Mr.

Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution,

H. Con. Res. 235, calling for an end

to the violent repression of the legitimate

rights of the people of Kosovo. In

recent weeks we have seen yet another

outbreak of deadly violence in the Balkans,

with the Serbian police and the

military units striking certain regions

in Kosovo and killing as many as 80

Kosovar Albanians.

I am an original cosponsor of the resolution,

and I appreciate very much

the work done by my colleagues, the

gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL)

and the gentleman from New York (Mr.

GILMAN), the chairman of the full committee,

to bring this measure to the

floor. The measure was considered in

committee last week, at which time a

number of amendments that I offered

were adopted, including one asking

that the OSCE mission be allowed back

into Kosovo as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we must all recognize

that, despite the complexity of the Balkans,

primary responsibility for nearly

a decade of conflict in the former

Yugoslavia lies squarely on the shoulders

of Milosevic and his regime in Belgrade.

Since 1989, when Milosevic unilaterally

revoked Kosovo’s autonomy,

he has established as official policy discrimination

against ethnic Albanians,

who constitute 90 percent of the population

of Kosovo, especially in terms of

employment. Milosevic’s police force in

Kosovo is, in reality, more of an army,

which has arbitrarily harassed, detained,

tortured and even murdered innocent

Albanians on a regular basis.

Tomorrow, in fact, the Commission

on Security and Cooperation in Europe,

which I co-chair, will be conducting a

hearing on the issue of the repression

and the violence in Kosovo. As the

Commission has followed closely this

situation in Kosovo, it has become

clear that Mr. Milosevic responds to

criticism only when there is a clear resolve

that his aggression, violence, and

abuse of human rights will invoke serious

consequences.

I would note that the language of the

resolution states that no independent

national or United States sanctions

currently in force against the Government

of Serbia or Montenegro should

be terminated at this time unless a

judgment is made that such termination

would help encourage a peaceful

resolution to the repression in Kosovo.

In this resolution, we call on the authorities

of Serbia-Montenegro to fully

cooperate with efforts and initiatives

of the OSCE, including the immediate

and unconditional return of a mission

of long duration. The mission mandate

should focus on all of Serbia and Montenegro

and should be held by a person

of prominence.

Belgrade expelled the mission, you

might recall, Mr. Speaker, in 1993 and

has made its return contingent on the

lifting of Yugoslavia’s suspension in

the OSCE. Both Kosovar Albanians and

Kosovar Serbs have told us that the return

of the mission is desirable. The

mission would monitor the situation

both in Kosovo and in Serbia and Montenegro

and would facilitate local dialogue

in order to help deter an escalation

of conflict and the violation of

human rights.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we

should enthusiastically support the investigation

and prosecution of the

International Criminal Tribunal for

the Former Yugoslavia of crimes

against humanity committed in

Kosovo. The events in Kosovo in recent

days are reminiscent of what took

place at the beginning of the Bosnian

conflict in 1992, and they could similarly

escalate into massive and violent

ethnic cleansing.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very good resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of

my time.