

With the hundreds of other young girls that have joined us, they are learning that our work is about domestic issues and international issues, that we have to be concerned with what happens in our own communities and in far places around the world. So it has been a good experience for many of them. I thank our colleagues for sharing this day with so many special girls in this area and around the country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to change the previous order and that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business following Senator DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina, Mr. THURMOND, is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. THURMOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 865 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). We thank the distinguished President pro tempore for the remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I send a bill to the desk for introduction and appropriate referral to committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be received and appropriately referred.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 873 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

#### KOSOVO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to address for a moment as well some reflections on the visit I made this past weekend as part of this delegation. It was a delegation that flew from Washington Andrews Air Force base to Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany where we met with General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander of the NATO forces for our mission in Kosovo and Serbia. We then went to a war room at that base and met, as I mentioned earlier, with some of the most amazing young men and women that America could ever hope to bring to this cause. They are so filled with energy and commitment and enthusiasm that it really makes you proud to be an American, to be in their midst. You see the amazing technology at their disposal and realize

without their dedication and their talent it would mean little or nothing.

We flew the next morning from that Air Force base directly, on a cargo plane, to Albania, one of the poorest countries in Europe, where, on a lengthy landing strip, we saw one of the most massive humanitarian efforts undertaken since World War II in Europe. Countries literally from all over the world are rallying for the Kosovo refugees. Among them you could see evidence of humanitarian assistance from the French, the Swedes, of course the Americans; helicopters from the United Arab Emirates—so many different countries coming together in this humanitarian undertaking. The men and women who have to endure the most primitive conditions living there to protect this humanitarian airlift, again, deserve our praise, because there they sit literally on a muddy delta in their tents doing their duty. I was proud to represent this Nation and represent the State of Illinois in thanking them so much for their sacrifice.

We flew from Albania, after meeting with the Prime Minister, to Macedonia, part of the trip which I may never forget as long as I live, because we visited a refugee camp at a place outside of Skopje, Macedonia, the camp known as Brazda, or Stakovac. Two weeks ago, this camp did not exist. Today, it has 32,000 people in it. In the 48 hours before we arrived, over 7,000 refugees came across the border out of Kosovo, looking for safety.

I walked into that camp which had been built by NATO and was being managed by the Catholic Relief Services and was literally mobbed when I offered a piece of candy to a young child. They saw an American with a bag full of candy and they wanted to come up and meet me right away. I passed out a lot of these Hershey Kisses to the kids, and their parents stood around. With a translator, I asked them: Why are you here? Open-ended question, no propaganda: Why did you leave Kosovo?

The story was the same over and over again. Simple people leading ordinary lives in the villages of Kosovo would hear a knock on the door in the middle of the night, only to be greeted by people in black ski masks, some of whom they knew right away to be their neighbors, who announced they had 5 minutes to pick up anything they wanted to pick up with them and leave the country because their house was about to be burned down or blown up. In many cases, the head of the family, if he were a young adult male, was taken away from them. The rest were pushed out in the road and they started their walk, their walk to safety, their walk out of Kosovo.

You know, when you see pictures of refugee camps around the world, you see some very sad scenes. Many times the people are very poor, starving, very sick, some dying on the spot. That was not the case at these refugee camps.

These people, as I said, were ordinary people leading their lives, who were disrupted because of Slobodan Milosevic's ethnic cleansing. What was their crime? They committed no crime other than to have, as far as Mr. Milosevic was concerned, the wrong ethnic background, the wrong culture, the wrong religion. You see, he is cleansing his country, as he says, of these undesirables.

I am not sure what the word genocide means to most people, but when I saw these people, the tens of thousands, shunned, rejected, persecuted and pushed out of their homes, now trying to make a simple life in a refugee camp, I understood genocide and "geno-suffering."

Some people ask a question: Why is the United States involved in this? Why do we care? What does this have to do with America? Come on, these are people in Serbia and they always fight, don't they?

I think there is more to the story because what is at stake here is Europe, and Europe has always had a special meaning to the United States. In this century, we fought two World Wars, we have given the best of our country in defense of causes that we felt were right against Nazism, against communism, to make certain that Europe was peaceful, had stability, was there, and they were friends of the United States. It means something to the people of Europe.

This morning, as part of the NATO summit, the Polish Prime Minister came here on Capitol Hill. It was a wonderful celebratory gathering, for breakfast: Poland, so proud and happy to be part of NATO. Think of that, that this country that went through such deprivation during World War II under the heel of communism for so many decades had finally pushed it aside through their own courage and determination and said once and for all: We are not neutral in our future. We are part of the West. We want to be part of NATO. That is where we belong.

I am proud of that, proud of that as an American that Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland became part of NATO and are dedicated to the principle of democracy, something we are all about in the United States. What a great celebration will happen in Washington, even under the shadow of the war that goes on, as these NATO allies come together, determined to make a better future in Europe. That is one of the reasons we are there.

Second, NATO itself is being tested. The NATO alliance has come forward and said we will not allow a dictator in Europe who pursues these policies of genocide, who has initiated four wars in 10 years, who tomorrow will start another war and pick some more innocent victims—we cannot have a stable Europe with this in place. Slobodan Milosevic must be stopped. Mr. President, 18 allied nations turned to the United States and said: Are you with us? Will you be with us in this mission?

I am glad President Clinton said yes. I voted for the airstrikes. I think it was the appropriate response for NATO against Milosevic.

The third issue is one of values, values as to whether or not we stand for anything as Americans. God knows we have throughout our history. We do not get engaged in wars to pick up territory or to come back with loot and booty. We get engaged in wars for values. That is what it was all about in World War II; to make sure that Hitler and his genocide would come to an end once and for all, to make certain in the cold war that we stopped the spread of communism in Europe. Now, today, in this mission in Kosovo, we say we are standing again for values that are important, not only in the United States, but in Europe and around the world.

There are some who question this, and I understand it. I am not one who runs quickly to get involved in any military undertaking. I only wish those who have doubts about this would have been with me last Saturday afternoon, walking through this camp in Brazda, in Macedonia, or, frankly, in many other camps, where the 350,000 Kosovo refugees now in Albania are living in tents and under sheets of plastic—over 120,000 in Macedonia, over 30,000 in Montenegro. Honestly, these are the lucky refugees. They got out alive. They are under the protection of NATO.

The unluckiest are still left behind, those who are still hiding out as refugees in Kosovo, in the woods, hoping they can survive another day until this war comes to an end and it is safe to go home. Those who were brought in, conscripted as slave labor in the Serbian Army, those are the ones who were unlucky. Those are the ones we have to always remember are part of our mission.

Earlier this morning, we were visited by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair. I had never met him before. He is an impressive individual. I can understand why the people of that nation have decided to choose him as a leader. He said some things that were flattering, but I think well worth sharing as I speak to you today. He said the United States has a special place in this world. It is an example to the rest of the world so many times. He said, "I can't tell you how many times we say thank God for America and its leadership." I am proud of that. And I am proud of the men and women who have made it possible.

Those pilots who put their lives on the line every night in the bombers, soon in the helicopters, to try to bring this war to a conclusion and peace to Yugoslavia.

I am proud, too, of the families back home who wait, hoping that they will return safely. I am proud of the families of the three POWs who have been captured there. I want to let them know we will never forget those prisoners. They are in our thoughts and our prayers every moment until they come home safely, as they will.

I think we have to stay this course. We have three difficult choices at this moment. We can leave, and if we leave, what have we left behind? This penny-ante dictator with his genocide and ethnic cleansing who will pick another helpless target?

Some say we should have a ground war. I am not for that. I do not think that will work. Or we can pursue this air campaign, a campaign which has gone on about 26 days, about which 13 or 14 days we have had good weather. If we pick up the intensity of this bombing, Mr. Milosevic will understand there is a price to pay for his horrible policy of ethnic cleansing.

If this ends as we want it to, we will close the 20th century with peace in Europe. We will be able to say to Europeans wherever they live that the United States, your partner, stood by your side during one of the bloodiest centuries in the history of Europe. When it was all over, the values we cherish, the values we fought for, prevailed. That is what is at stake here, and that is what I hope most Americans will recall.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

#### EARTH DAY

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today across our country, Americans are commemorating Earth Day, a day vitally important to all who serve in this Chamber as well.

As my colleagues know, Earth Day was first observed on April 22, 1970. Its purpose was, and it remains, to make people across the country and around the world reflect on the splendor of our planet, an opportunity to get the people to think about the Earth's many gifts we often take for granted.

Earth Day is a day for us to renew our commitment to protect our environment and recognize the respect we must give our natural resources, recycling and replenishing whenever possible.

The New York Times, on the original Earth Day, ran a story which in part read:

Conservatives were for it. Liberals were for it. Democrats, Republicans and Independents were for it. So were the ins, the outs, the executive and the legislative branches of Government.

Mr. President, the goals of Earth Day 1970 were goals upon which all of us agree. They are goals still shared across the country, regardless of age, gender, race, economic status, or religious background, and they are shared by this Senator as well.

I consider myself a conservationist and an environmentalist, and I think everyone who serves in the Senate also does. No one among us is willing to accept the proposition that our children

or grandchildren will ever have to endure dirty water or filthy skies. Our children deserve to live in a world that affords them the same environmental opportunities that their parents enjoy today.

When speaking about the Earth and our environment, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to highlight the consensus that exists in Congress on protecting the environment, because the environmental debate is now so focused on the margins.

The proliferation of special interest groups has forced our debate away from our common concerns and left the American people with the idea that an individual is either for the environment or against it, and that determination is made not by the voters or by one's record, but by the scorecard or the rhetoric of a particular organization.

I would like to take a moment this Earth Day to remind my constituents and the American people of the tremendous progress we have made on a bipartisan basis towards protecting the Earth and its inhabitants and, at the same time, improving and conserving our precious natural resources.

In the 104th Congress, we passed several major pieces of legislation to improve the environment. They include the Safe Drinking Water Act, the conservation title to the farm bill, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Invasive Species Act, the Everglades Protection Amendments, the Food Quality Protection Act, the Water Resources Development Act, the Battery Recycling Act, and the Parks and Public Lands Management Act, just to name a few.

Those public laws are now at work helping Americans protect the environment by including billions of dollars to improve the safety of our Nation's drinking water and billions more on conservation efforts on more than 37 million acres of sensitive land.

Those programs will help improve our cities' waterfronts, control invasive species in our lakes, and increase visitor enjoyment and natural resource protection in our Nation's parks and in our visitors' enjoyment.

Unfortunately, if a Member's constituents did not take the time to review the complete record of their Member of Congress, they would not know the truth.

While the accomplishments of the 104th Congress are impressive, the 105th Congress did not rest on its laurels over the past 2 years. The environmental accomplishments of the 105th Congress include the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Dolphin Conservation Act, the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, the National Park System Restoration Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteers and Community Partnership Act, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, the African and Asian Elephant Conservation