

about war crimes in Bosnia. I have talked about Slobodan Milosevic branded by the State Department under George Bush as a war criminal. I have talked about the necessity of us confronting Slobodan Milosevic, not the Serbian people, but the leader of the Serbian Government, confronting him in a way that he clearly understood the West was serious; that the West would not tolerate genocide in Europe.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, in Bosnia, as all of us know, some 250,000 people lost their lives, over 2 million refugees were created by ethnic cleansing—the greatest tragedy in Europe since the Second World War.

Mr. Speaker, tragically, when dictators and despots are not confronted effectively, the lesson of history is that they repeat their atrocities. Just the other day we saw such atrocities committed. When Ambassador Walker called it genocide, which truly it was, a crime against humanity—people lying on the ground, children, women shot at close range, in their faces and in the backs their heads—Slobodan Milosevic told Ambassador Walker to “Get out of my country”.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, I'm the ranking member on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission. In that capacity, I have traveled to Bosnia and to Kosovo, been to Pristina, talked to leaders, Albanian leaders and Serbian leaders. Tragically, there was no avenue for communication offered by the Serbian authorities. They would say that there are atrocities committed on both sides, and they would be correct. But, Mr. Speaker, as was the case in Bosnia, the overwhelming responsibility for the crimes against humanity which were committed in Bosnia, and are now being committed in Kosovo, are the responsibility of Slobodan Milosevic.

Now, you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that when I and others made those accusations, the response was, “Oh, no, that is in Bosnia, not in Serbia. That is Karadzic, Mladic, and other Serbian leaders in Bosnia itself, not me,” said Slobodan Milosevic. “I am not responsible. I want to stop the war. I want to ensure the safety of people.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is no mask, there is no curtain, there is no veil. In point of fact, the world has seen the reality of Slobodan Milosevic's determination to accomplish his ends by whatever means possible—no matter how illegal they may be, no matter how evil they may be, no matter how many opponents' lives are lost, no matter that they are innocent women and children, old men, noncombatants. Slobodan Milosevic does not care.

Mr. Speaker, we focus on a lot of things in America, but we need to focus on the fact that we are the leader. And in that position we have a responsibility to come together with the rest of Europe to make sure that genocide has

a consequence, that genocide is stopped, that people are saved.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 105TH CONGRESS ARE MANY, BUT MUCH MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, it is good to be here today. As I look back over the last 2 years, I am so proud of the accomplishments of this Congress, proud of what we have achieved in just the last few short years, accomplishments that include balancing the budget for the first time in 28 years, cutting taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years, saving medicare and giving medicare another 10 years of a strong, good life; and also reforming welfare by emphasizing work and family and responsibility for the first time in over a generation.

Now, this House of Representatives, even though we have accomplished quite a bit, accomplishments we are proud of, balancing the budget, cutting taxes for the middle class, reforming welfare and saving medicare, we face some big challenges ahead. Our tax burden is still too high. In fact, for the average American family the tax burden today totals almost 40 percent, if we add State and local as well as Federal taxes. We need to make sure that taxes are lower for working middle class families.

We need to help our local schools and ensure that the dollars that we provided, because we have increased funding by 10 percent this last year at the Federal level for our local schools, we need to ensure those dollars actually reach the classroom.

We need to increase and strengthen our Nation's defense. I think it is just wrong that 11,000 American military men and women today subsist on food stamps in order to make ends meet. That is just wrong. We need to make up and fix that and strengthen our national defense.

We also need to save social security, an issue that is so important not just for today's seniors but for every working American.

Tonight we are going to hear the President's State of the Union speech. It is important we be here to hear what the President has to say, and I hope tonight we hear from the President that he has a specific plan, a specific proposal to save social security.

□ 1445

For the last year and a half now, the President has talked about saving Social Security but he has yet to give us a plan, a proposal, specifics that we can work with him on to accomplish that goal. I hope tonight to hear some specifics.

As a member of the Subcommittee on Social Security, I am anxious to learn the President's proposal, and I am won-

dering whether his solution will raise taxes on working Americans. Will it cut benefits for seniors? Will it give opportunity for working Americans, or will he just redistribute wealth? Those are important questions, and we are looking forward to hearing the President's proposal.

I also hope to hear the President address an important issue, a fundamental question of tax fairness. I have often asked in this well here this question: Is it right, is it fair that 21 million married working couples pay on average \$1,400 more in taxes today just because they are married, \$1,400 more than an identical working couple living together outside of marriage? I think that is wrong, and I know the folks back in Chicago and the south suburbs that I have the privilege of representing also believe that the marriage tax penalty is wrong and unfair and we believe it should be eliminated.

In the Chicago south suburbs, in a town like Joliet and the district that I have the privilege of representing, \$1,400 is one year's tuition at our local community college, Joliet Junior College. It is 3 months of day-care at a local day-care center. It is just wrong that our tax code punishes marriage. We should make elimination of the marriage tax penalty a bipartisan priority.

This past year the House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate legislation that helped the process of saving social security and legislation that specifically eliminated the marriage tax penalty for a majority of those that suffer it. In fact, our legislation that we passed out of the House of Representatives last fall reserved \$1.4 trillion of the budget surplus, extra tax revenue that we are now collecting more than we are spending, but set aside \$1.4 trillion to save social security, and the rest we use to help working families by lowering their taxes, including eliminating the marriage tax penalty for the majority of those who suffer it.

My hope is that the President tonight will outline a plan which does save social security. It is my hope that the President will also come forward and embrace a bipartisan effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty. We can get the job done, just as we have in the past.

Over the last 2 years, we have balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years; we cut taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years; we reformed welfare for the first time in a generation; and we extended the life of medicare by working together.

It is my hope that by working together under the leadership of our new Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), that we can save Social Security, that we can eliminate the marriage tax penalty, that we can strengthen our Nation's defenses and ensure that the dollars we provide for our local schools actually reach the classroom.