

very exciting, necessary provisions, some provisions where all Americans taxpayer will receive back part of the overpayment they paid in.

We have made a dent in the death taxes. We fixed the marriage penalty—eventually, with a start immediately, and a myriad of other provisions in there that will affect the lives of literally every person in the United States.

I thank the chairman of the committee who has been a part of the last great tax relief that was done as well as this great tax relief.

I thank the chairman and my colleagues who worked on and supported this measure.

I yield the floor.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I also associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Wyoming commending Senator ROTH and the Finance Committee for their work on this very important landmark tax relief legislation the Senate passed today. I believe, in taking the step we did today, in lowering the tax burden upon the American people from 21 percent of GDP to 20 percent of the gross domestic product, we have taken a modest but a very important step in providing relief to all Americans. I commend the Senate today, and the staff, and ask the President to reconsider his proposed veto.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BALKAN HISTORICAL PARALLELS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, yesterday the Committee on Foreign Relations held a remarkable hearing on the prospects for democracy in Yugoslavia. Testifying were two of the Administration's top Balkan experts, two leading representatives of the non-governmental organization community with wide and deep experience in the Balkans, the executive director of the Office of External Affairs of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the United States, and a courageous woman from Belgrade who chairs the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia.

One of the many topics raised during this hearing was the question of the correctness of the decision of the United States to refuse to give reconstruction assistance—as distinct from humanitarian assistance—to Serbia as long as Slobodan Milosevic remains in control in Belgrade. I completely support the Administration's policy in this matter, which, I am certain, comes as no surprise to any of my colleagues.

Since on this very day President Clinton and more than forty other world leaders are meeting in Sarajevo to discuss a so-called Balkans Stability

Pact, which would deliver reconstruction assistance on a regional basis, I thought it would be appropriate at this time briefly to discuss two alleged historical parallels, one of which I believe is fallacious, the other which I would assert is directly applicable to the current situation.

At yesterday's hearing it was asserted that there was a moral imperative for NATO countries to offer reconstruction aid to Serbia just as after World War II the United States included Germany in its Marshall Plan assistance.

Mr. President, I would submit that this intended parallel falls short in several respects. First of all, in spite of twelve brutal years of criminal Nazi rule, post-war Germany still had the democratic tradition of Weimar as a basis for rebuilding its political system, with several prominent surviving leaders. Nothing like that exists in Serbia today. There are no Serbian Konrad Adenauers or Kurt Schumachers.

Secondly, the United States made as preconditions for Marshall plan assistance adherence to democracy, free-market capitalism, and cooperation with neighboring countries. Needless to say, the Serbia of Slobodan Milosevic would qualify on none of those grounds.

Finally, in order to guide post-war Germany toward democracy, the victorious allies occupied the country, dividing up responsibility into four zones. The Soviets quickly made clear their intention to impose communism in what became East Germany, and Stalin pressured the East Germans and other satellite countries to refuse the offer of Marshall Plan aid. In the U.S., British, and French zones of Germany, however, hundreds of thousands of troops and civilian officials essentially ran political life until the Federal Republic of Germany was established in 1949, and allied troops have remained until today.

It may well be that in order to bring Serbia into the family of democratic nations just such an international occupation would have to happen, but it is simply not in the cards.

So, Mr. President, the alleged parallel of today's Serbia with post-war Germany is totally inappropriate.

There is, however, a historical parallel chronologically much closer to today, which is, in fact, an appropriate one. That is the case of the Republika Srpska, one of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the Dayton Accords were signed in late 1995 and the two entities—the Bosniak-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska—were established, the Congress of the United States put together a reconstruction assistance package. Because of the brutal crimes of the Bosnian Serbs under Radovan Karadzic from 1992 to 1995, the legislation excluded the new Republika Srpska, then under Karadzic's control, from any reconstruction assistance ex-

cept for infrastructural projects like energy and water, which spanned the inter-entity boundary line with the Federation. That meant that in the immediate post-Dayton period the Federation received about ninety-eight percent of American development assistance to Bosnia.

Largely as a result of this policy, the Federation's economy immediately began to recover from the war, while the Republika Srpska, under Karadzic's control in the town of Pale, stagnated.

But our policy has not been one exclusively of sticks; there have also been carrots. If localities in the Republika Srpska cooperated with Dayton implementation, the U.S. Agency for International Development was prepared to channel assistance to them. USAID lays down strict conditions in contracts with the individual localities. The policy is not perfect, and it is carefully monitored by Congress. But, in general, it has worked, and it has had positive results.

People in the Republika Srpska saw the economic resuscitation of the Federation and noticed the assistance that a few of their own localities were receiving. They compared this modest, but undeniable economic progress with the persistent, grinding poverty of most of the Republika Srpska, led by Karadzic and his corrupt, criminal gang in Pale, which had been effectively isolated. The indicted war criminal Karadzic was finally banned from political life, but one of his puppets took his place.

No matter how ultra-nationalistic or even racist many of the people in the Republika Srpska were, most of the population caught on pretty quickly that their future was an absolute zero as long as their current leaders stayed in office.

The result was a reform movement, initially led by Mrs. Plavsic, which legally wrested control from the Pale thugs and moved the capital of the Republika Srpska to Banja Luka. Last year she lost an election, but the government of the Republika Srpska is now led by Prime Minister Dodik, a genuine democrat, who has survived attempts from Belgrade by Milosevic to unseat him, is supported by a multi-ethnic parliamentary coalition, kept the lid on the situation during the Yugoslav air campaign, and now is beginning to implement Dayton.

The situation in Bosnia, as we all know, is far from satisfactory, but real progress has been made. And, back to my original point, in the Republika Srpska we have the real historical parallel of a policy of excluding a government from economic reconstruction assistance as long as it is ruled by an indicted war criminal or his puppet.

I hope this discussion of historical precedents may be helpful as the Senate continues to debate our Balkan reconstruction policy.