States would contribute less than 4,000 troops to that force. The on-scene commander for the force would have been a British general. The force contribution of our NATO allies would dominate the force. Once again, our NATO allies delivered. And the foreign ministers of Great Britain and France co-chaired the negotiations that provided the opportunity for a peaceful settlement of this crisis.

Finally, Mr. President, I want to describe my visit to Kosovo in November. In the course of that visit, I accompanied a U.S. Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission team on its daily tour that stopped in the village of Malisevo. Malisevo was a ghost town. The Kosovar Albanians who had previously lived there were afraid to return because of the damage that had been caused by the Serbian special police and Yugoslav Army and the continuing presence of Serbian police forces in the village. In order to conceal the extent of the destruction they had wrought, the Serbian forces had bulldozed a large square block of the village and carted off the debris. The bullet and shell holes in the remaining structures bore silent witness to the cruel way in which President Slobodan Milosevic's forces punished the civilian population in response to the resistance of the Kosovo Liberation Army or KLA.

Kosovo is the scene of a horrendous humanitarian disaster. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated last week that at least 230,000 persons were displaced within Kosovo as a result of the conflict and a further 170,000 have fled from Kosovo in the past year. That adds up to a total of about 400,000 people who had fled their homes. That number increases on a daily basis as Milosevic's forces continue their rampage.

During my visit to Kosovo, I met with the political representative of the KLA, Adem Demaci, with the elected President of the Kosovo shadow government, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, and with the editor of the Albanian language newspaper Koha Ditor, Veton Surroi.

My meeting with Adem Demaci, the then political representative of the KLA, who was first arrested in 1958 and, by his own admission has been fighting for Kosovo independence, ever since, had spent 28 years in Yugoslav jails for his campaign for independence for Kosovo, involved a friendly and occasionally heated discussion. He stated that he could not endorse any agreement that did not have a guarantee that the ethnic Albanians could decide their own future after three years. Mr. Demaci resigned his position in protest when Kosovar Albanian negotiators agreed in principle to the agreement at Rambouillet.

Dr. Rugova, who has consistently espoused a policy of peaceful resistance, stated his preference for the agreement to provide a mechanism for the people to express their will at the end of three years but was flexible on that point since he was committed to reaching an agreement that would stabilize the situation. Dr. Rugova and a number of his lieutenants participated as part of the ethnic Albanian negotiating team that went to Rambouillet.

Veton Surroi, who has courageously published an independent newspaper in Pristina, the capitol of Kosovo, expressed his concern about achieving an agreement in view of the difficulty he anticipated in reconciling the positions of the KLA and the Rugova camp. He was not optimistic. He also participated in the Rambouillet negotiations as a member of the ethnic Albanian team.

Mr. President, despite the Kosovar Albanians strong desire for independence, a goal which is supported by the international community and is not provided for by the Interim Peace Agreement, they signed that Agreement. The Yugoslav delegation, by contrast, has stonewalled and, as characterized by Mr. Verdine and Mr. Cook as co-chairmen of the negotiations, "has tried to unravel the Rambouillet Accords." And Slobodan Milosevic, when given a final chance to avoid NATO air and missile attacks, stubbornly continued his ethnic cleaning of Kosovo.

I will support the resolution, of which I am an original cosponsor, and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, we have heard the debate on this floor. Now what is at hand? How many questions have we asked ourselves? Are we crossing international boundaries to inflict heavy damage or to destroy the ability to make war in a sovereign nation? Are we not making war? Are we not using a treaty organization to participate in a civil war? Is there a possibility that we are being used to deal with a very acute and serious problem in the stability of a region?

No one should question the motive of any vote on this issue. Every Member of this body is capable of casting the hard vote. One cannot clear his or her conscience of the atrocities that have been committed, and one can see the desperation on the faces of those who are being displaced. But I say to you, the nations that are most affected must now assume the responsibility that confronts them. To ask us to participate in a civil war, which is not our character, is a lot to ask. Can we help? Yes, we can. We can do it in different ways. But to ask us to place our men and women in harm's way, to force submission of a people with deep resolve in an area where not very many folks have ever been beaten into submission, that is asking of us a great deal.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank my friend from Delaware. Mr. President, on Christmas Eve, 1992, President George Bush issued what is known as his "Christmas warning" to President Milosevic that if he attacked Kosovo, NATO would have to respond. We had President Clinton reinforce that threat as recently as last October. Milosevic signed a cease-fire agreement in which we again said to him, if you attack Kosovo, we will have to respond with force. What has happened? He is attacking Kosovo. The International Finnish Pathological Team said a massacre occurred there in January. Kosovar women and children were put on their knees and shot in the back of their heads.

Mr. President, if NATO does not act, and if the United States does not act to be consistent not just with the threats we have made to him, the warnings he has ignored, but the principles that underlie those warnings, it will be more than the Kosovars who will suffer irreparable damage at the hands of the Serbians; NATO will be irreparably damaged and so, too, will the credibility of the United States.

Mr. President, some of my colleagues say, "What's the plan?" There is a plan here and we have heard it. There is a response and we have options as we go along. But I ask, what will happen if we don't act? If we don't act, a massacre will occur. There is great danger of a wider war in Kosovo, wider even than the one that would have occurred if we left the conflict in Bosnia unattended. With all due respect to my friend and dear colleague from Alaska who suggested we may be beginning world war III—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask the Senator for 30 seconds more.

Mr. BIDEN. I don't have it. I am sorry.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I will finish by saying I think what we are doing in authorizing this action is making sure that world war III does not begin in the Balkans.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator. I rise in opposition to the resolution. I have all the confidence in the world in the capability of our military. But I think this is an ill-advised mission. I heard my good friend from Delaware, and I also heard the Senator from Massachusetts use the word "hopefully." In fact, that word was used repeatedly. "Hopefully," the airstrikes will work. "Hopefully," the airstrikes will bring Milosevic to the bargaining table. "Hopefully," there will be a peace agreement.

The question I ask is, What if our best hopes are not realized? What if it

doesn't work? What happens then? I raised that question to Secretary of Defense Cohen. I don't believe the answers were sufficient or satisfactory. There were far more questions than answers. The President has not made the case to the American people or to the Congress. We all know the great limits there are on airstrikes, the capability of airstrikes in changing behavior. There will be limits on these airstrikes and how successful they can be. Our hearts go out to those who are suffering, and they should. But I remind my colleagues that there are massacres taking place in many places in this world, including Sudan, where the level of carnage is far greater than what we have seen in Kosovo.

I asked the Secretary this afternoon what will be the cost in financial terms? To my dismay, there is no estimate of what kind of dollars or costs, budgetary costs there will be. But the far greater cost will be in potential American casualties. We all know that the probability is high that there will be the loss of American lives. So this afternoon I did a lot of soul searching. I thought about my 20-year-old son, Joshua.

If it were him going in, could I in my mind justify sending him in, and the tens of thousands of Joshes who are 20 years old?

I believe stability in the Balkans is not a satisfactory answer.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I support the resolution. I believe the danger of inaction—of doing nothing—greatly exceeds the dangers of action. What are the dangers of inaction? There are three, in my judgment.

First, disintegration of instability in a key part of Europe.

Second, the acceleration of existing humanitarian catastrophes, which we have all seen.

Third, the unloosening of bombs that tie us to NATO, bombs that cannot easily be renewed in the days ahead when the need for NATO cooperation will be ever greater than it now is.

So, for these three reasons, the dangers of inaction, I hope the resolution will be supported.

I thank the leader.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. KYL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, first of all, let me declare that this is not a vote to support or not to support the troops. This is an authorization to the President to use military force against Serbia.

If this were an appropriations bill to support a mission already underway, a mission which the President had ordered American troops to engage in, there is no question that I assume all of us would have to support that and

would not vote against an appropriation of funds—at least I would not vote against an appropriation of funds—to support the troops. That is not what is involved here. This is an authorization for the President.

Second, this is a vote to tell the President two things, I believe: No. 1, before you send American troops in harm's way, you need to have a dialog with the Congress and with the American people to explain two things.

No. 1, you need to explain why there is a direct threat to the national security of the United States. And there isn't in this case. And, No. 2, you need to explain how your plan is going to achieve the goals.

There are two goals there: to repeal an attack by Serbia against Kosovo and to force the Serbs to enter into a peace agreement.

The particular kind of military campaign planned here cannot achieve either goal, in my opinion. The quasi-police forces going into Kosovo are not easily stopped or impeded in their progress by cruise missiles. And, second, I suggest that the kind of plan here of a 48-hour, or similar hour, campaign with cruise missiles against Milosevic is not going to force him to his knees to invite peacekeepers into Kosovo. My guess is that he will, in fact, rebel against it rather than succumb to it.

For both of those reasons, I will vote "no" on the resolution.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes.

Mr. BIDEN. I yield 1 minute to the Senator from Minnesota, and then 2 minutes to the Senator from Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I have for months been closely monitoring the situation in Kosovo, hoping and praying for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. I traveled there about 5 years ago, and have seen for myself the conditions under which millions of ethnic Albanians have struggled under increasing Serb repression. I have seen and visited with U.S. military personnel posted along the Macedonian border—including some very young men from my home State—and I am well aware of the stakes involved in this debate.

I and some of my colleagues have been briefed by Secretary Cohen, National Security Advisor Berger, Secretary Albright, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Shelton and others recently about the very fluid and violent situation there.

Now that the Albanian Kosovars have signed the Rambouillet agreement, and the Serbs have forcefully rejected it, it is clear that the crisis has moved into a new phase. And now that the Serbs have in the last few days begun—slow-

ly, brutally, methodically—to expand their grip on Kosovo with a massive force of an estimated over 40,000 Serb police and army regulars, the situation becomes more urgent with every passing hour. Those Serb forces have been burning homes, taking the lives of innocent civilians along with KLA insurgents, and forcing tens of thousands of innocent civilians to flee their homes without food and shelter. Just in the last few days, tens of thousands more civilians have been forced from their homes, with Serbian forces leaving their villages smoldering and in ruins behind them in what appears to be their brutal final offensive. While reports have been barred from many areas by Serb forces, it is clear what is going on there. Atrocities of various kinds have become the signature of Serb military forces in Kosovo, just as it was for years in parts of Bosnia.

In recent days, including in his press conference last Friday, the President has begun to articulate more clearly to Americans what he believes to be at stake there. The humanitarian disaster that's been unfolding of months, and has now been accelerated by the recent Serb onslaught, coupled with the serious concern that increased violence in Kosovo could spread throughout the region, must be addressed forcefully. While I know some of my colleagues believe strongly that the administration has not articulated forcefully, consistently and clearly the mission and goals of this use of force, and I still have some unanswered questions about the administration's military plans—including the precise timing and strategy for withdrawing U.S. and NATO forces from the region once their mission is accomplished, provisions made to protect United States forces against sophisticated Serb air defense systems, and likely casualties expected from any military action—I believe there is little alternative for us but to intervene with airstrikes as part of a NATO force.

I come to this conclusion, as I think many Americans have in recent days, reluctantly, and recognizing that all of the possible courses of action open to the United States in Kosovo present very serious risks.

But I am pleased that we are finally having a real debate on this question on the Senate floor. As Senators, I believe we should make it clear on the record what we believe our policy should be in Kosovo.

I have agonized over this decision, and consulted widely with those in Minnesota whom I represent, with regional political and military experts, and with others, and have tried to place in historical perspective what is at stake here for our Nation. I have tried, as I know my colleagues have, to weigh carefully the costs of military action in Kosovo against the dangers of inaction.

Mr. President, one thing that is clear is that the situation on the ground in Kosovo today is unacceptable and like-

ly to worsen considerably in the coming weeks. The ongoing exodus as refugees flee this latest major military operation mounted by the Yugoslav Army over the last 3 weeks must be contained.

This conflict has created, by some estimates, more than 400,000 refugees. A spokesman for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimated that 20,000 have been displaced just in the last week by military operations, most of them in the mountain range just northwest of Pristina. As we all know, Milosevic has already carried out numerous massacres and other atrocities in Kosovo, including the killing of more than 40 ethnic Albanian civilians in the village of Racak in January.

Right now, there are tens of thousands of refugees on the move in Kosovo. These refugees are facing very basic problems of survival. They lack shelter. They need blankets and stoves. The fighting has knocked out the electricity and water supplies. There are people right now huddling in cellars, and in unfinished houses, with their families. According to an account in the New York Times, people who are refugees themselves are giving shelter to refugees. One family is giving shelter to 80 people.

Serbian forces that have been massed on the border of Kosovo are on the march, and it is widely believed that they are planning to accelerate their advance west into the heartland of the rebel resistance and the base of its command headquarters. The people of Kosovo are terrified of such a massive offensive. It is almost certain that we will soon be hearing more stories of massacres and displacements, of women and children and elderly men being summarily executed, and of further atrocities.

I have called for months for tougher action by NATO to avert the humanitarian catastrophe that has now been re-ignited by the latest Serb attacks. I find it hard to stand by and let Milosevic continue with his relentless campaign of destruction. But I also recognize the grave consequences which may follow if the U.S. leads a military intervention into this complicated situation.

The airstrikes proposed by NATO, if Milosevic does not relent and sign on to the peace agreement, will represent a very serious commitment. If NATO carries out these airstrikes, U.S. pilots will confront a well-trained and motivated air defense force that is capable of shooting down NATO aircraft. Serbian air defense troops are knowledgeable about U.S. tactics from their experience in Bosnia, are protected by mountainous terrain and difficult weather conditions, and are well-prepared and equipped to endure a sustained bombardment.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Ryan told the Senate Armed Services Committee last week that casualties are a "distinct possibility," and Marine

Commandant Gen. Charles Krulak said. "It is going to be tremendously dangerous."

We not only risk losing our own pilots, but, even if our attacks are carefully circumscribed, we run the risk of killing innocent Serb civilians.

Before we decide to send our pilots into harm's way we must be certain that we have exhausted all diplomatic options and that we essentially have no other choice.

As I have grappled with this decision, I have tried to reduce it to its simplest form: Will action now save more lives and prevent more suffering than no action.

Despite the dangers, I have concluded that the NATO airstrikes which may soon be underway will save more lives in the long run than they will cost. I hope and pray that we do not suffer any American casualties in these air operations, and that innocent civilian casualties on both sides are kept to a minimum, but I fear that if we do not act now thousands will lose their lives in the coming months and years.

A decision to use force is also justified by reasons that go beyond humanitarian concerns. It has been argued by the Administration that an intense and sustained conflict in Kosovo could sent tens of thousands of refugees across borders and, potentially, draw Albania, Macedonia, Greece, and Turkey into the war. We will not be able to contain such a wider Balkan war without far greater risk and cost. And we could well face a greater humanitarian catastrophe than we face now. I am not just talking about a geopolitical abstraction, the stability of the region. I am talking about the human cost of a wider Balkan conflict.

So as I see it, the immediate goal of NATO airstrikes would be to degrade Serbian military forces so that they could not seriously threaten the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and also to force Milosevic into signing a peace agreement that could end the fighting in Kosovo and bring stability to the region.

I am not a Senator who supports military action lightly. I still hope this conflict can be settled without an actual military engagement. But I feel that we simply must act now to forestall a larger humanitarian crisis.

Mr. President, in the end my support for airstrikes in this situation arises from my deep conviction that we cannot let these kinds of atrocities and humanitarian disasters continue if we have in our power to stop them. I believe that it is our duty to act. In this case we cannot shirk our responsibility to act. We cannot stand idly by. That's why I intend to support the President's decision.

Mr. President, I have agonized over this vote. But I very honestly and truthfully believe that if we do not take this action as a part of the NATO force that we will see a massacre of innocent people—men, women, and children. I do not believe that we or the

international community can turn our gaze away from that.

Therefore, I rise tonight with concern, but, nevertheless, I want to say it as honestly and as truthfully as I can as a Senator from Minnesota. I do support this resolution. I hope and pray that our forces will be safe. I hope and pray that there will be minimum loss of civilian life. And I hope and pray that by our actions we can prevent what I think otherwise will be an absolute catastrophe.

I yield the floor. I thank my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I would suggest we alternate back and forth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. THURMOND.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the pending resolution.

NATO was formed to defend Europe against Soviet aggression, not to settle domestic problems. The NATO treaty was ratified with the advice and consent of the Senate. NATO's mission has clearly changed without congressional consultation. Whether for good or bad reasons, NATO combat power is being used to intimidate a sovereign country—Serbia—into signing a peace agreement on domestic problems.

What NATO has done in Bosnia should not be used as reasoning for U.S. action in Kosovo. President Clinton wrongly claims that NATO succeeded in Bosnia because of its air strikes and economic sanctions against Yugoslavia. In fact, it was the successful Croat ground offensive against Bosnian Serbs just before the 1995 Dayton agreement that forced Serbia's compliance with the peace agreement. Likewise, to resolve the problem NATO faces today, ground force will probably be required in Kosovo.

Today, the most important issue to the U.S. is our credibility in NATO. For NATO, it was credibility that pushed the majority of NATO members down the dangerous path toward military intervention. At home and abroad the President's problem is credibility. Likewise, it may be America's problem abroad. NATO has issued a clear ultimatum to a vicious aggressor. If Congress does not back U.S. efforts in NATO, will the credibility problem reflect on the United States? It may. However, these issues and questions come to us from the Administration's faulty policies. Such policies have resulted from timid piecemeal reasoning and lack tough-minded decision-making worthy of the problem at hand.

Bad national defense policy is about to get us into serious trouble—again. The list of the administration's failed peace missions is long and growing. I am unconvinced that trying to resuscite

these failed nation-states is in the U.S. vital interest. The costs of U.S. involvement in nation-building are not in our national interests and should be reduced. The price tag of the Bosnia mission, for example, has already hit \$12 billion, with no end in sight. The question is simple: Is it in the United States' best interest to have our troops in imminent danger, preoccupied with defending themselves against people whom they have come to help, who have shown little inclination for reform at a great cost to America? This is the path down which the administration has taken the United States. We are now involved in a steady run of civil wars without clear solutions which involve failed nation-states. We will soon drown in this kind of foolishness. Stemming civil wars should not be the main strategic challenge for the United States. These kinds of misadventures do not really engage the strategic interest of the United States. Certainly, such ill-conceived adventures do arrogantly endanger our troops. I cannot support endangering our troops without good reason.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, our worst fears have been realized. Months of patient negotiations, bolstered by repeated threats of air strikes, have failed. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic has defied the will and the prayers of the world and has turned his back on the prospect of peace in Kosovo. Indeed, he is intensifying his relentless assault on the ethnic Albanian population of the Serbian province of Kosovo. It was made clear to me and to many of us at the White House this morning that the question is no longer "whether" NATO will launch air strikes against Yugoslavia but "when". It is entirely possible that by the time these words are uttered, the machinery to launch an air offensive against Yugoslavia will have been put into motion.

This is a matter of immense importance and far-reaching consequence for the United States. Senior defense officials have warned that an air operation against Yugoslavia will be extremely dangerous for U.S. and allied forces. This is not Iraq. This is a rugged, mountainous region frequently shrouded in fog and protected by a sophisticated air defense system. If the United States sends aircraft into Yugoslav air space as part of a NATO strike force, we must understand—and accept—the risk of that operation. That risk includes the possibility of downed aircraft, American hostages, and American casualties.

An operation of this magnitude and risk should not be undertaken without the express support of Congress and the backing of the American people. We saw in Vietnam what happens when the will of the people is not taken into consideration.

Only the President can lead the way in this crisis. Only the President can rally the American people. Only the President can mobilize the troops. Only

the President can unite our NATO allies. Only the President can explain to the American people the reasoning for his intended action and the risks attendant to it. I urged him last week to make his case to the people as well as to the Congress.

Mr. President, I again urged the President at the White House this morning to seek the support of the Congress for air strikes against Yugoslavia. I asked him to make that request in writing to the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate. I am pleased that he has done so. I command him for recognizing the need to seek the support of Congress when the use of force is contemplated.

We do not know where this conflict will lead. The winds of war are blowing over Kosovo today. Who knows what fires those winds might fan. Bosnia. Montenegro. Macedonia. Albania. All are in danger of being drawn into a conflagration in the Balkans. With enough sparks, Greece and Turkey could be drawn into the inferno. Although the conflict in Kosovo is far from our doorstep today, it could spread quickly, as wildfires are wont to do. Today our credibility as a world leader is threatened. If the conflict in Kosovo spreads, much more than our credibility will be at stake. If we are to act at all, the time to act is now.

All we know for certain is that Slobodan Milosevic is a ruthless and desperate leader. If anything, his defiance of NATO and his repression of the Kosovo Albanians are increasing as his options dwindle. Violence is mounting in Kosovo, and thousands of ethnic Albanian refugees have already fled their homes and villages. The bloodshed has begun. Let us pray to God that it will not turn into a bloodbath.

The United States cannot stand idly by and watch the catastrophe unfolding in the Balkans. It is in our national interest to support stability in this volatile region, to prevent the downward spiral into violence and chaos, and to stem the humanitarian disaster spreading out of Kosovo like a contagion. Having raised the stakes so high, a failure to act decisively could have untold consequences.

The President may have the primary responsibility in the formulation and execution of foreign policy, but the Congress has an equally weighty responsibility, which is to authorize or refuse to authorize military action.

The resolution that we are currently considering, which was drafted by a bipartisan group of Senators, endorses air strikes, and only air strikes, against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The goal of this resolution is twofold: to stop the violence in Kosovo before it escalates into all-out carnage, and to convince President Milosevic in the only terms he understands—brute force—to abandon his campaign of terror against the Kosovars.

Mr. President, my thoughts and prayers today are with the brave men and women of the United States mili-

tary who are willing to put their lives on the line in order to save the lives of countless strangers in a strange land. And my thoughts and prayers are with their families, the parents, spouses, and children who will wait at home, fearing the outcome of every air strike, until this madman Milosevic can be brought to his senses. These are the people to whom we have a duty to show courage in the execution of our responsibility. My prayers are also with the President. His is a heavy burden of responsibility. The decisions he makes in the coming days will affect the lives of many Americans. He is embarked on a somber, sober, and serious undertaking, and I pray that he will find the strength and guidance to bear the burdens of office that will weigh heavily on his shoulders as he faces this crisis.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong support for President Clinton's decision to use United States Armed Forces, together with our NATO allies, to stop the killing in Kosovo and help bring peace and stability to a troubled region of Europe.

International intervention to stop the killing and atrocities in Kosovo is long overdue. The United States, as the world's sole remaining superpower, must lead that international effort.

Mr. President, I firmly believe NATO must follow through on threats of air strikes unless Milosevic immediately ends his assault on the people of Kosovo and accepts the Contact Group's interim agreement. If we do not, Milosevic will pursue his kind of peace in Kosovo—through "ethnic cleansing."

Air strikes are a means to an end. I hope Belgrade will agree to sign the Contact Group's interim peace agreement, as the Albanian side has done, without further revisions.

President Clinton has decided and the Pentagon has planned to deploy about four thousand U.S. troops to participate in a NATO-led peacekeeping force to help implement the interim agreement, once it has been signed by both sides. I support this plan because I stand behind its goals. United States armed forces should participate in a peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

I support the President's determination that this must be a NATO-led force, with sufficient forces and appropriate rules of engagement to minimize the risk of casualties and maximize prospects for success.

U.S. participation is essential to the credibility of NATO's presence in Kosovo.

NATO's peacekeeping role is essential to the implementation of a peace agreement for Kosovo. And implementation of a peace agreement is essential to stop the killing—and end the atrocities in Kosovo—and allow people to return to their homes and rebuild their shattered lives.

But today we face a more immediate question: whether NATO should launch air strikes to stop the killing and end the atrocities in Kosovo.

In my view we must end Milosevic's reign of terror.

Some in this body have argued that these atrocities are an internal matter, that we should not get involved.

Others have said U.S. national security interests in Kosovo do not rise to a level that warrants military intervention.

I strongly disagree with those assertions.

Allow me, therefore, to remind my colleagues of the fundamental United States interests which are at stake here:

The first is U.S. credibility, going all the way back to the Christmas warning issued by President Bush and reaffirmed by President Clinton.

If we fail to act, our threats in other parts of the world will not be taken seriously, and we may find ourselves having to actually use force more often.

The second is the credibility, cohesion, and future of NATO. As the 50th anniversary Summit approaches, I believe we need to strengthen the Euro-Atlantic partnership.

Particularly when a crisis arises in Europe, we need to be able to act in concert with allies who generally share our interests and values and who have the capability to undertake fully integrated military operations alongside U.S. armed forces.

Third, we need to prevent this conflict from spreading. How can we expect Albania to stay out of the conflict as their kin are being slaughtered? What is to prevent citizens of Macedonia from joining up with different sides along ethnic lines? Would Bulgaria, and NATO allies Greece and Turkey, be drawn into a widening conflagration?

I don't claim to be able to fully predict what will happen if we do not act, but it seems to me we're better off stopping the conflict now than risking another world war sparked in the Balkans.

Finally, I would remind my colleagues that Milosevic and his police and military forces are killing people and driving them from their homes on the basis of their ethnicity—they are committing genocide. We have an obligation and a responsibility to act to stop genocide.

How can we stand by and allow these massacres to continue and claim to stand for what is right in this world?

The time has come to stop threatening and start making good on our threats. There is too much at stake.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the crisis in Kosovo. President Clinton and our NATO allies are at the point of having no other option except to conduct air attacks against Yugoslav forces operating in and near the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. I regret we are at this point, but that doesn't change the facts. At this crucial moment, Congress should not tie the President's hands or give Mr. Milosevic the slightest reason to believe the

United States will not join with its allies in airstrikes against the Yugoslav units that are burning and shooting their way through Kosovo as I speak. For this reason I will vote for the resolution.

A requirement to use military force often follows a failure of diplomacy. That is not the case in Kosovo; this Administration and our major European allies have worked hard to bring about a just and peaceful outcome in this Albanian-majority province which also has such powerful historic and emotional significance for Serbs. A just and peaceful outcome would have been possible, but for the unwillingness of the Milosevic regime to govern Kosovo on any basis other than force and fear. Common sense and appeals to higher motives did no good, and now force will meet overwhelming force in what can only be a tragic outcome for many Yugoslav soldiers.

The President is out of options, and we must support him and the aircracks who will carry out his orders. But I am under no illusions that airstrikes will fix the Kosovo problem. The best I hope for is that the airstrikes will bring Milosevic back to the table to accept a NATO-brokered agreement for a peaceful transition in Kosovo. Such an outcome would at least stop the killing and would accustom all in the region to the idea of an autonomous Kosovo. Even if we succeed to this extent—and it is by no means certain we will—the underlying instability in the region will persist.

The Kosovo problem is really the problem of a minority ethnic group, the Albanians of Serbia, who have not been fully accommodated. The Albanian minority in Macedonia has the same problem. Within Albania proper there is an ethnic Greek minority, and concern for that minority has created tension in the past between Greece and Albania. My point is not to induce despair about the complexities and complexities of this one small corner of the Balkans, but rather to encourage Congress and the Administration to see the region as a unity and work simultaneously in all the affected countries to promote solutions. Just fixing Kosovo won't do it, and I'm not confident we can do even that.

If airstrikes can begin a transition to a Kosovo settlement, the next step will be the insertion of a ground force to keep the transition peaceful. The Administration has proposed this force include about 4,000 American soldiers or Marines, and has promised to deploy this force only in a "permissive" environment—meaning a Kosovo in which at least the leaders of the various factions agree to the presence of our troops. Mr. President, the resolution before us does not deal with the question of ground troops. When that question does arise, I will oppose any deployment of U.S. personnel on the ground in Kosovo. The stability of the entire planet depends on the readiness and availability of the U.S. Armed

Forces. We should not fritter them away in peacekeeping missions in countries which do not rise to the level of vital American interests. We should keep them ready for the contingencies that are truly in our league: Iraq and the Persian Gulf, the Koreas, Russian nuclear forces. Europe contains wealthy countries with the militaries that could take on local European missions like Kosovo. It is their problem, and they should step up to it.

Mr. President, several other reasons are raised to justify U.S. deployments to Kosovo. Some assert a "domino effect" from Kosovo will plunge Europe into war. After all, they say, World War I started in the Balkans. But the alliance systems, rival empires, and hair trigger mobilization plans of 1914 are nowhere apparent in today's Europe, so there is no need to fear a return of World War I. We are then told the instability could eventually cause war between Greece and Turkey. But Greece and Turkey could have fought over many things over the last forty years, most recently the Ocalan affair, and they did not. There are rational leaders in Athens and Ankara who know their own interests. Kosovo will not set them off.

As I said, the Administration should be praised for working for years on the thankless task of trying to bring peace to Kosovo. At this point, airstrikes are the last option available. The people of Kosovo, as well the Serbian people and all the people of the region, deserve a dignified, secure peace. Diplomacy, supported by U.S. and other NATO air-power and, when appropriate, European ground troops, should aim to bring this peace about. The United States should concentrate on the bigger problems which truly threaten us.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, the Senate is now considering the gravest decision we are ever called upon to make. Do we send our troops into harm's way to defend America's values and interests? Do we use our military to seek to end the brutal repression in a faraway country?

After careful thought and serious discussions with our Secretary of State, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Secretary of Defense, I will support U.S. participation in strategic NATO air strikes against Serbian military targets. Our objective is to stop the killing and to weaken Yugoslav President Milosevic's ability to further hurt the people of Kosovo. These objectives are crucial to achieving durable peace and security in Europe.

There are two primary reasons that I support the limited use of force. First of all, we must prevent further Serbian acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Serbian actions have resulted in terrible human suffering. The Serbs abolished the Parliament and government of Kosovo in 1990. In response, the Kosovar Albanians maintained a policy of nonviolent resistance for seven

years. During this time, Milosevic ethnically cleansed Kosovo—driving over 400,000 people out of their homes and destroying hundreds of villages. For those who wouldn't flee, Milosevic sought to starve them out—destroying farm land and blockading the shipment of food.

Reports from last night indicate that further humanitarian catastrophes are imminent. Serbia is moving aggressively to overrun and drive thousands more ethnic Albanians from their homes. The Serbs have deployed 40,000 army and police units in Kosovo. Over the past weekend, over 10,000 Kosovars were forced to flee their homes fearing for their lives. And for good reason: a brutal Serbian attack on the village of Racak in January resulted in the death of 45 civilians.

Some of my colleagues have argued that we should consider military action only if further humanitarian atrocities occur. We cannot wait for genocide to occur before we act.

Our second goal must be to stop this war from spreading and from threatening stability and our national interests throughout central Europe. The ethnic tensions in Kosovo could spread to Albania, Macedonia and even to our NATO allies, Greece and Turkey. Serb actions threaten the stability of the entire region.

I would not support the use of military force unless we had first exhausted all other options. There are three ways that America can best exert our leadership. First, through diplomacy. There is no question that we have done everything possible to resolve the Kosovo crisis peacefully through diplomacy. Second, we can apply sanctions or rewards. We have applied sanctions to Serbia for many years with little tangible result. And third, we can use our military to fight for our interests and our values. That is the decision we face today. After exhausting diplomatic and economic options, do we now use our military to force the Serbs to end their intransigence and repression?

The military action proposed by President Clinton meets three principles I consider before supporting military action.

First of all, whenever possible, military action should be multilateral. In Kosovo, we will be acting as part of NATO—with the nineteen allies sharing the burden.

Second, the military actions should be strategic and proportional. We are authorizing air strikes against military targets—like bases, military storage depots, and command and control centers—and against key infrastructure—like roads and bridges that Serbs use to reinforce Kosovo.

And third, military actions must be intended to achieve a specific goal. In this case, we are seeking to prevent further atrocities and to weaken Milosevic's ability to hurt the people of Kosovo.

Mr. President, I am disturbed by the process that was initially established

for this vote. The Senate should vote on whether or not to authorize the use of force. Plain and simple. Instead, we are asked to cast a cloture vote on a second degree amendment to an appropriations bill. That is not the way to conduct foreign policy in the Senate.

That is why I voted against cloture on this matter—and I will vote for a bipartisan resolution to authorize U.S. participation in NATO air strikes against Serbia.

Mr. President, I still hope that the Serbs will back down. But if they don't, the Senate must show that we back our troops one hundred percent. Our airmen have excellent training and the best equipment in the world. They will have the participation of our NATO allies. And they will have the prayers and support of the American people—who recognize their heroism.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I yield myself 1 minute. Of the 3 minutes remaining, I yield myself 1 minute, and I ask my friend from Virginia to close on behalf of the proponents.

There are a number of Senators who wished to speak today—Senator SPECTER, Senator HAGEL, Senator SMITH. There are a number of people who wanted to speak. In the interest of a limited time, we have been unable to do that. And I apologize for that.

But the reason why I think it is appropriate that the Senator from Virginia close the case for us is that no one has been more instrumental in bringing about the ability to vote up or down on this proposal as well as the outline of the proposal.

I thank him for his leadership.

I yield the remainder of the time under the control of the Senator from Delaware to the Senator from Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank my distinguished colleague from Delaware. We have joined together many times in our two decades-plus here to work on what we felt was absolutely essential in the best interests of the country. I respect every colleague and their votes, whichever way it goes. There has been, I think, a substantial debate—perhaps not as long as I hoped. But, nevertheless, we had the debate. And this is essential now. We could not have done it had it not been for the Senator from New Hampshire, Mr. SMITH, the Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, and others who joined in to make this possible—and my good friend from Michigan, Mr. LEVIN. We made it happen.

But this started with this Senator last September when I made my second visit to Kosovo. Having come out of Bosnia and seeing that situation at that time, I have tirelessly worked on this issue ever since that period. And now I join my colleague from Delaware to make it happen.

But, Mr. President, my main concern has always been the investment of the

American people through this Congress in Bosnia—8-plus years, \$9-plus billion, which could be severely at risk if this area of the Balkans known as Kosovo and the environs thereto were to erupt and begin to take down what little progress we have achieved in Bosnia, and display before the world a magnitude of human suffering and ethnic cleansing and crimes of horrific nature.

So I know it has been a painful subject for many. But I honestly believe that by supporting this vote we are doing what is in the best interests of mankind.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the senior Senator from New Mexico.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I spoke at length today, so I will try very hard to not even use the 2 minutes.

Mr. President, this President has decided that he doesn't need our approval. This vote tonight has nothing to do with whether we agree or disagree, and we are sending that message to him, because he has already told us he is going to do it. So it is a different request. It is a request saying, "I am going to do this. Would you tonight concur that it is OK?"

What a difference a President makes. George Bush didn't do that when the United States had a far more serious problem dependent upon oil—oil in jeopardy in the Middle East, Iraq invades a sovereign country. And what does he do? He sends us a letter and says, "Would you concur, and if you do not I will not do it." Now that is the kind of true, dedicated President that gives credit to the elected representatives of the American people.

We talk about this great Senate. Well, there is a great House, also. And they deserve the right to pass judgment on this. And for us to sit around here tonight saying we finally made the point, and we are going to get to decide whether he is or isn't, that is just a hoax. I do not believe we ought to meddle in civil wars that have been going on for 800 years. We are not going to solve it unless we commit to have a military force on the ground for perhaps 100 years, because we are going to get involved through NATO. In fact, I think we ought to begin to ask our NATO general, we ought to begin to wonder how in the world does he get in the middle of these negotiations and then he makes commitments through NATO and we say we have to live up to what has been committed through NATO? I think we ought to be able to commit that, too. It is our law. It is not the other countries. They are putting in very little.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I yield 1 minute to the Senator from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, as my good colleague from Virginia, I appreciate the conscientious nature of every vote that will be cast tonight. I was among those who visited with the President this morning and have struggled with this. I have concluded that I cannot vote for this resolution. It is a declaration of war. There are going to be casualties. This resolution will not bring about the adjusted behavior of Mr. Milosevic that is sought.

The lingering question throughout the day and throughout all the deliberations is: What is next? That question has not been answered and it will surely come upon us as a result of this vote tonight. This is a very grave decision we are making for which the prospects of a solution, as proposed in this resolution, are nil.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be able to proceed for 30 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BIDEN. I ask unanimous consent the letter from President Clinton to the leaders be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. STEVENS. It is already in the RECORD.

Mr. BIDEN. I understand it is, but I want to point out again where he says, "I ask for your legislative support as we address the crisis in Kosovo."

I point out I was here, too, during the gulf crisis. I recall we were not even going to hold hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee. I recall the President said he would not send up a request for authority until it was clear that the Congress was going to revolt. Every President, of the six while I have been here, has been reluctant to do so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I had the letter read to us this afternoon. There is nothing in that letter that says he will not do it if we do not agree. That is the difference. It says: I ask, but I am going to do it anyway.

Mr. BIDEN. If the Senator will yield, neither did President Bush; he didn't say I will not do it if you do not do this. Let's get that straight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I reclaim my time and yield the remainder of it to the Senator from New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, that is not very much time, but this is a very serious matter. It is

a vote that I wanted. I have been asking for it for a number of days and weeks. Now we are here, and the President has already made up his mind. He didn't really care particularly one way or the other how the Congress felt, which is pretty much the way the foreign policy has been conducted. Thousands of people, hundreds of thousands have died in Rwanda. We are not firing missiles there. This is a mistake. This is a civil war. We are attacking a sovereign nation without a declaration of war and we are going to regret it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired. The question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—FIRST CONCURRENT BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the first concurrent budget resolution at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday and there be 35 hours remaining for debate as provided under the Budget Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. In light of that agreement, the vote on the Kosovo resolution will be the last vote tonight. The Senate will start the budget resolution tomorrow. Obviously, hard work will be in order for the Senate to complete action on the budget resolution prior to the recess, but we must do that. Hopefully we could get it completed by Friday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) is absent because of a death in the family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. COLLINS). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber who desire to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 58, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Leg.]

YEAS—58

Abraham	Dorgan	Landrieu
Akaka	Durbin	Lautenberg
Baucus	Edwards	Leahy
Bayh	Feinstein	Levin
Biden	Graham	Lieberman
Boxer	Hagel	Lincoln
Breaux	Harkin	Lugar
Bryan	Hatch	Mack
Byrd	Inouye	McCain
Chafee	Jeffords	McConnell
Cleland	Johnson	Mikulski
Conrad	Kennedy	Moynihan
Daschle	Kerrey	Murray
DeWine	Kerry	Reed
Dodd	Kohl	Reid

Robb	Shelby	Warner
Rockefeller	Smith (OR)	Wellstone
Roth	Snowe	Wyden
Sarbanes	Specter	
Schumer	Torricelli	

NAYS—41

Allard	Enzi	Kyl
Ashcroft	Feingold	Lott
Bennett	Fitzgerald	Murkowski
Bingaman	Frist	Nickles
Bond	Gorton	Roberts
Brownback	Gramm	Santorum
Bunning	Grams	Sessions
Burns	Grassley	Smith (NH)
Campbell	Gregg	Stevens
Collins	Helms	Thomas
Coverdell	Hollings	Thompson
Craig	Hutchinson	Thurmond
Crapo	Hutchinson	Voinovich
Domenici	Inhofe	

NOT VOTING—1

Cochran

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 21) was agreed to as follows:

S. CON. RES. 21

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the President of the United States is authorized to conduct military air operations and missile strikes in cooperation with our NATO allies against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Mr. BIDEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, I referenced earlier the significant help and leadership of the Senator from Virginia, but what I did not mention was the person who carried the ball on this side of the aisle, the Senator from Michigan, Senator LEVIN.

You know that old expression, success has a thousand fathers and mothers and failure is an orphan. Hopefully, I am not going to be praising him and others and it turns out that what we have done tonight is a mistake. I think it is not a mistake. I think it is necessary. I think it is going to make for the possibility of some peace in the region.

I want to tell the Senator from Michigan how much a pleasure it is to work with him. I mean with him. As my grandfather used to say, he is the horse that carried the sleigh. He is the guy who maneuvered us through all this to get to the resolution. I personally thank him and tell him how much I enjoyed working with him.

Mr. LEVIN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BIDEN. I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I thank my friend from Delaware. His leadership is what carried this resolution to a bipartisan conclusion, along with the Senator from Virginia. I pay particular, really, homage to both of them. This is a very difficult vote for all of us, whichever side of this resolution we voted on. It is very important it be a bipartisan vote. It is important to our troops, first and foremost. It is important we send a bipartisan message to Milosevic so there not be any misunderstanding or miscalculation.

The leaders in the effort to do that were the first two names on that resolution, and they are Senators BIDEN and WARNER.

I commend them for their leadership.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, while I opposed the concurrent resolution which was adopted this evening, I think it is very important that it be said, once again, that this resolution does in no way authorize the commitment of ground troops and that the President certainly—I think this Senator believes as many others do—needs to seek the counsel of the Congress if that day should become necessary, in at least the eyes of our Commander in Chief, that he consult fully with us on that issue.

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, I concur with the Senator from Idaho on that score. I want to say just one more thing. This was a very difficult vote, and I echo the words that were stated by several people here. On these matters—and I give credit to Senator NICKLES, who is the No. 2 man on the Republican side—when we were negotiating, I asked him how many votes are for this. He said, “I did not whip this.” In our jargon, we know that to mean: “I did not go out and count votes. This is not a partisan matter. This is something that should be left to the conscience of each Senator.”

The fact of the matter is, when my colleagues came up to me before the vote started and said, “How many votes do you have?” I said to them, “I did not do it.”

I did not know how many votes were here for this resolution, but I thought it was important that the Senate go on record exercising its responsibility in this area. I do not think the President has the authority to use force in this nature without our approval, a concurrent resolution, or any statement by us, assuming the House makes a similar statement, and meets the constitutional criteria that he has the authority.

But again I want to make it clear that I respect those who voted against it. There are very strong reasons to vote no. I think the reasons to vote yes are stronger. And no one, particularly the Senator from Delaware, can tell this Senate where this action is going to lead. It is a very tough call.

I am confident, in my view, that there is more of a danger in not acting than in acting, both constitutionally and practically. But I just want the record to reflect that everyone in this debate, including the discussion at the White House—the Presiding Officer is younger than the Senator from Delaware, as is the Senator from Louisiana, who is on the floor, is younger than the Senator from Delaware. I came here in 1973 as a Senator. I was 29 years old.

I remember one of the things that I resented the most keenly was that at the time, for those of us who opposed the Vietnam war, at least in some quarters on this floor, and at times with the then-sitting President, we were told we were giving, by our opposition, this great deal of help to the

North Vietnamese; we were hurting our troops who were overseas; we were basically un-American for objecting to the war.

One of the generational changes that has taken place—I want the record to show this—sitting with a number of Senators and Congresspersons—I am guessing the number at 20—in the private residence this morning, the President of the United States said to us assembled he wanted to make one thing clear, that he respected the Congress voting. He knew some who opposed were going to be told that Milosevic is listening and he is going to take some confidence from this; he is going to somehow be emboldened by the opposition.

He said, "I want you to know I think you have an absolute right and obligation, if you believe that way, to object. I will never be one who will tell you that, notwithstanding he is watching this on CNN in Belgrade, that somehow you're undermining our effort. Were we to apply that standard," he said, "we would never be able to debate in this society the important issues."

So the reason I mention that is not to give particular credit to the President, although in this case he deserves it, but he came from that same generation. I think we have moved to a position here where we have debated, in the last several years, the major contentious issues relating to our peace and security, and that when the debate has been finished, when it has gone on, it has been cordial and it has not been partisan.

When it has been finished, there has been unanimity and support of American forces. The same occurred in the gulf. After the gulf, many of us voted no. I was one who voted no. And at the end of the day, we all said, once the Senate spoke, once the President spoke, once the Congress spoke, we would stay the course.

So I thank my friend from Idaho who was in opposition, my friend, the Presiding Officer, who had a different view on this to tell you. And I am not being solicitous. It is important for the American people to know we do not always disagree based on our partisan instincts here.

The judgments made by every Senator on this floor today were made with their intellect and their heart, on the direction that they thought was in the best interest of the country. I think the right outcome occurred, but I do not in any way—in any way—question the motivation, or am I so certain of my own position that I would be willing to guarantee either of my colleagues that they are wrong. I think they were wrong. I think I am right. But we are approaching this in the way we should, openly and in a nonpartisan way. I want to thank the Republican leadership for proceeding this way and thank my colleagues for the way in which we conducted this debate earlier.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Delaware for those remarks.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, March 22, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,642,227,279,510.37 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-two billion, two hundred twenty-seven million, two hundred seventy-nine thousand, five hundred ten dollars and thirty-seven cents).

Five years ago, March 22, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,557,220,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred fifty-seven billion, two hundred twenty million).

Ten years ago, March 22, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,736,549,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred thirty-six billion, five hundred forty-nine million).

Fifteen years ago, March 22, 1984, the federal debt stood at \$1,465,629,000,000 (One trillion, four hundred sixty-five billion, six hundred twenty-nine million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 22, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$471,830,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-one billion, eight hundred thirty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,170,397,279,510.37 (Five trillion, one hundred seventy billion, three hundred ninety-seven million, two hundred seventy-nine thousand, five hundred ten dollars and thirty-seven cents) during the past 25 years.

GEORGE MITCHELL'S MEDAL OF FREEDOM

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, few individuals have made a greater contribution to the cause of peace in Northern Ireland than our friend and former Senate colleague, Senator George Mitchell. His leadership was indispensable in helping the political leaders of Northern Ireland achieve the historic Good Friday Peace Agreement of 1998.

Last Wednesday, on St. Patrick's Day, President Clinton presented Senator Mitchell with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In accepting the award, Senator Mitchell demonstrated again why he has been so vital to the peace process. He spoke directly and movingly to the political leaders on both sides of Northern Ireland, many of

whom were in the White House audience. He reminded them of how far they had come in their search for peace. He urged them to resolve the current difficulties and enable the peace agreement to continue to be implemented.

As he said so eloquently, "History might have forgiven failure to reach an agreement, since no one thought it possible. But once the agreement was reached, history will never forgive the failure to carry it forward."

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF BOONVILLE, MO, LIONS CLUB

Mr. ASHCROFT. Madam President, I am pleased to offer my enthusiastic congratulations to the Boonville, Missouri Lions Club which celebrates its 60th anniversary on April 17, 1999.

Long before President Bush spoke of a "thousand points of light," the Lions sparkled in Boonville. Over the years they have been recognized for their tireless work to aid both research and victims of sight and hearing impairments, diabetes, and other maladies. Always a strong force in local charities, they truly embody their motto: "We Serve."

The Lions Club of Boonville has enjoyed sixty years of achievement through good deeds and good fellowships. I salute them.

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I congratulate the Department of Veterans Affairs on its 10th anniversary of becoming a cabinet level department of the federal government. On March 15, 1989, the new Department of Veterans Affairs was established, headed by a Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Over the past ten years, VA has worked hard to fulfill its commitments to our nation's veterans by providing benefits and health care to millions of Americans who have given so much to protect and defend our country and its liberties. Among VA's many contributions: VA research scientists and practitioners have led in the advancement of medical research and health care delivery; VA benefits such as home loans, life insurance and educational support have been immensely helpful in transitioning active duty military members back into civilian life; and VA disability payments aid veterans injured in the line of duty as partial compensation by a grateful nation for their many sacrifices.

As Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I will help ensure that VA sustains these many programs to meet the myriad needs of an aging veteran population. I am certain my colleagues share that commitment as well.

The mission of the VA, as enunciated by President Abraham Lincoln, is "To care for him who shall have borne the