

regardless of whether one is a Democrat or a Republican, these issues are important. But unfortunately, over the recent years, it has become just that, and it is so unfortunate, even today, that it has been raised in a partisan context.

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It does, however, give us the opportunity, as Democrats, to celebrate our Democratic administration and all that it has done to fend off efforts to turn back the clock, if we look at what happened in 1995 when the Republicans actually allowed corporate lobbyists to draft attacks on environmental standards. Or when the Republicans passed bills that cut environmental funding by 25 percent, or what I really want to talk about for a minute is the regulatory reform bill that would have actually dismantled the food inspection program.

In my district lives a woman named Nancy Donley, who, because of her own personal tragic situation, that is, the death of her 6-year-old son Alex from eating meat poisoned with *E. Coli* bacteria, created an organization. She turned her tragedy into an organization that will now fight to make sure that no other children die called STOP, Safe Tables Our Priority.

As a result of working with this administration, and in particular Vice President AL GORE, the food safety initiative was adopted. They were able to defeat the so-called regulatory reform which would have dismantled the meat and poultry inspection system in this Nation, and actually pass new regulations that began in 1998, more sophisticated ways of inspection.

That inspection program was really initiated in the Upton Sinclair days at the beginning of the century and really required updating, not dismantling. So we now have a more sophisticated system that is being phased in over time. It began in 1998, and the establishment of a food safety initiative.

As part of that initiative I know that Nancy had, Nancy Donley, had Vice President AL GORE, at the announcement of what we call PulseNet, which is a new program that we have to track food-borne illness outbreaks over the Internet, so we are now able to link an outbreak of food poisoning in Maine with one that might happen in Montana, and be able to see that it is from the same cause.

In fact, there was a terrible outbreak of *Listeria*, which is a virulent form of foodborne illness, deli food, soft cheeses, et cetera, last year that resulted in major recalls across the country of those foods, and has already proven itself to save lives.

At the announcement of PulseNet, our Vice President, AL GORE, was there to talk about it as an initiative that would save lives. As we know, he has been the person who has figured out how to use the most high-tech systems to bring them down to protecting families and now protecting our food supply.

So as we look forward to Earth Day this year and we look forward to the 21st century, I think we can be happy that we have someone who has been our point person on the environment, who has been an advocate and a fighter, and has implemented already those programs that will make our air, our water, and our world safer for our families.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank the gentlewoman. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Last year when the appropriation bills were folded into an omnibus bill, the majority here added a long list of anti-environmental riders. They could not get those proposals through on their own merits, but they tried to hold funding for all Federal programs and services hostage to those riders. They figured that their opponents in Congress would be forced to swallow them, and that the President would agree to accept them to keep other programs operating.

But the President did not accept them. He insisted that they be taken out of the appropriations bill before he would sign it. That surprised the people who wrote the riders.

The factor they did not count on in their strategy was the Vice President of the United States, AL GORE. The President relies on AL GORE for advice on environmental matters, and it was AL GORE who said no, we cannot allow these things to happen. We have to take a stand. We have to take a stand, so that the riders faded away.

Let me give some examples of what AL GORE would not allow. He said no to proposals that would have blocked the EPA from conducting research or educational activities on global warming, a gag rule to block even a discussion of what may be the most serious environmental problem of our time.

He said no to a proposal that would have blocked clean-up of toxic PCBs, even in places where children could be affected.

The Vice President said no to proposals that would have blocked the EPA from reducing children's exposure to pesticides, and we now know that pesticides pose a much greater risk to children than they do to others, much more than we thought.

He said no to proposals that would have canceled environmental reviews on timber sales, where logging could threaten wildlife. He said no to a proposal to build a road through the middle of a migratory bird refuge, a place that is supposed to be wilderness.

He said no to proposals that would have required uneconomical logging that would have permanent damage to one of our most pristine forests. He said no to proposals that would have barred EPA from trying to improve air quality in our national parks. Because AL GORE took a firm stand, those proposals were blocked.

He has stood with us when we blocked efforts to roll back 25 years of work on cleaning up our rivers. He stood with us when we blocked efforts that would have prohibited EPA from doing more to clean up the air that we all breathe.

He stood with us on protecting children's health from asthma caused by airborne pollution, illness caused by food poisoning, and pesticide poisoning, permanent damage caused by toxic wastes let loose in the environment. The Vice President stood with us on all those issues.

The American people want clean air and water. They want freedom from pollution and contamination. They want protection of our beautiful public lands and forests, and they want protection for our wildlife. AL GORE wants them, too, and he wants all of them to have them as well. He is willing to stand up and fight for it to see that they get it.

He has been a very big help by having the courage to say no and to mean it. I am looking forward to seeing what he can do when he gets the opportunity to say yes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman, and everyone who participated in this special order this evening. It is the eve of Earth Day. Earth Day is tomorrow. I think there is a lot of talk up here about what the truth is.

The truth is that the health of our environment is in jeopardy at the hands of the Republican majority in the Congress. The truth is that the Democrats and the Clinton-Gore administration are the true protectors of the environment for this Earth Day and the Earth Days in the future.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The Chair will remind all Members to address their remarks to the Chair, and not to refer to residents of the gallery.

Members should also not make personal references to Members of the Senate.

A TRIBUTE TO MAYOR RALPH J. PERK

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, tonight Cleveland, Ohio, is much poorer than it was yesterday because of the passing of Mayor Ralph J. Perk. If we were to ask residents of the city of Cleveland about et cetera city's recent history, they might point us to the bridge at State Route 21 over the Cuyahoga River as the point where 25 years ago the Cuyahoga River caught on fire, or they might direct us to the factory where Mayor Perk, while attempting to show some blue collar voters that he

was proficient in the use of a blow torch, accidentally set his hair on fire.

But Clevelanders love to tell the story about when Mayor Perk, a Republican, was invited to a State dinner by then President Richard Nixon, and it conflicted with his wife Lucy's bowling night, so he was not able to be in attendance on that particular evening.

Mr. Speaker, Ralph Perk was vintage Cleveland, and he will be greatly missed. He is best known as Cleveland's mayor, but he had a distinguished career as a public servant. He began his political career in 1940 as a Republican precinct committeeman, and was appointed to the staff of the Ohio Attorney General's Office in 1950. He then went on to represent the Broadway East 55th Street area of Cleveland as a councilman from 1953 to 1962.

He was then elected to county-wide office, and served as the county auditor for 9 years. When he was elected mayor, Mayor Perk had the distinction of being the first Republican mayor of Cleveland since the 1930s. In fact, only two Republicans have served as the mayor of Cleveland in my lifetime, Ralph Perk and also our new Senator from Ohio, GEORGE VOINOVICH.

God love Ralph Perk, Mr. Speaker. He was a Republican in the days when being a Republican was not very cool. His political base was found in Cleveland's heavily Democratic ethnic communities, which supported him regardless of party label. He won folks over with his heart and his ability to be just like everyone else, to connect with his fellow man without pretense.

If another mayor had turned down a State dinner at the White House because of his wife's bowling engagement, it would have been a serious breach of etiquette. To Ralph Perk and the city of Cleveland, it is a badge of honor.

Mayor Perk served as mayor from 1972 to 1977, at a time when the city was developing some financial difficulties, but Ralph Perk was able to work with the Federal Government and the Nixon White House to secure funding to alleviate a number of those difficulties.

He is credited with establishing a regional sewer district, and he is also credited with paying off the bonds, using city funds to pay off the bonds of the financially strapped Cleveland Transit Authority to create what is now the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

Mr. Speaker, although it has been more than 20 years since Ralph Perk served as the mayor of our fair city, he has never been nor will he ever be forgotten. He was a true Cleveland original, a man who loved his hometown with all of his heart and served it with great spirit and dedication. He will be sorely missed.

Mayor Perk was reelected as mayor in both 1973 and 1975. In 1977, there was a nonpartisan primary and he was defeated by two other individuals. One was a Member who served in this House, Ed Feighan, and the other is my

very distinguished greater Clevelander, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DENNIS KUCINICH), who then went on to serve as mayor of Cleveland, and now serves with us in the House.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for his thoughts and remembrances of Mayor Perk.

Mr. KUCINICH. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) also for the opportunity to share in this very important reflection on a former mayor of the city of Cleveland, Mayor Ralph J. Perk.

Ralph Perk leaves us at a time when the world could use the message of his life, which was to unite people across racial and ethnic lines. For generations he led us in celebrating the beautiful cultural mosaic that is our inheritance in greater Cleveland. He understood the beauty and the strength of each individual expressing his or her own uniqueness.

I shared with Ralph many a platform, festooned with colorful flags, many an ethnic picnic, many polka-filled moments. He had a great enthusiasm for life. He was a wise and dedicated public servant who served Cleveland long and well as a city councilman, a county auditor, and mayor. His greatest strength was his common touch, his ability to stay close to the life of Cleveland's neighborhoods.

Throughout his long life he never left the city he loved, and because of his dedication to Cleveland, his memory will never leave us. My deepest sympathies go out to his dear wife, Lucy, and to his children.

I will miss Ralph, but I shall never be able to think of him without smiling about this engaging, energetic, passionate public man and dear friend.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND NATO'S INVOLVEMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA AND KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, supporters of internationalism celebrated NATO's 50th anniversary with the Senate's 1998 overwhelming approval for expanding NATO to include Eastern European countries. This year's official inclusion of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic made all NATO's supporters proud, indeed. But in reality, NATO now is weaker and more chaotic than ever.

In the effort to expand NATO and promote internationalism, we see in reaction the rise of ugly nationalism. The U.S. and NATO policy of threats and intimidation to establish an autonomous Kosovo without true independence from Serbia, and protected by NATO's forces for the foreseeable future, has been a recipe for disaster.

This policy of nation-building and interference in a civil war totally contradicts the mission of European defense set out in the NATO charter.

Without the Soviet enemy to justify the European military machine, NATO had to find enemies and humanitarian missions to justify its existence. The centuries-old ethnic hatreds found in Yugoslavia and the militant leaders on all sides have served this purpose well. Working hard to justify NATO's policy in this region has totally obscured any objective analysis of the turmoil now raging.

Some specific policy positions of NATO guaranteed that the ongoing strife would erupt into a full-fledged and dangerous conflict. Once it was determined in the early 1990s that outsiders would indict and try Yugoslavian war criminals, it was certain that cooperation with western negotiators would involve risks. Fighting to the end became a practical alternative to a mock international trial. Forcing a treaty settlement on Serbia where Serbia would lose the sovereign territory of Kosovo guaranteed an escalation of the fighting and the forced removal of the Kosovars from their homes.

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Ignoring the fact that more than 500,000 Serbs were uprooted from Croatia and Bosnia with the encouragement of NATO intervention did great harm to the regional effort to reestablish more stable borders.

The sympathy shown Albanian refugees by our government and our media, although justified, stirred the flames of hatred by refusing to admit that over a half million Serbs suffered the same fate and yet elicited no concern from the internationalists bent on waging war. No one is calling for the return of certain property and homes.

Threatening a country to do what we the outsiders tell them or their cities will be bombed is hardly considered good diplomacy. Arguing that the Serbs must obey and give up what they see as sovereign territory after suffering crimes themselves as well as face war crimes trials run by the West makes no sense. Anyone should have been able to predict what the results would be.

The argument that, because of humanitarian concerns for the refugees, we were forced to act is not plausible. Our efforts dramatically increased the refugee problem. Milosevic, as he felt cornered by the Western threats, reacted the only way he could to protect what he considered Serbia, a position he defends with international law while being supported by unified Serb people.

If it is the suffering and the refugees that truly motivate our actions, there is no answer to the perplexing question of why no action was taken to help the suffering in Rwanda, Sudan, East Timore, Tibet, Chechnya, Kurdish, Turkey, and for the Palestinians in Israel. This is not a reason; it is an excuse.