

pressure on the Congress to respond to their responsibilities. I think this is a very, very good move and going in the right direction.

It has been asked why in the world might we be there if it is not a concern for the refugees, because obviously we have hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of refugees in many, many places around the world. We do not go to Rwanda to rescue the refugees, we did not go into Yugoslavia to rescue the Serbian refugees when they were being routed from Bosnia and Croatia, but all of a sudden the refugees seem to have an importance.

Most people know why we went to the Persian Gulf. It was not because we were attacked. It was because of a financial commercial interest: oil. But what is the interest in this area in Yugoslavia? I am not sure exactly what it is. There has been a lot of postulations about this, but I am not convinced that it is all of a sudden the concern for the refugees.

Yesterday in the Washington Post an interesting article occurred on this subject, but it was not in the news section; it was in the business section. There was a headline yesterday in the Washington Post that said: Count Corporate America Among NATO's Staunchest Allies. Very interesting article because it goes on to explain why so many corporations have an intense interest in making sure that the credibility of NATO is maintained, and they go on to explain that it is not just the arms manufacturers but the technology people who expect to sell weapons in Eastern Europe, in Yugoslavia, and they are very interested in making use of the NATO forces to make sure that their interests are protected. I think this is not the reason for us to go to war.

There is talk now of calling up all our Reserves or many of our Reserves at the same time there are hints now that there may be the institution of the draft. So this is a major problem that this country is facing, the world is facing, and up until now we, the Congress, have not spoken.

On February 9 of this year I introduced a bill that would have prohibited this by prohibiting any funds being spent on a war in Yugoslavia. I say it is too bad we did not pass that legislation a long time ago.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time previously allotted to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

NEW DEMOCRATS FOR FISCAL DISCIPLINE

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition to the Republican budget that the House passed this afternoon.

As a member of the New Democratic Coalition when I came to Congress, I was very proud of the vote that I made last year in the last session to help lead my party in this Congress back to fiscal responsibility and be able to vote on the first balanced budget in a generation.

I say that with a heavy heart today because I think we have just passed one, the majority has, that is not a budget but a political document.

Prior to my service in public office, Mr. Speaker, I spent 19 years running a small business in North Carolina, where you have to balance the budget, you have to meet a payroll every week, and if you do not balance your books, you will go broke.

When I served in the General Assembly where I served for 10 years, I chaired the appropriations committee for 4 years where I helped write a balanced budget for 4 straight years. You have to balance the budget to make sure you do not have to raise taxes.

As State Superintendent of Schools of the State of North Carolina for 8 years I had responsibility for running a large agency with a huge budget; I cut a bureaucracy, and it helped improve the quality of education, with others in my State.

The people of North Carolina sent me to Congress 2 years ago to help with balancing the Federal budget and to put our national financial house in order, and I was tremendously proud to serve in that first session and vote to balance the budget. But that discipline is difficult. It is difficult to keep your budgets balanced. It is difficult to do the things you need to do to make sure you do not overspend. But it is economically wise, and it is a moral imperative.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the Republican resolution that passed today is so disappointing. It returns to those irresponsible promises, in my opinion, and the tax cut binges that helped create the annual deficits, and it crippled this country's economy and piled up a huge national debt in the 1980s that our children and grandchildren could be forced to pay.

In order to push this risky scheme, the Republican leadership has passed a budget that fails to protect Social Security and Medicare, threatens needed investments with our priorities in education and abandons our new-found fiscal discipline. This misguided attitude captured on this floor by Members of the majority who said there is nothing,

there is no such thing, as an irresponsible tax cut, that is the kind of attitude we ran into in the 1980's that got us in such bad trouble. We should not return to those attitudes.

Let me state for the record that I support tax cuts, I am in favor of them, but I think we ought to keep our financial house in order.

One of the first bills that I signed as a Member of this Congress when I came was the tax cut for the middle class, for estate tax relief for small businesses and farmers, for the \$500-per-child tax credit, for HOPE scholarships so that our children could go to school and have an opportunity to blossom in the 21st century, and to help families pay their college tuitions, and for tax credits or to deduct interest on the money they borrowed to go to college.

In this Congress I have introduced legislation for school construction, to provide tax free interest bonds at the State level to build new schools in our communities, which in turn would provide relief to a lot of our local communities that are feeling the strain of tremendous growth.

So I am for tax cuts, but they must be responsible, they must be paid for. We must save Social Security and Medicare first before we jump off the cliff. We must pay down the national debt to keep the interest rate down and encourage economic growth.

We are now enjoying one of the largest, longest and greatest periods of economic prosperity in our Nation's history, and we should not do anything to undermine it. We must make careful investments in education and in health care and scientific research that will provide the basis for the future for our tremendous growth. We have had that already. We need to continue so that we will enjoy the bounty of a new economy in the 21st century.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we did have an opportunity to vote on the budget; call it the Republican budget if you will; and, just as a matter of response to my friend from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) who expressed his criticism of that budget, I would like to, if I might, set the record straight because I think the American people have a right to know for the first time in a long time we are being honest.

This is a honest budget. This says to the American people that we are going to set aside Social Security and Medicare taxes, payroll taxes, and leave them there, lock them up, wall them off and not touch that because the surplus that we are running today, most of it is in Social Security and Medicare