horrible thing that some 3,000 of them have lost their lives, still when you look at the refugees, I was shocked to find out, as perhaps you were, that they are very well off, considering they are refugees. Kids are all wearing Nikes and were very well dressed. They have the food that they need to eat. They seem to be in much better shape, certainly much better shape than the refugees in some other areas.

Lastly, I want to mention the troops. Our troops are doing a great job. I just couldn't feel better about that. But I really want to get into this, because the New York Times said, on April 13, we are going into Kosovo, the middle of nowhere, with no infrastructure. They will be naked, an official told the New York Times.

I went in there and I found that is exactly right. Our troops have just arrived there, and they are up to their knees, literally, in mud in a tent city. You have to keep in mind that Albania has some things that are very unique. First of all, it is the poorest country in Europe. Secondly, it is always listed as one of the three most dangerous countries in the world. And third, a guy named Hoxha came along right after the Second World War, and he actually declared, and it is still official policy, it is the only nation that has a declared policy of atheism. So we are dealing with that kind of people there, too.

Then something happened in 1997. It is called a pyramid scheme. In 1997, these poor Albanians, from this country in poverty, as poor as Haiti, revolted and they took over the military. When they did that, they took over all the weapons they had. What kind of weapons did they have? They had rocket-propelled grenades, RPG–7s. They had AKA–47s. They had SA–7s, a shoulder-launched, surface-to-air missile that can knock down one of our Apaches very easily, and they had mortars. So here we have our troops who are there in the mud without any infrastructure protecting them and with all of this hostility around them. I might also add, I was sorry—I hate to even say this—that one of the units that came in there when I was there was the mortician unit, so the body bags have arrived.

Mr. President, if there is ever a scene that is set for gradual escalation and for mission creep, this is it. I can see our Troops going in right now. When the President, who has already decided he is going to send in American troops, takes these troops and puts them across the border—and we were standing there watching these high mountains where the border is—if they go in that way, or they go around through Macedonia or some other way, and they have to take over Kosovo and get the Serbs out of Kosovo, that mission is going to creep into the Belgrade scenario, and then that will creep into the Yugoslavia scenario, and let's remember what the Heritage Foundation said in terms of American casualties.

I will say this, and I am not enjoying doing this. There is only going to be one possible way to keep us out of a war, in my opinion, because the President is going to send in troops. Once our American troops get into Kosovo, it is irreversible. One way to keep that from happening is if the American people wake up and realize that we are getting involved in a war where we do not have any national security interests. We are getting involved in a war that is keeping us from adequately defending America in areas where we do have a national security interest such as Iraq or North Korea. Let us keep in mind that in Korea we still have about 367,000 troops and their families. This would greatly impair them. I hope we can have a concerted effort and a wake-up call to the American people to stop this President from starting this war that we will all live to regret.

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

Mr. SPECTER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Kansas and Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair. I thank the Chair doubly for the double acknowledgment of representation, the distinguished Presiding Officer being the Senator from Kansas and this Senator having been born and raised in Kansas. If the sitting Senator from Kansas acknowledges representation of that State, I second the motion.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak for up to 15 minutes in morning business.

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

NATO ACTION INVOLVING UNITED STATES AGAINST FEDERATION OF YUGOSLAVIA

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, now that NATO has celebrated its 50th anniversary with unity, I believe it is important that the Congress of the United States should now carefully assess what action is next to be taken by NATO involving the United States against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

It is critical that Congress discharge its constitutional responsibility where the Constitution specifies that only the Congress of the United States has the authority to declare war and to involve the United States in war. The black-letter pronouncement of the Constitution is sufficient reason in and of itself for meticulous observance, but the public policy reasons behind that constitutional provision are very sound. Unless there is public support for war, shown first through the action of the Congress of the United States, it is not realistic or possible to successfully prosecute the war. We learned that from the bitter experience of Vietnam.

When the Congress of the United States makes a declaration, either formally or through a resolution, it happens after deliberation, after analysis, after an interchange of ideas and after a debate. In so many instances now, we have seen erosion of the congressional authority to declare war. Korea was a war without a declaration by Congress. Vietnam was a war without a declaration by Congress. Only the Gulf of Tonkin resolution has been held up by some as a thinly veiled authorization for the military action taken by the United States in Vietnam.

I believe that we must be very, very cautious not to repeat the mistake of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution and not to endorse hastily a resolution proposed by some of our colleagues in the United States Senate to authorize the President to use whatever force the President may determine to be necessary in the military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

I am not prepared to give the President a blank check. I believe that the constitutional responsibility of a Senator and the entire Senate, both Houses of Congress of the United States, involves a deliberate judgment as to what ought to be undertaken before we involve the United States in war and before we, in effect, have a declaration of war. And there are many, many very important questions which have to be answered before this Senator is prepared to authorize the executive branch—the President—to use whatever force the President deems necessary.

First of all, we need to know what the U.S. commitment will be. We need to know what the plan is. We need to know the strength of the Serbian Army, the military forces of the Republic of Yugoslavia. We need to know to what extent the airstrikes so far have degraded or weakened the military forces of the Serbs or the Republic of Yugoslavia. We need to know what the other commitments will be from the other NATO nations. We need to know how long our commitment will be, or at least some reasonable estimate as to how long we may be expected to be in Kosovo.

We know that the initial deployment in Bosnia was accompanied by a Presidential promise to be out within a year. That was extended by a period of time. That extension was re-extended, and now we don't even have an outer limit as to how long we are to be in Bosnia.

We know that the President has come forward with a request for $5.9 billion in additional funding. I believe the Congress of the United States will support our fighting men and women. But that is a large bill; about $5.5 billion is for military machinery, operations and equipment. It was a surprise to many that in the course of that military operation, we were on the verge of running out of missiles; that our munitions supply was questionable; that our supply of spare parts was questionable. Many of us on this floor, including this Senator, have argued that our military has been reduced too

much. And now there is a debate underway as to whether the President's request for $5.9 billion ought to be supplemented to take care of many items that have been overlooked in the past—issues of military pay, issues of munitions, the overall readiness of the United States.

When the distinguished Prime Minister Tony Blair was in the United States last week, I had occasion to talk to him personally and get his views as to what ought to be done in our military action, the NATO military action, against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Prime Minister Blair talks about ground forces. I asked the obvious questions as to how many the United Kingdom is prepared to commit, how many the U.S. will be called upon to undertake, and what we have done by way of degrading the Yugoslav forces by air attacks. To his credit, Prime Minister Blair responded that those were all unanswered questions.

Well, before I am prepared to vote for the use of force, I think there ought to be some very concrete answers to those questions. The President of the United States was quoted as saying that he was prepared to reevaluate the question of the use of ground troops because that request had been made by the Secretary General of NATO. Frankly, I am just a little bit surprised that the Commander in Chief of the U.S. military forces is looking to the leadership of the Secretary General of NATO when the United States is playing the dominant role and supplying the overwhelming majority of air power and materiel in our military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

It seems to me the leadership ought to be coming from the President. The leadership ought to be coming from the United States. We certainly are footing the bill, and we certainly are the major actor. So if, in fact, there is a justification for a greater authorization by the Congress, that word ought to come from the President, through the leadership of the President, telling us in a very concrete way the answers to the important questions that I have enumerated.

This Senator understands there are no absolute answers to the questions, but we ought to have best estimates, and we ought to have a very candid assessment from the United States military, who, so far, have been less than unequivocal in their responses as to whether the airstrikes alone can bring President Milosevic to his knees. The answer that is given by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shelton, is that the military will be degraded. But there is a more fundamental question which needs to be answered—whether the airstrikes will be successful, or whether the airstrikes will sufficiently weaken the Republic of Yugoslavia so that we at least have an idea, if there are to be ground forces, what the results will be.

But I believe very strongly that we should not pass a resolution analogous to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, authorizing the President to use whatever force the President deems necessary. I believe there should be no blank check for this President, or for any President. But I am prepared to listen to a concrete, specific plan that evaluates the risks, that evaluates the costs in terms of potential U.S. lives. I am not prepared to commit ground forces without having a specific idea as to what the realistic prognosis will be.

The Senate of the United States passed a resolution on March 23 authorizing airstrikes, but strictly guarding against ground forces. The airstrikes constitute a clear-cut act of war, and the resolution of the Senate of the United States is not sufficient under the Constitution. There has to be a joinder with the House of Representatives. So it is my thought that before any further action is taken, before there is any suggestion of a commitment of ground forces, that matter ought to come before the Congress and ought to receive prior congressional authorization before any such force is used, and that the entire Congress of the United States ought to review the military action that is undertaken at the present time, and that it is in fact beyond the prerogative of the President under his constitutional authority as Commander in Chief, but it is realistically a matter that is decided by the Congress.

Make no mistake. There are very vital interests involved in the action now being undertaken against the Republic of Yugoslavia. NATO's credibility is squarely on the line. The credibility of the United States is squarely on the line. The activities of the Serbs, the Republic of Yugoslavia, in what is called ethnic cleansing, which is a polite name for ''barbaric massacres,'' is unparalleled since World War II. And there are very major humanitarian interests which are currently being served.

This body has never come to grips, in my opinion, with the square determination as to whether vital U.S. national security interests are involved, and that is the traditional test of the use of force. But we are on the line; our country is on the line. NATO, a very important international organization, has its credibility on the line. And we must act in a very thoughtful, very careful way after important information is presented to the Congress by the President, because only the President is in a position to answer the critical questions. Then the deliberation of the Congress ought to take shape, and we ought to make a determination in accordance with the Constitution whether the Congress will authorize the executive branch to use force, to send in ground troops, or what the parameters of that declaration would be.

Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania has 2 minutes 20 seconds remaining.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I might speak for an additional 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I urge the Palestinian Authority not to take unilateral action on May 4 to declare a Palestinian state. That date, May 4, 1999, marks a period where significant speculation has been undertaken as to whether the Palestinian Authority would make such a unilateral declaration of statehood because of their dissatisfaction with the progress of the negotiations under the Oslo accords. I urge the Palestinian Authority not to take any such action on the grounds that is a matter for negotiation under the Oslo accords, and that it is something that ought to be decided between the parties to those accords—the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

I had occasion to discuss this matter personally with Chairman Yasser Arafat when he was in the United States a little over a month ago when I was scheduled to visit him in his hotel in Virginia, but I had the opportunity to confer with Chairman Arafat in my hideaway.

For those who don't know what a hideaway is, it is a small room in the Capitol downstairs 2 minutes away from the Senate floor; small, but accommodating.

On that occasion, Chairman Arafat and I discussed a variety of topics, including the question of whether the Palestinian Authority would undertake a unilateral declaration of statehood.

I might say to the Chair in passing just a small personal note that when I accompanied President Clinton to Bethlehem in December of last year, I was struck by a large poster which had the overtones of a political poster. It had a picture of the President on one side with his thumb up, and it had a picture of Chairman Arafat on the other side. It was a political poster. The picture had not been taken with President Clinton and Chairman Arafat together, but it had that symbolism for the occasion of the President's visit to Bethlehem.

I took one as a souvenir. As we Senators sometimes do, I had it framed and it is hanging in my hideaway so that when Chairman Arafat came into the hideaway and saw the picture of himself and President Clinton, he was very pleased to see it on display and insisted on having a picture of himself taken in front of the picture of himself, which is not an unusual occurrence, whether you are a Palestinian with the Palestinian Authority, or from even the State of Kansas, or the State of Pennsylvania.

In the course of our discussions, I urged Chairman Arafat not to make the unilateral declaration of statehood.