I welcome the news that President

Milosevic and Dr. Ibrahim Rugova will meet

on May 15 in Belgrade to initiate a dialog

without preconditions.

As Ambassadors Holbrooke and Gelbard

announced earlier today, the parties have

also agreed to continue this dialog in a series

of talks in Pristina.

This is a sober first step towards resolving

a very dangerous conflict that clearly has the

potential to spill over into neighboring countries

and destabilize the region.

There is a great deal more to be done,

however, before all the peoples of Kosovo

enjoy the peace, security, and human rights

they deserve. The parties face a complex

challenge, but success is up to them. We expect

each to make good their commitment

to serious and productive dialog.

We should be mindful of the difficult road

ahead, but we are encouraged to see this

process underway.