Mr. Speaker, the killing

in Kosova continues, and as is always

the case in war, it is the innocent

civilians who suffer the most. This picture

of refugees fleeing Kosova, right

here, through the mountainous region

on the border with Albania illustrates

only a few of the many thousands of

Kosovan refugees who have fled the

country in recent weeks to escape from

the latest round of ethnic cleansing

taking place in this troubled region.

I visited the region with my colleagues,

the gentleman from New York

(Mr. ELLIOTT ENGEL) and the gentleman

from Virginia (Mr. JIM MORAN)

just prior to the latest offensive

launched by Serbian strongman

Slobodan Milosevic. What we saw there

was a mixture of fear and apprehension

over the possibility that the violence

would escalate, a fear which has, sadly,

come to pass.

The ethnic Albanian population in

Kosova elected Dr. Abraham Rugova as

the President of the Republic of

Kosova. Despite the fact that Belgrade

refused to recognize the legitimacy of

the election, despite the violence that

was already taking place at the time,

and despite the fact that the Kosovan

people went to the polls on an election

day at their own personal peril from

possible retribution from Serbian police

and military forces, I saw a genuine

sense of hope among the ethnic Albanians

that we were able to meet.

Of course, that hope was shattered by

artillery and mortar rounds as

Milosevic launched his latest and most

deadly campaign against the Kosovan

people, a campaign which has left hundreds

dead and many thousands more

homeless. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that

this should not surprise any of us.

After all, dictators care very little for

the will of the people, for human

rights, and for the rule of international

law.

Milosevic now has an estimated 50,000

troops and special police in Kosova,

backed by tanks and armored vehicles,

artillery, helicopter gunships, and aircraft

to support his campaign of genocide.

No, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Milosevic

cares very little about the consequences

of his actions in Kosova, or

for the outrage expressed by world

leaders.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Milosevic no longer

responds to words and condemnation.

What will get his attention? What will

end the killing? What will end scenes

such as this, of terrified refugees fleeing

with whatever belongings they

could grab and carry, these poor people

streaming out of the mountains, leaving

their homes, leaving their family

farms, trying to flee the violence?

What will end scenes such as this?

What may finally bring peace and stability

to this troubled region? That is

the very real threat of military action

by NATO.

Mr. Milosevic does not understand

reason, but he does understand force.

When he realizes that his own forces

may be in jeopardy if he fails to pull

them out of Kosova, then and only then

will he cease fire and pull back. Then

and only then will we have any real

chance at negotiating a lasting peace

that recognizes the rights of all

Kosovans.

It is time that NATO take the gloves

off, Mr. Speaker. If Milosevic only responds

to force, then perhaps we have

reached a point where force is necessary.