Mr. PALLONE. Reclaiming my time, I just wanted to mention, I appreciate the comments that the gentlewoman from Michigan and the gentlewoman from Connecticut made, because I think the bottom line is that you are talking about targeted tax cuts that help the average working family.

I wanted to say, though, you know, that just for those who think that perhaps the Democrats do not have an alternative, we really have the only new tax system, if you will, new proposal out there that sweeps away the old Tax Code, but at the same time provides fairness. This is the one that was introduced by our Democratic leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT).

It is the only major tax reform proposal that retains the progressive rate structure and ensures that this new system is fair. It is a 10 percent tax plan that has been offered by our House Democratic leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), recognizing that the Tax Code is too complex and filled with special interest tax breaks that result in higher tax rates for middle-income families.

So what the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) has proposed is basically ratifying and simplifying the system and cutting taxes for 70 percent of families with children, with income between $20,000 and $75,000. Under his plan, more than 70 percent of all taxpayers would have a tax rate of 10 percent or less.

This proposal by the gentleman from Missouri also eliminates the marriage penalty by making the standard deduction in tax brackets for couples double those for single people. It eliminates special interest tax breaks. Very important.

You keep reading on a regular basis, particularly around April 15, about all these special interest tax rates. It eliminates them. It eliminates the role of the army of lobbyists who now dominate tax policy discussions. We see them around here. Every one of us has seen these people. This is the time of year when we see them the most.

It calls for a commission to identify and recommend elimination of wasteful and unwarranted corporate tax and spending subsidies. I think this is something we should look at. This is a Democratic proposal by our leader. It stands for a tax system that is fair and simple, in the event you want to look at an alternative.

Ms. DELAURO. I think what is important to mention there, it also maintains that home mortgage deduction, again, which is so critical to families today. As I say, that is part of the American dream. I just wanted to point out, because I know the gentlewoman from Michigan, if you will, she is a technology maven, you know, and is there all the time pushing as how we need to move families and so forth to take advantage of technologies, the way our kids are going to get ahead and so forth.

I think it is interesting in terms of this sales tax here, in every family, kids are coming home today, ''Why can't I have a computer? I would like a computer. Why don't have one? You know, Mary has one. Jessica has one. Freddie has one. What about us?''

Well, hold up the chart. I think it is important to note that chart. Family computer, today's price is almost $2,000. It would add an additional 30 percent, another $600, bringing the cost of a family computer to almost $2,600, you know, for the most part, trying to put it out of the reach for working families. They are trying to respond to their kids to allow their kids to get ahead.

It is wrong. This is not what we ought to do. Let us target our tax credits to working families, to small businesses, to small farmers. Let us take a look at that Tax Code. Let us make it simpler. Let us make it easier. These catchwords scrap the code. They are radical. They are dangerous.

We are going to make it our mission here to continue to have these conversations so that the American public knows that they are being sold a pig in a poke. We are going to bring it to their attention so that they do not get fooled by this dangerous and extreme rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, I think we will be up on our feet again on this issue.

TRAGIC U.S. POLICY IN RWANDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULSHOF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House tonight to reflect on what we have seen on television and heard about, relating to the President of the United States' visit to Africa. I think all of us have witnessed the President as he has made his way across the African continent.

I read in this morning's Washington Post, and I know it was covered by other newspapers, an account of what the President said. And he was in Rwanda when he made this statement. He said, ''We did not act quickly enough after the killing began.'' I believe he was talking to Rwandans.

I want to talk about that statement in a second. But President Clinton will not be going to Somalia on this trip. In Somalia, our President took a humanitarian mission initiated by President Bush, and turned it into a $3 billion disaster.

Remember, if you will, that President Clinton placed United States troops under United Nations command. Remember, if you will, that as Americans we watched in horror as our murdered troops were left under U.N. command, unable to defend themselves, were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu.

Today, Somolia has slipped back into chaos after this Clinton fiasco. We have to remember what took place in Africa and what the policies of this administration were. I protested the Clinton proposal for Somalia before that tragedy, time and time again, in the well and on the floor of this House.

Let me now turn to Rwanda. President Clinton, as I said in my opening statement, is quoted as saying, ''We did not act quickly enough after the killing began.'' Pay particular attention to what the President said and what is printed in the papers.

Let me, if I may, as Paul Harvey says, tell you and repeat the rest of the story.

The President said we did not act quickly enough after the killing began. But what the President of the United States did not say to the world and to Africa is what we should now be remembering.

I saved the newspaper accounts of what the President said, because I was so stunned by the lack of action and actually the blocking of action by this administration, and brought them with me to the floor tonight. I saved them and had them blown up.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros-Ghali, begged President Clinton to allow an all-African U.N. force to go into Rwanda. Let me read what he said. This is what was in the newspaper.

□ 2145

When last year's peace agreement collapsed on April 7th and fierce fighting broke out between Hutu and Tutsi, the United Nations cut its 2,700-member force in Rwanda back to a few hundred at the urging of the Clinton administration.

I spoke out then, and I have spoken out afterwards on the floor when we saw what was happening with this administration and this policy before 1 million Africans were slaughtered.

Let me, if I may, recall some of the statements that I made on this floor. I made one statement on this floor, and I will read it. Let me, if I may, trace the history of this tragedy. Let me also, if I may, trace the history of our failed policy.

On April 6th, a plane with the presidents of Rwanda, Burundi was shot down. We knew then the potential for violence, terror and mass killings.

On May 11th, the United States criticized a U.N. plan to send 5,500 multinational soldiers into Rwanda to protect refugees and assist relief workers. No U.S. troops would have been involved.

On May 16th, the U.S. forced the U.N. to delay plans to send 5,500 troops to end violence in Rwanda, an all-U.N. force.

So we see that the history of action and inaction by this administration, and history should so properly record it.

THE STATUS OF OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE AND OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULSHOF). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to discuss an issue that is not one of the front page stories nationally, but which really needs to be discussed in this body, and that is the status of our national defense and our national security. It is an especially timely discussion tonight because we are about to take up for consideration both in this body and the other body a supplemental bill that will partially deal with the funds that we have been expending in Bosnia and in other parts of the world where our troops are currently deployed. But before I get into my overview, Mr. Speaker, let me respond to some of the discussion from our colleagues on the other side during the previous hour.

They attempted to portray the Republicans as being insensitive to the needs of working people, not caring about seniors, not caring about families, not caring about education, not caring about health care. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker.

I take great pride in being a Member who, by profession, spent years as a public school teacher in a suburban district next to Philadelphia, ran a chapter 1 program for economically and educationally deprived children, and like my colleagues on the Republican and on the Democrat side, cared desperately about the future of our young people.

We in the Republican Party simply have a fundamental difference with our Democrat colleagues. We think that the American people can best decide how to spend their money, what the priorities should be. Obviously, we could spend the money of the American people in a number of different ways, and that is what many of our colleagues on the other side think should be the role of the Federal Government. We, however, believe that giving the American people more of their hard-earned money to spend on their priorities is in fact the best way to allow us all to enjoy the liberties under this system that we are so blessed with.

In fact, following my presentation tonight, one of our colleagues, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE), will be doing an in-depth discussion of health care, and I think he will be raising some very provocative issues about our need to look at the way health care is being provided in this country.

So Republicans do care, Mr. Speaker, and Democrats do care. And I think for Members of either party to get up and totally tear apart the other side is, in fact, what it appears to be; it is just shallow rhetoric, it is political rhetoric designed to try to continue what happened in the last campaign cycle. We do not need that. With the difficult problems that this Nation has, we need to have intelligent discussion, debate, and deal with the real issues that face this country.

One of those issues, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that has not been getting much attention has been our national security. In fact, if we look at the record over the past 7 years, the only major area of the Federal budget that has in fact been cut in real terms is our defense portion of the budget. In fact, it has gone down for 13 consecutive years.

Now, many would argue that the world has changed, and since we are no longer in the Cold War where we are having to keep up with a very powerful Soviet Union, that reductions in defense spending are appropriate; and in fact, Mr. Speaker, I agree with that, and I have supported many of the reductions that we in fact have caused to occur over the past several years.

For instance, for the past 3 years, I have been a Republican, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Research and Development, voting consistently against the B–2 bomber. It is not that I do not like the technology, I think Stealth technology is critically important, but I just do not think we can afford the B–2 bomber with the budget limitations we have and with the other problems that we have as a Nation.

But we need to look at the facts, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what has been happening with our defense posture, what the threats are, and where we are going to be at the beginning of the next century, because I think we are going to face a very perilous period of time.

First of all, let us make some comparisons. Now the people of America, my constituents back home in Pennsylvania, believe that we are spending so much more of their tax dollars today on defense than what we did in previous years. The facts just do not bear that out, Mr. Speaker. In fact, in the 1960s, and I picked this period of time because we were at relative peace, it was after Korea, but before Vietnam, the country was not at war. John Kennedy was the President. During that time period, we were spending 52 cents of every Federal tax dollar sent to Washington on our military. We were spending 9 percent of our country's gross national product on defense. We were at peace.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are spending 15 cents of the Federal tax dollars sent to Washington on the military, about 2.9 percent of our GNP. So, in fact, as a percentage of the total amount of money taken in by Washington, we have in fact dramatically cut the amount of that money going for national security.

But some other things have changed during that time period that we have to look at. First of all, Mr. Speaker, back when John Kennedy was the President, we had the draft. Young people were sucked out of high school, they were paid far less than the minimum wage, and they were asked to serve the country for 2 years.

Today's military is all volunteer; we have no draft. Our young people are paid a decent wage. In fact, many of them have education well beyond high school, college degrees, some have advanced degrees. So we have education costs. We have housing costs because many of our young people in the military today are married; so we have health care costs, housing costs, education costs that we did not have when John Kennedy was President because our troops were largely drafted. So a much larger percentage of this 15 cents on the dollar that we bring into Washington for the military goes for the quality of life of our troops.

And in fact, the bulk of our money today, the bulk of the money spent in the defense budget goes to provide for quality of life for the men and women who serve this country. So that is a fundamental change. But some other things have happened, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, we have to look at what has occurred during the last 7 years or 6 years as this President has seen fit to dramatically cut defense far beyond what I think is a safe level in terms of long-term spending. During a time where the President has proposed massive decreases in defense spending, he has increased the deployment rate of our troops to an all-time high, in fact, the highest level of deployments in the history of America.

Now, let me give some examples, Mr. Speaker. I have a chart that bears this out. This chart shows the number of deployments that our country has provided our troops in terms of the past 7 years. We have deployed our troops, rather, the President has deployed our troops 25 times at home and around the world. These are deployments that involved military operations, some have involved confrontation, many are peacekeeping, some are involved with disaster relief, a whole host of missions. But the point is that during the period of time where we decimated defense spending to an all-time low, we increased the deployment low to an all-time high. Mr. Speaker, 25 deployments in the past 7 years.

Now, compare that to the previous 40 years. We had 10 deployments in that period of time. So in the previous 40 years, prior to Bill Clinton becoming the President, our troops were deployed a total of 10 times. Just in the last 7 years, our troops have been deployed 25 times.

Now, what is so significant about that, Mr. Speaker? Well, what is so significant about that is that none of those deployments were budgeted for, none of them were planned for. So to pay for those deployments, we had to take money from other accounts, because there were no special monies made available to pay for the costs of all of these deployments.