Mr. President, the use of

indiscriminate force by units of the

Serbian special police and the Yugoslav

armed forces in Kosovo must stop.

If unchecked, the violence there could

well spillover into Albania and Macedonia

and could at some point involve

other nations in the region, including

our NATO allies.

Acting at the direction of Yugoslav

President Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian

police and military units have

brutally targeted civilians and used

scorched earth tactics with a plan to

drive ethnic Albanians out of their

towns and villages. According to the

United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees Sadako Ogata, around 65,000

people have been forced to flee their

homes in Kosovo since March and prior

to the latest Serbian special police and

troop attack on the town of Belacevac.

Of that number, around 12,000 have

fled to neighboring Albania across

treacherous mountains—some children

had to walk barefoot for days. About

8,000 have fled to Montenegro and small

numbers have sought refuge in Macedonia,

where the United States maintains

about 350 Army personnel as part of the

United Nations Preventive Deployment

Force.

Before I comment further on what I

believe should be done to address the

crisis in Kosovo, I would like to briefly

describe how this crisis came about.

Kosovo, with a population of 2 million

of which more than 90 percent are

ethnic Albanians, enjoyed autonomous

province status under the 1974 Yugoslav

Constitution. However, changes to

the Serbian constitution in 1989

through 1991 revoked that autonomous

province status and abolished the Parliament

and Government of Kosovo.

Since that time, Serbian authorities

have carried out a policy of repression:

firing ethnic Albanians from all public

jobs and using arrests, brutal and often

fatal beatings and other forms of intimidation

in violation of commonly

accepted human rights standards. In

the face of this repressive policy, ethnic

Albanians pursued a policy of nonviolent

resistance. They boycotted Serbian

institutions and built their own

parallel set of political, economic and

social institutions. In 1992, they elected

Ibrahim Rugova as president and a 130-

member parliament.

When the policy of non-violent resistance

failed to make any progress, some

ethnic Albanians turned to violence

and over the past two years, the

Kosovo Liberation Army has conducted

attacks on Serbian police and other officials.

On the night of February 28 of

this year, Serbian special police reportedly

killed more than 20 ethnic Albanians

in a sweep through the Drenica

region of Kosovo. Since late February,

it is estimated that more than 200 ethnic

Albanians have been killed in

Kosovo at the hands of Serbian special

police and military forces. As Serbian

police forces have increased their violence

against civilians, more and more

ethnic Albanians have joined the

Kosovo Liberation Army.

Mr. President, the actions of

Slobodan Milosevic and his henchmen

have been condemned by the entire

international community. Russia, at

the conclusion of the NATO-Russia

Permanent Joint Council meeting on

June 12, 1998, joined the NATO defense

ministers in condemning ‘‘Belgrade’s

massive and disproportionate use of

force as well as violent attacks by

Kosovar Albanian extremists.’’

The United Nations Security Council,

by resolution 1160 adopted on March 31,

1998, condemned the excessive use of

force by Serbian police forces against

civilians and peaceful demonstrators in

Kosovo and acting under Chapter VII of

the Charter imposed a comprehensive

arms embargo on Yugoslavia and urged

the Prosecutor for the International

Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia

to begin gathering information

related to the violence in Kosovo.

The Security Council’s action is important

because, by taking under Chapter

VII of the United Nations Charter,

the Security Council has determined

that the violence in Kosovo is a threat

to international peace and security.

This is important because, there is a

possibility that Russia may use its

veto to prevent the Security Council

from authorizing the use of all necessary

means to stop the violence in

Kosovo. In this regard, I note with approval

that both Secretary of State

Albright and Secretary of Defense

Cohen took the position that the Security

Council’s authorization was desirable

but not required for NATO action

to intervene in Kosovo.

Mr. President, I applaud NATO’s decision

to conduct an air exercise in Albania

and Macedonia to demonstrate

its capability to project power rapidly

in the region. I regret that Russian

President Yeltsin was unable to gain

Milosevic’s commitment to withdraw

Serbian special units from Kosovo,

when they met in Moscow on June 16.

Milosevic has already defaulted on his

commitment to President Yeltsin to

carry out no repressive actions against

civilians.

Mr. President, we all hope that this

tragic situation will be resolved peacefully,

but that does not appear to be

likely. Bosnia has taught us that quick

and decisive action can prevent a crisis

from getting out of hand. We must not

allow Milosevic to draw this crisis out,

while the ethnic Albanian people of

Kosovo suffer. The international community

must let Milosevic know that

he must halt the systematic campaign

of repression and expulsions in Kosovo.

He must withdraw his special police

from Kosovo and return his military

forces to their barracks. And he must

engage in bona fide negotiations to restore

a significant degree of autonomy

to Kosovo. Anything else will be insufficient

and justify strong action by the

international community.