

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

MINNESOTA VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to protect one of the crown jewels of our national wildlife refuge system, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. On Wednesday, February 3, 1999 I chaired a hearing of the Committee on Resources on the impacts of the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota airport expansion on this premier national wildlife refuge.

This refuge is home to a broad range of wildlife species which deserve every bit as much protection as do the species that live in other national refuges. Species living in this refuge include threatened bald eagles, 35 mammal species, 23 reptile and amphibian species, and 97 species of birds including Tundra Swans migrating all the way from Alaska. The displacement of these species could throw nature's delicate balance into a tail spin. If we allow the destruction of this refuge and these species, it could send a shockwave through the entire ecosystem and impact every species in its footprint—a devastating biological echo.

The new runway expansion will cause so much noise and disturbance to visitors that most of the facilities under the path of the runway will have to be relocated. In fact, the refuge will be so impacted by the noise, that the FAA has agreed to pay the Fish and Wildlife Service over \$26 million to compensate them for the "taking" of their property by virtue of the noise and the impact on visitors to the refuge. This payment, however, will not mitigate or reduce the harm to endangered species, migratory birds, or fish living in the refuge. This payment is intended to allow the refuge to build additional buildings, relocate visitors facilities, build a new parking lot, and additional roads.

Yet, even with this level of disturbance, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the FAA found that the wildlife would not be disturbed so much that the airport expansion should be stopped. They also found no impact on the threatened bald eagle and no need for the protections of the Endangered Species Act in this case. They found that the wildlife in the refuge would adjust to the noise. They found that there is a little scientific evidence that wildlife will be seriously harmed by over 5,000 takeoffs and landings per month at less than 2,000 feet above these important migratory bird breeding, feeding and resting areas. In fact, over 2,000 flights will be at less than 500 feet above ground level. Yet the Fish and Wildlife Service has not required one dollar to be spent to protect the wildlife living in this refuge.

An environmental impact statement was prepared by the Federal Aviation Administra-

tion, in consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service. However, this environmental impact statement makes little effort to address the impacts on endangered and threatened species in the refuge. Therefore, my view is that the EIS should be redone before this project is allowed to proceed.

I know that wildlife and humans can coexist. In the coastal plain of Alaska, oil production and caribou have coexisted and the caribou population has increased. I have a picture in my office that illustrates that point beautifully. It shows a large herd of caribou peacefully resting and grazing in the shadow of a large oil drilling rig right on Alaska's north slope.

Yet some Members of Congress, including some who have agreed to allow this airport expansion in Minnesota, have introduced legislation that would preclude most human activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by designating that area as a permanent wilderness. I guess they believe that wildlife in Alaska can't adjust to human activities . . . but wildlife in Minnesota can.

I want to make it clear that I support our refuges. I sponsored the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act in 1997, which is now the law of the land. I want refuges to be places where wildlife can thrive and I want them accessible to the public. I support adequate funding so that our refuges can be open to the public. I agree that refuges and wildlife should not be used to stop needed projects and development in nearby communities.

Let's protect the very little habitat for wildlife in these highly developed areas of the east. This is truly a last refuge for many of these species. Unlike Alaska, which has preserved over 130 million acres for protecting the environment, the highly congested and developed areas around Minneapolis-St. Paul simply cannot afford to lose the little amount of wild spaces left. The United States, as a world leader in preserving lands of significant and symbolic value, cannot let this sort of degradation occur to its land or wildlife. We have only one chance to save the beauty of this natural landscape, the crown jewel of America's wildlife refuges, for generations of younger Americans. Once it is gone, it is gone forever, nature can never truly recover from such adverse actions visited upon its fabric, an attack upon the scope and breadth of life that, for now, call this place—home.

For this reason, I am introducing this legislation to protect the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

TRIBUTE TO ADRIENNE GIORDANO

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention Ms. Adrienne Giordano of Belleville, New Jersey.

Adrienne Giordano wrote this letter for a school project reflecting the impact that Can-

cer has had on the families of its victims, and how it has had an impact on virtually every family in America. Adrienne's expressions are viewed through the eyes of a young girl as she watched the devastation of Cancer on her family members. This essay was written out of pure emotion and it is her insights that have made an impression on me.

Her essay reads as follows:

When I was young I had two sets of healthy and out-going grandparents, or so I thought. I grew up thinking that way until I was about six years old. At that time, my dad told me that my grandma, his mom, had cancer since he was a young boy. However, she was now in remission and was supposedly doing quite well. By the time I was nine, I found out that my grandma's cancer had returned, but she hadn't told anyone for five years or so.

From that point on, my family and I saw her go in and out of hospitals for a few years. Each time she was out, she would make the best of it even though she was suffering inside. She became very ill at one point and the doctors said that she would die within a couple of months. To make matters worse, my other grandfather went into the hospital for cancer too.

He became very sick, in fact to the point that he could hardly speak, or even breathe. The thought of living without my grandpa as a part of my life was very difficult for me. In words I cannot express the pain inside of me, although it couldn't possibly amount to the pain that he was going through. He was suffering but showed it rarely, but then again how could he not, he was in a hospital, on a floor with dying cancer patients who were waiting to die. He had to deal with what he had and how it was going to be. There was no say in what was happening to him, as a healthy man for all of his previous life nobody thought that he would ever be this sickly, and either did he. About four months after he went in, he passed away. Although I knew it was coming, it hit me hard and it hit my heart. I thought that I would go through some sort of emotional grieving stage, but I didn't, my feelings stayed bundled up inside until the days of the wake and funeral. On those days I cried more that I ever had in my whole lifetime. But I had to move on and keep the joyful memories in the back of my mind. Every time I feel upset or wondered, "Why them, why such wonderful people, what have they done to deserve this?", I looked back to all of the good times they had, and what wonderful lives they had to remember. Sometimes thinking about how they loved life and cherished each moment of the day made me realize that their lives weren't only misery and fighting this deadly disease, but enjoying the good times, and making the best of the bad.

Weeks passed after the death of my grandfather and by then my grandma had gathered enough strength to pull through. Once again, she was released from the hospital, but inside I knew that the fight wasn't over yet and she would soon return to the halls of the sickly dying cancer patients. I had seen her fight for so many years, and the story repeated itself, in the hospital and out, and back in again. What could make me think that this time would be different? It was the same and always the same, I knew that one day she would take the final punch and the fight would finally end.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

As I predicted, she went back five months later. Although I've seen her go in and out of hospitals for as long as I could remember, when I saw her that time I noticed something different. She seemed as though she was sick of cancer and tired of fighting it. A couple more months passed and it looked worse and worse. The most upsetting thing for me to deal with was that I was losing two grandparents, who are two of the most important people in the world to me, to a deadly disease that killed millions each year, CANCER! By that time I didn't want to hear another word about cancer, and I wished and prayed that it could be cured, and quick. But it did exist and there wasn't a cure. It felt like an evil monster that had corrupted my grandparents' bodies. In May of 1998, my beloved grandmother died. I will never forget that day, it was one of the worst days of my life. Inside I was torn up and my heart was shredded to pieces, then I realized that my grandparents wouldn't be able to take part in my life ever again. I remember thinking to myself how I wished they could be alive again just the way it was.

However, as I look back at those thoughts, it was selfish of me to want them to be back in the hospital, dying and suffering from cancer, because that was the way it was, and now I take back those wishes. Also I realized that the memories I had with them in the past have become priceless and those are the memories that I will remember them in the future. I can finally say that I am relieved that my grandparents aren't suffering anymore and they are in a peaceful place. It is now very important for me to think about all people, not just myself, I have to understand that some people aren't as lucky as I am, I am healthy and out-going and I should cherish every moment of life. Things come and go, including health, but you should never lose your happiness and the love for the people who love you.

Mr. Speaker, please join me, our colleagues, Adrienne's family and friends in wishing her continued success in all of her future endeavors.

IN HONOR OF MONTE AHUJA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Monte Ahuja, a Cleveland entrepreneur and Cleveland State graduate, for his achievements and generous contributions to Cleveland State University. Mr. Ahuja has donated \$1 million and has pledged an additional \$1 million to Cleveland State University, primarily in support of the James J. Nance College of Business Administration.

Born in India, Mr. Ahuja received a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Punjab Engineering College in 1967. He arrived in the U.S. in 1969 and earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Ohio State University in 1970. After moving to Cleveland in 1971, and while working full time with a Maple Heights automotive firm, he earned his MBA from Cleveland State's College of Business Administration in 1975. As an assignment for a marketing class, he developed a business plan for an auto transmission supply business. After graduation, Mr. Ahuja turned this plan into his own company—Transtar Industries, Inc. Although the firm began with only two employees and virtually

no capital, today Transtar has nearly 700 employees and is the leader in the transmission products industry with 21 operations in the U.S. and worldwide distribution.

In addition to his generous monetary donations to Cleveland State University, Mr. Ahuja has dedicated his time by serving as a director of the Cleveland State University Foundation, and establishing the Ahuja Endowed Scholarship Fund in Business Administration and Engineering and the Distinguished Scholar in Comparative Indian and Western Philosophy, a cultural endowment initiated by a close friend, Dr. D.C. Bhajji. As chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Ahuja oversaw one of the largest physical expansions in Cleveland State's history. In 1990, he was named one of Cleveland State's top 25 distinguished alumni.

Let us join Cleveland State University as they honor Mr. Ahuja on March 26, 1999, for his contributions to the university.

CLOSER TO EMPIRE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to consider the effect of our current actions in Kosovo, but this time I do not wish to address the folly of war, for attempts to prevent war measures against that nation are now futile. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address a long term concern, a problem larger even than war. I am referring to the folly of empire.

Our involvement in Kosovo and in Iraq, and in Bosnia—when combined with America's role in Korea, and in the Middle East and other places around the world, is now lurching our republic ever closer to empire. Empire is something that all Americans ought to oppose.

I remind those who believe in the Judeo-Christian tradition that opposition to empire is to be found in the warnings found in the book of Ezekiel, warnings against the empowerment of a king. And it is this same principle which is evident in the story of the Tower of Babel, and in that admonition of Christ, which reminds that those things which are of Caesar are not of God.

To pragmatists, agnostics and such, I point to the decline and fall which has historically attended every other empire. The Ottomans and Romans, the Spanish and the British, all who have tried empire have faltered, and at great costs to their own nations.

Mr. Speaker, to liberals I would remind that these interventions, however well-intended they may be, all require the use of forces of occupation, and this is the key step toward colonialism, itself always leading to subjugation and to oppression.

To conservatives, I want to recall the founding of our Republic, our nation's breaking from the yoke of empire in order that we might realize the benefits of liberty and self-determination, and that we might obtain the blessings that flow naturally from limitations on centralized power. Empire reflecting the most perfect means yet devised to concentrate power in the fewest hands.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our own nation faces a choice and we may well be at the very precipice. Indeed, to move even one step further down the road to empire may mean that there

will be no turning back short of the eventual decline and fall. Will we act now to restore our Republic?

It is oft repeated that we do not realize the import of our most critical actions at the time that we begin to undertake them. How true, Mr. Speaker, this statement is. Were Mr. Townshend, or the King in England the least contemplative of the true cost which would eventuate as a result of the tea tax or the stamp act?

Now we must ask, is our nation on the verge of empire? Some will say no, because, they say, we do not seek to have direct control over the governments of foreign lands, but how close are we to doing just that? And is it so important whether the dictates of empire come from the head of our government or from the Secretary General of some multilateral entity which we direct?

Today we attempt, directly or indirectly, to dictate to other sovereign nations who they ought and ought not have as leader, which peace accords they should sign, and what form of governments they must enact. How limited is the distinction between our actions today and those of the emperors of history? How limited indeed. In fact, one might suggest that this is a distinction without a substantive difference.

And where now are we willing to commit troops and under what conditions? If we are to stop all violations of human rights, what will we do of Cuba, which recently announced new crackdowns?

And what of communist China? Not only do they steal our secrets, but they violate their own citizens. Who should be more upset, for example, about forced abortion? Is it those who proclaim the inviolable right to life or those who argue for so-called reproductive rights? Even these polar opposites recognize the crimes of the Chinese government in forced abortion. Should we then stop this oppression of millions? Are we committed to lob missiles at this massive nation until it ceases this program?

Will the principle upon which we are now claiming to act lead us to impose our political solutions upon the nations that now contain Tibet, and Kurdistan, and should the sentiment rear, even Quebec and Chechnya?

The most dangerous thing about where we are headed is our lack of historical memory and our disastrous inattention to the effect of the principles upon which we act, for ideas do indeed have consequences, Mr. Speaker, and they pick up a momentum that becomes all their own.

I do believe that we are on the brink, Mr. Speaker, but it is not yet too late. Soon I fear the train, as it is said, will have left the station. We stand on the verge of crossing that line that so firmly distinguishes empire from republic. This occurs not so much by an action or series of actions but by the acceptance of an idea, the idea that we have a right, a duty, an obligation, or a national interest to perfect foreign nations even while we remain less than principled ourselves.

When will we, as a people and as an institution, say "we choose to keep our republic, your designs for empire interest us not in the least." I can only hope it will be soon, for it is my sincerest fear that failing to do so much longer will put us beyond this great divide.