

patients, not restrict them in the name of patient protection. I have been contacted by hundreds of seniors from my state who understandably expressed outrage that Congress had passed a law that will inevitably restrict access to health care from the provider of their choice even when they are willing to pay for the care out of their own pocket. We have been told that this provision was included in the Balanced Budget Act as a protection for Medicare patients. However, I believe we can protect Medicare patients from fraud and abuse without restricting their access to desired care.

Mr. President, I thank my colleagues, once again, for their commitment and leadership and I look forward to working with them in the near future to address this important issue.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I, too, rise in support of S. 1194, the Medicare Beneficiaries Freedom to Contract Act.

You and I, Mr. President, and all other Americans not covered under Medicare, may obtain health services without informing the federal government. However, our nation's senior citizens must first seek out Washington's approval—even when they prefer to pay for those services out of their own pocket.

Congress intended to correct this situation by permitting private contracts. Unfortunately, the President insisted he would veto the entire 1997 Balanced Budget Act unless this fundamental right of all Americans was eliminated or severely limited for senior citizens.

Medicare beneficiaries should have the same freedom to obtain the health care they choose from the physician or provider of their choice—as do Members of Congress and virtually all other Americans. It's ridiculous that this right was taken away and unfortunate that it's taken so long to correct.

Mr. President, I thank the majority leader, Senator LOTT, and Senate Finance Committee Chairman ROTH for acknowledging the importance of this issue and for pledging to look into it further next year in the 106th Congress.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished friend, Senator KYL, for introducing S. 1194—the Medicare Beneficiary Freedom to Contract Act and for his leadership on this issue.

I firmly believe it is my obligation, as an elected member of the United States Senate, to defend the liberty of the constituents that put me in office. Freedom manifests itself in various ways, but one fundamental concept of importance in America is the protection of one's discretion over one's financial resources. I often raise this issue in the context of taxes, but in addition to allowing one to reap what one sows, it is equally important that people have the ability to spend their earnings as they see fit.

I want to be perfectly clear what I think the essence is of what we are discussing when the issue of Medicare private contracting arises. We are talking about allowing people to spend their

money as they see fit. This is a very simple, yet important, freedom that people enjoy. We are not talking about letting people buy illegal products, but rather about the right of people to spend their money on health care. Only in Washington DC could such a notion be considered controversial. But to those who have little regard for individual freedom, and who have a vested interest in seeing the scope and power of government grow, this is a controversial matter.

H.L. Menken once said that "the most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself." That is the threat, Mr. President. Those that favor the Medicare monopoly, often even to the detriment of Medicare beneficiaries, resist the freedom of people to make these private decisions, because it threatens the government's control of health care delivery.

Unfortunately the era of big government is not over. In fact, it is alive and well and is embodied in Section 4507 of last year's Balanced Budget Act. Therefore, I want to request that Majority Leader LOTT and Finance Committee Chairman ROTH help us attach S. 1194 to the first appropriate legislative vehicle, so that we can repeal Section 4507. Mr. President, we must restore the right of our elderly to buy the health care they feel they need, without any "big government" constraints on their decisions. This effort is important not only to our ensuring quality health care to our elderly, but also to the larger battle of defending freedom in America.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader, Senator LOTT, and Finance Committee chairman, Senator ROTH, for recognizing the problem of many seniors who are not afforded choice in determining where they get their health care and on agreeing to address this problem in the 106th Congress.

I also thank Senators HOLLINGS, ROTH, GORTON, CRAIG, NICKLES, ALLARD, MACK, GRASSLEY, BENNETT, INHOFE and SHELBY for participating with statements for the RECORD. We do intend to address this problem in the next session of the Congress because we could not get it done this session. I appreciate my colleagues' commitment to doing that and, again, thank the Senator from Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

KOSOVO

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to continue a series of remarks that I have placed before the Senate in the past several weeks regarding the increasing problems relating to Kosovo. Together, with other Senators, I have tried to avail myself of every opportunity to learn about this situation. Just weeks ago, I made a trip myself into the region, accompanied by two outstanding ambassadors, Miles and

Hill, and had an opportunity to get firsthand impressions. My trip included Bosnia, Belgrade, Macedonia, and Kosovo.

Those impressions, together with many years of really hard work studying the Balkan region, having first gone, in September 1992, into Sarajevo, I have even greater concern today about the implications of the problems unfolding in Kosovo and the necessity for the world to respond to stop the tragic killing that is taking place every day.

I commend the majority leader—indeed, I am sure there are others who have worked diligently on this—but he has, in this busiest of all weeks of the year in the Senate, found time to convene in his office and otherwise meet with people—and I have joined him on several occasions—about this situation. Indeed, a few days ago a group of us sent a letter to the President of the United States expressing our concerns. This was a letter that followed the briefing by the Secretaries of State and Defense, with the National Security Adviser and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Mr. President, I will address particular parts of that letter to the President and his response. The response was quite comprehensive.

Further today, I, and I am sure other Members of the Senate, have received drafts of proposed resolutions put forth by a Member on that side of the aisle and a Member on this side of the aisle. Given that they are drafts, and I don't know what the ultimate intention of the drafters will be, I will not identify the persons who distributed the drafts as a senatorial courtesy, but I would like to address my concerns relevant to both drafts.

The purpose today is, again, to give my personal views regarding the plan of operation that has been laid before us publicly by this administration, by the NATO commanders and, indeed, by one or more of our allies, notably Great Britain.

I commend their Minister for National Security and Defense. He has spoken most forthrightly. Indeed, I think his views closely match my own, and that is, any planning to go forward to correct the problems that exist in Kosovo today has to be, in my judgment, and in his, twofold—ground as well as air.

One, a very decisive series of airstrikes, which I support. I believe, and others believe, that a necessary second component of any military action, to back up the airstrikes, has to be the quick placement of a stabilization ground force into Kosovo, into the region, primarily the capital, Pristina. If that is not done, Mr. President, the goals of the airstrikes can not have been fulfilled in my opinion.

In my judgment, the predominant number of military units involved in that airstrike would be American, because of our specialized aircraft and air-to-ground precision ordinance. Our

Allies in NATO will provide other important air assets. I think in order to consolidate the gains that we can anticipate from those air strikes, a stabilization force has to be put in place on the ground.

The main urgency of the moment—is some approximately quarter of a million Kosovars, Albanians who have been driven from their homes and villages into the hills who are confronting now another enemy. Once it was the Milosevic police, the Milosevic regular army, but now it is weather that is forcing these tragic people to endure conditions which will be severely injurious to their health and safety.

Food, medicine, and shelter must be brought in beginning immediately, to alleviate that crisis. And secondly, we want to have a cessation to the conflicts that have gone on between these peoples for these many months which have resulted in some 2,000-plus deaths, largely again suffered by the Albanians, the 90 percent of the population. But, indeed, there are incidents where the KLA, the insurgent forces within the Albanian population, have got to answer, themselves, for their responsibility for certain tragic killings of Serbs in this area. There are not clean hands on either side.

But again, to summarize the objectives: Get immediate relief in for these refugees; and, secondly, stabilize the fighting among the minority Serbians and the majority Albanians.

If that is not done, if that stabilization force is not quickly put in, this situation could even escalate in terms of the killing, because you will have removed that military force, i.e., the Serbian paramilitary police, and indeed the regular army, and the remnants that will be left of the Serbian people, such police that are left, will then be faced with the preponderance of a 90 percent ethnic Albanian population coming down out of the hills. And I doubt that they will come down and shake hands with their former Serbian neighbors—finding their homes ravaged, destroyed, their livestock killed, their fields burned. It will not be, Mr. President, a very peaceful setting once the air seals off the flow of heavy armaments and military down from Belgrade.

Mr. President, herein is the problem as I see it. Our administration, regrettably—and I will refer to their letter momentarily—regrettably, has evaded, in my judgment, a full debate on the issue of the need for a stabilization force. They have focused the public attention in our country solely on the need for an airstrike, leaving out what I think should be responsible dialogue, beginning with the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense, on the need for a stabilization force.

Yesterday, I met with a senior officer from NATO, together with other Senators, and he clearly understood the necessity for that stabilization force. Indeed, I happen to know firsthand NATO has studied the need for it.

NATO has contingency plans to address that. The plans range all the way from taking the indigenous KDOM, which is a very interesting creation in this conflict—it is a combination of military people from the United States, Canada, and certain other European nations, and indeed I think some Russians, together with diplomatic officials from those nations who go out into this region, unarmed, for the purpose of reporting back on what is taking place in terms of the ravaging of the countryside, the condition of those who have been driven into the hills. And it has been a very valuable source of information for the free world to have had the reports of KDOM. I traveled with them; they are a brave lot.

One option is to enlarge the KDOM. But again, KDOM is not there for military purposes. They are not trained as policemen. They are not trained as security forces. The individual military officers may have some training, but certainly by design and in terms of the logistic equipment, and the like, they are not prepared, in my judgment, to take on the potential parameters of conflicts that could break out following air strikes.

Next it is thought that one or more organizations, like the O.S.C.E. in Europe, could come in and take over this situation to provide a stabilizing force. But that organization has no history. It has no history of taking on an operation of this magnitude. It has no logistical support. It has no experience in coordinating, bringing in troops from other countries.

And so after dialogue with our guests yesterday, and dialogue with many others, it is my judgment that only NATO can provide such stabilization force as will be necessary in the immediate aftermath of a series of airstrikes—I repeat that—only NATO. I believe it unwise for the Administration now to rule out U.S. ground forces as being a part of a stabilization force composed of several NATO members.

When we had the Secretary of Defense before the Armed Services Committee the other day, regrettably, he did not respond with the precision I would have liked regarding U.S. participation. Indeed, I think the record reflects statements to the effect that there will be no U.S. participation should a ground element for stabilization be necessary.

Mr. President, I do not think that we should embark—I want to repeat that—I do not think we should embark on these airstrikes without a resolution of how that stabilization force is to be constituted and whether or not the United States will be a part of that force, because we will have started a situation of hitting a sovereign country. We have done that twice already here in the past month or two—hitting a sovereign nation with predominantly U.S. air assets—with really no clear understanding of what is going to take place immediately afterwards on the ground in Kosovo.

We talk about a peace settlement. All of us would like to have a peace settlement, but I cannot believe that if you inflict severe air damage of the magnitude it will take to bring Milosevic, the principal wrongdoer in this whole situation—the principal wrongdoer for years and years, beginning back in Bosnia—you cannot suddenly expect him to come to the negotiating table in a matter of days. And it is within those days that the instability could grow in the Kosovo region. That is my concern.

This instability could spread over into Albania, which is already torn by civil strife. Refugees could begin to flow into Montenegro. Montenegro is now burdened, heavily burdened, with refugees from Albania. More refugees into Macedonia. This whole region could be destabilized unless a stabilization force is put into Kosovo in a timely way.

And further, in my judgment, the work that we have done, together with our allies over many years, to secure Bosnia, to the extent we achieved any results there—certainly relative peace compared to the war of several years ago—that could well be undermined, because if the insurgents down in Kosovo are not contained, that will spread into Bosnia and begin to undo what we have achieved, what little we have achieved thus far, toward the implementation of the Dayton accords.

So my purpose in addressing Kosovo, again, is twofold. These resolutions in draft form call for only U.S. participation in airstrikes. I mean, it is very clearly laid out in both these resolutions. One of them states that: Whereas the Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, opposes the deployment of ground forces in Kosovo, as reflected in his testimony before Congress on October 6, and clearly says that while we support the use of air, it will be air, and air alone.

That I think is an unwise position for the U.S. to take.

Let me give you an example. Should it be the consensus of NATO that you have to bring a NATO ground force into Kosovo for stabilization, which is my judgment, and you plant the NATO flag, and the U.S. flag is not on the staff, we are not represented there, the question arises why? I mean, we bring into question, who is the commander in chief of NATO? It is an American officer. An American officer is to command of a stabilization force put into a hostile region, and there is not a single additional American there in that force! We should not take that position now.

I fought for many years placing the ground troops in Bosnia. Year after year I voted against it. It was only on the last vote where I joined Senator Dole that I relented. I had no desire to see Americans go in there. I questioned, in some way, the vital security interests. But that's history; we are on the ground in Bosnia and our troops, with other SFOR elements are working

to secure a lasting peace. NATO's credibility is on the line now in Kosovo, for only a credible threat to use force can move settlement talks in Belgrade.

If NATO leaders, upon failure of diplomacy, launch a NATO air operation, the credibility of NATO is on the line.

I think you should not start the air until we have fully answered the question: How do you secure the benefits flowing from the air operation and stabilize that region until the negotiators can come to the table and work out a cease fire.

The other resolution being circulated today, likewise, calls solely for air, very explicitly. It has another provision in here which troubles me a great deal; that is, you can only use air for 6 months unless there is further consideration by the Congress.

Mr. President, we have known for a long time that setting deadlines with regard to troops just does not work. Therefore, the placing of a deadline in connection with the use of air and limiting it to 6 months, to me, is not a wise way to proceed. Therefore, I have indicated I would not participate; indeed, I would vote against either of these resolutions should they come back in this form. Both resolutions limit the U.S. participation to air. The President is authorized to use the U.S. Armed Forces for the purpose only of conducting air operations and missile strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Again, you cannot plan an air operation without a concomitant means to secure the ground.

Let me pose the hypothetical: Suppose you strike with air and you are successful in destroying certain targets, then is Milosevic likely to sit there and do nothing? He could counterattack. His only means of counterattack, in all probability, given his air capability is largely destroyed, his naval capability is hopefully bottled up in the caves or elsewhere, his only avenue to retaliate would be on the ground; perhaps, once again, send out his column of tanks and his column of heavy artillery. Bad weather and darkness of night travel could inhibit air operations.

Air could interdict, I am sure, much of it, but it might require a ground force at some point to interdict such actions as may be taken in retaliation by Milosevic.

I urge the Senate to be very, very cautious as we proceed. I hope to continue our debate with other Senators here as it relates to this situation.

I turn to the response of the President. As I said, it contained specific responses. This is the President speaking. On page 4 he states:

Second, on the question of ground force, although NATO planners reviewed a broad range of options, some of which would involve grounding forces and hostile circumstances. I can assure you [this is written to all nine of us] the United States would not support these options and there is currently no sentiment in NATO for such a mission.

The mission under consideration involves the use of graduated air power, not military forces on the ground.

Now, to me, that is just faulty planning.

I do support the use of force to stop the killing, to enable the NGOs and others to have an environment into which they can bring supplies to help these people. I do not give my support unless a convincing argument is put forth about a stabilizing force and the need to have that force in order to secure the Kosovo region.

We have to be very careful that the credibility of NATO is protected. It is on the line. We cannot allow the NATO force to be considered as acting in concert with the KLA. That is a tough call. Try and find a KLA leader. They are difficult to find. I am not talking about Rugova in Pristina. He has been accessible to all. These militants, the heads of the KLA troops, in this area of Kosovo are not well defined, not well known, and not well coordinated. It is a problem to contain them once we begin to use our air. We cannot seem to be coming in here with a military hand to support Kosovo gaining independence from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That is not our goal.

Again, only a ground force containing this situation in Kosovo, until such time as a settlement can be worked out at the table, is the only way, in my judgment, that this matter can be resolved.

I hope other Senators will come forward and give their views because this could break in military action any day now. I don't predict in any way when the strike may begin. Hopefully, diplomatic efforts, which are still ongoing, can prevent the necessity of the use of force. It is only that credible determination to use force, as perceived in Belgrade, that will bring about successful diplomatic negotiations.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the letter to the President and his response to the majority leader, which I referred to earlier, printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
OFFICE OF THE MAJORITY LEADER,
Washington, DC, October 2, 1998.
Hon. WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON,
The White House, Washington, DC

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to express our concerns about your Administration's policy toward Kosovo. Since the Serbian military offensive began in Kosovo more than seven months ago, senior Administration officials have repeatedly stated that Serbian actions would not be tolerated. For example, in March 1998, Secretary of State Albright stated, "We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with in Bosnia." The same month, your Special Representative threatened "the most dire consequences imaginable" in response to Serbian offensives. Since these statements, many of us indicated we would support military action to halt Serbian ethnic cleansing. However, it is now more difficult

for us to have confidence that military action accomplish the stated goals. U.S. credibility has suffered great damage because U.S. threats have not been carried out. Milosevic has had the luxury of time to accomplish his goals in Kosovo.

We listened carefully as your senior national security officials briefed Senators yesterday. Clearly, we recognize the stakes involved in Kosovo, including the danger the conflict will spread to neighboring countries, the importance for our credibility and for that of the NATO alliance, and the ongoing human tragedy created by months of ruthless attacks by Serbian forces. We also recognize the seriousness of the action you are contemplating. It means, as Senator LUGAR stated yesterday, going to war with an attack on a sovereign country. We do not believe you have taken the necessary steps to prepare the Congress and the American people for such a weighty decision. In fact you have not even asked the Congress to authorize the use of military force.

We are troubled by a number of aspects of the plans and policies contemplated by your Administration.

First, we cannot support military operations by U.S. Armed Forces in Kosovo unless and until you commit to request a significant increase in the defense budget to address the shortfalls in military readiness, personnel and modernization recently acknowledged by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The crisis in military readiness that has only belatedly been acknowledged by your Administration is grave. To support ongoing operations around the world, our men and women in uniform are deployed away from their homes and families for unprecedented lengths of time during peacetime. Morale among the troops is suffering, and recruiting and retention statistics are dangerously low. Modernization of the force is seriously underfunded across the services. Training in many of the combatant commands must halt well before the end of the fiscal year due to funding and supply shortages. Nearly 12,000 military families rely on food stamps. Failing to provide additional funding for a potentially costly military operation in Kosovo, while U.S. forces are about to complete three years in Bosnia at a cost of nearly \$10 billion, will severely and perhaps irreparably exacerbate this critical readiness crisis.

Second, the issue of potential deployment of U.S. ground forces was not adequately addressed in yesterday's briefing. Press accounts report that detailed plans for nearly 50,000 ground troops in Kosovo have been developed. Yet Secretary of Defense Cohen stated that there has been no discussion of deploying U.S. ground forces in Kosovo. We believe that a ground force in Kosovo, which could be a likely follow-on to airstrikes, should be European, not American.

Third, we are concerned about the proposed use of NATO airpower. Press reports contain information about U.S. targeting plans that was not discussed in the briefing. To the extent we understand the proposed strikes, they appear to envision gradual and incremental measures. General Ralston discussed a "limited option" that may or may not achieve its stated objectives. A more "robust" option is under consideration but apparently has not yet been finalized. We believe any air attack should be sustained and overwhelming. Air attacks should be designed to decimate Milosevic's forces in Kosovo and in Serbia—in order to permanently end his ability to perpetuate the conflict in Kosovo.

Finally and most importantly, we are concerned that U.S. policy is not based on a coherent and convincing plan and neither protects our interests nor recognizes the danger of becoming involved in another open-ended

military commitment in the Balkans. Your policy seems to recognize that Milosevic is the problem but also proposes to make him part of the solution. By so doing, your policy helps to perpetuate his hold on power, your Administration has yet to formulate a policy for replacing Milosevic with a democratic government.

Yesterday, your officials stated that the credible threat of force was necessary to induce Milosevic to negotiate seriously. Yet in June, Secretary of State Albright stated, "The issue here is that we want a diplomatic solution. And I don't want to threaten strikes when what I'm trying to do is get a diplomatic solution." This is a disturbing and confusing inconsistency. A central question involves subsequent actions if any use of military force is not immediately successful in accomplishing its stated objective. If Milosevic does not accept U.S. or NATO demands either before or after the employment of military force, what is our next step? It is not sufficient to state, as Secretary of Defense Cohen did yesterday, that you have not reached that decision point.

Your policy apparently envisions a status of limited autonomy for Kosovo, a status that both parties have shed blood to reject. Independence has been the choice of the majority of inhabitants in Kosovo. Serb assaults since February have served to increase this sentiment. Your policy currently opposes independence for Kosovo but we are concerned that you do not have an achievable program to implement your policy.

Mr. President, we believe in bipartisanship in foreign policy. We will not support any plan that requires American military personnel alone to bear the burden of the sacrifice and risk involved. To the contrary, we expect other members of NATO and their military personnel to share the sacrifice and risk. We stand ready to work with you and your officials to protect American interests in southeastern Europe.

Sincerely,

STROM THURMOND, CHUCK HAGEL, PETE V. DOMENICI, TED STEVENS, DON NICKLES, TRENT LOTT, JOHN WARNER, RICHARD G. LUGAR, JESSE HELMS.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, DC, October 6, 1998.

Hon. TRENT LOTT,

Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC

DEAR MR. LEADER: Thank you for your letter about Kosovo. You have raised a number of critical issues. Before addressing your specific concerns, I believe it is appropriate to lead-off by describing our overall approach and the vital interests at stake.

We are entering a crucial period regarding the crisis in Kosovo. Serb repression and violence, clear evidence of atrocities, the uncertain fate of more than 250,000 displaced persons and the approach of winter have coalesced an international consensus behind U.S. efforts to resolve the conflict. In United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199, adopted on September 23, 1998, the international community reaffirmed in clear terms what steps Milosevic must take:

- Immediately cease offensive operations;
- Withdraw security forces;
- Allow full access to international monitors and relief agencies; and
- Negotiate a settlement with the Kosovar Albanians.

Since, as of now, Milosevic has not complied with these requirements, we and our NATO allies will soon consider the potential use of force. I want to provide you and others in the Congress our full thinking and strategy on this issue.

As your letter recognizes, the crisis in Kosovo began when Serbian special police launched an offensive against the Kosovo in-

surgers in February of this year. In the seven months that have followed, Serbian military and police have steadily escalated their systematic campaign of violence and expulsions designed to terrorize the local populations and suppress armed insurgent groups. The roots of the current crisis can be traced back to 1989, when Slobodan Milosevic revoked the autonomous status that Kosovo had enjoyed since 1974. My Administration has long pressed Belgrade to restore the rights and freedoms of the Kosovar Albanians, making clear that this was a prerequisite to Serbia's reintegration into the international community. However, Belgrade resisted our support for building an effective dialogue with the Kosovars, instead escalating the fighting by targeting civilians with increasing brutality.

Over the past several months, we have endeavored to contain and ultimately resolve the conflict through extensive humanitarian and diplomatic efforts. On the humanitarian track, we have committed more than \$45 million in emergency relief funds and other types of assistance and we have urged the UNHCR and other international agencies and donors to do the same. On the diplomatic front, Ambassador Chris Hill has had some success, pulling together a Kosovar Albanian negotiating team under Ibrahim Rugova and obtaining Milosevic's acknowledgment of an "interim" agreement that would allow for self-government. Ambassador Hill has also worked with Contact Group countries to develop the text of a settlement that they now have endorsed. This settlement would allow the people of Kosovo to administer their own local affairs, including education, justice and a separate police force, while protecting the human rights and cultural sites of all ethnic groups, including the small Serb minority. It would do so while preserving the FR Yugoslavia's territorial integrity, we believe that an independent Kosovo could not survive as a viable state. Moreover, independence would send entirely the wrong signal to those in the region calling for a "greater Albania," and to minorities elsewhere in Europe, leading to greater instability. However, our humanitarian and diplomatic efforts have been thwarted by the tactics of Milosevic's security forces.

In recent days, the intensifying threat of NATO military action has caused Milosevic to throttle back the operations of his security forces; some withdrawals have begun to occur. However, he has not done enough to come into full compliance with UNSC Resolution 1199. We cannot accept hollow promises or half steps that leave open the prospect of renewed hostilities in the coming weeks, or after this winter.

It is important to focus on U.S. national interests that are at stake here.

First, Kosovo is a tinderbox that could ignite a wider European war with dangerous consequences for the United States. Throughout Balkan history, ethnic conflicts often have been used for political manipulation. The violence directed against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo already has exacerbated political tensions and civil disorder in neighboring Albania. Continuation of the fighting in Kosovo likely would trigger further refugee flows into Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with dangerously destabilizing consequences. Wider instability and refugee flows further south would threaten the differing regional interests of NATO allies Greece and Turkey, exacerbating tensions in the Aegean. The radicalization of ethnic Albanians also could support radical Islamic fundamentalist efforts to establish a foothold in southeastern Europe, potentially creating new sources of instability and increasing the threat of terrorism to us and our allies in Europe.

Second, we are faced with a major humanitarian and human rights crisis that could soon become a catastrophe. Yesterday, the United Nations Secretary General's report on the crisis condemned the wanton killing and destruction perpetrated by security forces in Kosovo. These forces have destroyed at least one quarter of the homes in over 200 villages. They have committed atrocities, including the mutilation and execution of senior citizens, women and children. We must act to prevent widespread deaths with the onset of winter, to prevent further atrocities and to demonstrate that the international community will not tolerate such acts.

Third, it is important to sustain NATO's credibility as the principal peace and security instrument in Europe. Just as NATO's effective response in Bosnia has had a stabilizing influence throughout Europe, so too will NATO's efficacy in responding to Kosovo help achieve our long-term goals for Europe. Moreover, as the situation in Kosovo has deteriorated, the credibility of U.S. warnings to Milosevic first issued by President Bush in 1992, and reaffirmed by me, also are challenged.

We prefer to advance each of these interests through diplomacy that leads to a peaceful and principled settlement, as our negotiating efforts have sought to accomplish. But largely as a result of Milosevic's assault, those negotiating efforts are impossible to pursue under these circumstances. I believe the credible threat, and therefore the willingness to use force, has become necessary. It now appears that our NATO allies share this view.

I will now turn to the four specific issues raised in your letter.

First, I too am concerned about military readiness, as I discussed at length with the Chiefs and CINCs recently. As noted in my letters to Congress and Secretary Cohen, we have moved promptly to address these concerns, building on efforts initiated by my Administration over the past several months to support military operations. For example, in FY 1998 we worked with Congress to secure a \$1 billion reprogramming that reallocated funds to readiness programs and a \$1.85 billion emergency funding package to cover the unanticipated costs of the Bosnia and Southwest Asia contingencies. For FY 1999, I have proposed a \$1.9 billion emergency funding measure to cover the continuing costs of our Bosnia deployment. To preclude serious readiness problems in FY 1999, I again urge Congress to approve this measure.

In addition to these actions, I committed my Administration to work with Congress to provide adequate resources for readiness and other defense programs in FY 1999 and beyond. For the short term, I proposed that members of my Administration work with you prior to the Congressional adjournment to craft a \$1 billion supplemental package that will augment FY 1999 funding for key readiness programs. For the longer term, the Office of Management and Budget and the National Security Council have been instructed to work with Secretary Cohen and the Joint Chiefs to develop a multi-year plan that provides the resources necessary to preserve military readiness, support our troops, and modernize aging weapons systems. This plan will be incorporated in my FY 2000 defense budget request to Congress. As I wrote you last month, the men and women of our armed forces will have the resources they need to do their job.

The cost of potential military operations in Kosovo would be a function of the scope and intensity of such operations. My Administration will work with the Congress to ensure timely passage of appropriate funding measures and that this does not come at the expense of our defense program.

Second, on the question of ground forces, although NATO planners have reviewed a broad range of options, some of which would involve ground forces in hostile circumstances, I can assure you the United States would not support these options and there currently is no sentiment in NATO for such a mission. The mission under consideration involves the use of graduated air power, not military forces on the ground.

In the event that Milosevic agrees to comply with UNSCR 1199, and if there is a subsequent political settlement, some form of international presence may be needed. Whether this can be done entirely by international civilian personnel and whether Americans should participate are matters we will need to consider in the context of any such agreement and with full consultations with the Congress.

Third, regarding the nature of the air campaign in Kosovo, NATO has developed a clear military plan. It entails the graduated but effective use of air power harnessed to two achievable objectives. The primary objective is by threat of force, or its use, to persuade Milosevic to comply with the demands of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199. If initial use of air power does not result in compliance, NATO's secondary objective is to strike Belgrade's military capabilities in ways that will damage his ability to conduct repressive operations in Kosovo, the same objective you identify in your letter.

Let me assure you that NATO planning provides for air power to be used effectively. There will be no "pin prick" strikes. Even the initial use of air power will send a very clear signal of our ability to disrupt operations by the FRY military and special police, and follow-on phases will progressively expand in their scale and scope. These operations are planned to involve virtually all NATO allies.

Finally, regarding your desire for a clear policy linked to our national interests and a defined end-state, NATO air power will be used as part of a broader political strategy to advance our overall objectives of promoting a political settlement and averting a humanitarian catastrophe. We are not replacing diplomacy with military force; rather we are combining the two to achieve our objectives. Secretary Albright recently dispatched Ambassador Holbrooke to the region to make crystal clear to Milosevic what steps he needs under UNSC 1199 to take to avoid NATO air strikes. Even if Milosevic gives NATO no choice but to execute air strikes, we will use them in a way designed to help bring an end to Serbian operations in Kosovo, voluntarily or involuntarily.

Our desired end-state in Kosovo is clear, comprising three parts. Our immediate objective is to achieve full compliance with UN Security Council resolution 1199, thus reducing the risk of wider conflict, averting a humanitarian catastrophe and lessening the chance of further atrocities. Our mid-term objective is to secure a political settlement that grants broad autonomy to the Kosovars, while keeping Kosovo within the FRY. In particular, the agreement should ensure that the Kosovars have their own bodies of government and police. Our longer-term objective is a FRY that is democratic and on the path to European integration. This requires a responsible government that is accountable to its own citizens, of all ethnic backgrounds, and that carries out its obligations abroad, including in Bosnia. In this regard, we continue to support opposition parties and free and independent media in the FRY. Further efforts in these areas are an important part of our broader strategy.

The United Nations, the Contact Group, NATO and my Administration all agree that Milosevic bears primary responsibility for

the current situation including the brutal tactics of his security forces. Not only has he displaced a quarter million of his own citizens, but he has also suppressed the human rights of all citizens of the FRY and forced them to bear the burden of the current conflict, of UN economic sanctions and of isolation from the rest of Europe.

While Milosevic bears primary responsibility for the current crisis, there are others whose actions could prolong and exacerbate it. I am referring in particular to the various armed insurgent groups in Kosovo, including the Kosovar Liberation Army, or UCK. Ambassador Holbrooke this week delivered a firm message to these groups to cooperate in bringing about a peaceful solution. Armed reprisals against Serb civilians, or the continued pursuit of independence by military means, will only shatter a cease-fire and the hopes of attaining a political settlement that gives Kosovo true autonomy. We have told them that failure to cooperate will cause us to reassess our operations against the Serbs.

Larry Eagleburger, our former ambassador to Yugoslavia, once said that the war in Yugoslavia began in Kosovo and will ultimately end there. His prediction was correct. Our job is to bring that war to an end, to keep it from destabilizing the region and to avert a humanitarian catastrophe. I appreciate your willingness to work with the Administration to protect American interests in southeastern Europe. We will continue to consult closely with you in the critical days and weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL T. JOSEPH LOPEZ ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Admiral Joe Lopez on the occasion of his Change of Command as Commander of Allied Forces, Southern Europe and U.S. Naval Forces, Europe and his retirement from the United States Navy after 39 years of dedicated service to the nation.

Joe Lopez joined the United States Navy to see the world—and see the world he did. A native of Powellton, West Virginia, he enlisted in the Navy in September 1959. In 1964, he was commissioned an Ensign via the Seaman-to-Admiral Program and upon commissioning, he was assigned first to the U.S.S. *Eugene A. Greene* (DD 711) and then to the U.S.S. *Lind* (DD 703). While onboard both of these destroyers, he saw action in Vietnam.

Admiral Lopez received his first command in September 1969, when he assumed the duties as Commander, River Assault Division 153, which operated in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam and as part of a counter-offensive into Cambodia in May 1970. Admiral Lopez was the only Navy commanding officer to lead a river assault into Cambodia.

Following tours of duty at the Naval Postgraduate School, the Armed Forces Staff College, and as Flag Secretary and Staff Officer for Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group Eight, Admiral Lopez served as the Executive Officer onboard the U.S.S. *Truett* (FF 1095) from 1977 to 1979. While

he was XO, the *Truett* operated in the Mediterranean and Red Seas.

Admiral Lopez commanded the U.S.S. *Stump* (DD 978) from September 1982 to November 1984. As the CO of *Stump* he completed a Persian Gulf deployment. Admiral Lopez' next command tour was as Commander, Destroyer Squadron 32, which deployed to the Mediterranean Sea. He followed his Squadron Commander assignment with duties as Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel and Training and as Executive Assistant to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Admiral Lopez was promoted to Rear Admiral in July 1989. He served as Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's senior military assistant from July 1990 to July 1992 including during the Persian Gulf Conflict. From July 1992 to December 1993, he commanded the United States Sixth Fleet and NATO's Striking and Support Forces, Southern Europe, homeported in Gaeta, Italy.

For the next three years he served as the Navy's senior acquisition official, the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Resources, Warfare Requirements and Assessments. He led the Navy's transition to a force that is able to operate effectively in the littorals. His accomplishments include helping to develop the next generation of nuclear-powered attack submarines, the recently named *Virginia* class of fast attack subs, which are being built jointly by Newport News Shipbuilding and Electric Boat.

Admiral Lopez became Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe and Commander in Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe on 31 July 1996. As CINC AFSOUTH, he commanded the Peace Implementation Forces (IFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina from July 1996 to November 1996.

Tomorrow, at a ceremony at Headquarters AFSOUTH in Naples Italy, after more than two years as the senior military commander in NATO's southern region, Admiral Lopez will relinquish command to Admiral James O. Ellis, Jr. The ceremony will also mark the retirement of Admiral Joe Lopez after a 39-year Navy career.

Mr. President, Admiral Lopez has had a tremendous career and I wish to thank him for the superb job he has done as Commander in Chief of Allied Forces, Southern Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Europe. He demonstrated outstanding leadership as commander of the NATO forces in charge of enforcing the Dayton Peace Agreement. In my travels to that war-torn region of the world I have come to know Admiral Lopez well. We have traveled together on official business. On many occasions, I have visited Joe and his wife Vivian at their quarters in Naples, and have sought the Admiral's counsel, especially on the volatile situations in the Balkans. Admiral Joe Lopez is a man of vision and an astute realist. I will continue to seek his counsel during his retirement.