

Bonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. It is with great satisfaction we now take a look back at former President Quiroga's efforts and see how successful the Dignity Plan has been and what our investment in his vision earned.

Since the outset of the Dignity Plan in late 1997, the government of Bolivia has eradicated more than 130,000 acres of illegal coca.

The annual cocaine production in Bolivia has fallen by 70 percent.

In the past five years, nearly \$3.0 billion in Bolivian cocaine was taken off the international market.

Alternative development programs in the Chapare, Bolivia's primary coca growing region, have taken hold and are providing stable and meaningful income to former coca growers. Today there are more than 290,000 acres of legal agricultural crops under cultivation in the Chapare.

In these areas, family incomes are rising, proving that the transition to legal agricultural activity can be successful.

In the law enforcement area, nearly 5,000 coca base labs were seized and destroyed and over 58 metric tons of drugs, including cocaine base, cocaine and others, were seized.

I am pleased to report these results to Congress to show that with the proper combination of leadership and political will, the battle against illegal drugs can be won. I am hopeful and optimistic that the Honorable Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, the new President of Bolivia, will pick up and continue where former President Quiroga left off, ensuring Bolivia remains a shining example of success in the Western Hemisphere.

Lastly, I wish to say thank you to President Quiroga, with whom many of us have worked so closely during the past five years. We have no doubt that his leadership, vision and commitment to Bolivia were essential to the remarkable success of the Dignity Plan program. He should take great pride in his extraordinary record of success in the drug war and know that he has many good friends in the U.S. Congress who are grateful.

H.R. 4546

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, as the House considers passage of the conference report to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, I would like to recognize the contributions of an outstanding member of the staff of the House Armed Services Committee. His name is George Withers. Of all of the people I have come to know in my 13 years on Capitol Hill, I can truly say that I have not met a finer person than George Withers.

As a professional staff member of the Armed Services Committee since 1993, I have had an opportunity to work closely with George. Over these many years, I have come to appreciate his knowledge of the legislative process, judgment, professionalism and wisdom.

Although he has a heart of gold, and a smile that is genuine as a sunrise, he was indeed mistaken for a very prominent elected official who is not known for his smile. One of

the highlights of George's career on Capitol Hill was when President George W. Bush, upon meeting him, noted his resemblance to the Vice President and remarked, "How's your heart?"

Around the world, there are likely many members of our nation's military who are watching this broadcast. George Withers was a Navy Aerographers Mate Third Class (AG3) with an Aircrew designation. He flew with VW-1 and VQ-1 flying WC-121 and EC-121 aircraft out of Danang during the Vietnam War. He also deployed and flew out of Agana, Guam; Cubi Point, Philippines; South Korea, and numerous other locations in the Western Pacific. A large number of those flights were electronic intercept missions over the Tonkin Gulf. During his distinguished service in the Navy, he earned the Bronze Star and completed 86 penetrations into the eye of typhoons as a typhoon-tracker.

George's service in Vietnam took place to the advent of the "all volunteer force". This was a time when folks often "had to be there" rather than "volunteered to be there". Since they had to be there, it was pretty obvious from those who were there that our nation didn't pay nearly enough attention to what they wanted their barracks or housing to look like, what there mess halls served for meals, or what they wanted in the way of recreational opportunities. George has spent the better part of his career on Capitol Hill correcting those mistakes, and seeing to it that they never happen again.

To the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, who are living in new quarters or work in new facilities, it has been made possible with the great assistance of George Withers. If you're in one of these new facilities in South Korea, Germany, Ecuador, Mississippi, or serving anywhere in the world, credit for the quality of your quarters is often given to a Congressman or a Senator. However, I know for a fact that none of these important quality of life improvements for our nation's military personnel could have happened without the dedication and hard work of a great American named George Withers.

George, on behalf of the men and women in uniform, your friends here on Capitol Hill, and the countless other people that you have helped throughout your many years of military and public service, thank you. God Bless you in your retirement. You will be sorely missed.

NATIONAL JOURNAL STORY, "BUSH'S QUIET PLAN"

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following National Journey story, "Bush's Quiet Plan," for the RECORD. It clearly describes how this administration is rolling back our key environmental protections.

[From the National Journal, Nov. 23, 2002]

BUSH'S QUIET PLAN

(By Margaret Kriz)

The Bush administration is quietly but systematically working to make the 32-year-old environmental law that's considered the Magna Carta of national environmental policy less of an impediment to development.

Environmentalists charge that, by routinely bypassing or greatly speeding up the preparation of environmental impact statements required under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Bush White House is chipping away at the very foundation of the Nation's environmental protections.

President Bush has taken steps aimed at expediting or even eliminating the environmental impact studies that federal regulators have long been required to conduct before any major development project—whether it involves a new dam by the Army Corps of Engineers or logging in a national forest—can be undertaken on federal property or with federal funds. Industry lobbyists applaud the administration's actions because, in their view, environmental impact statements have largely served as a weapon for anti-development zealots to wield in court.

Environmentalists contend that the administration's efforts to shorten the reach of the law known as NEPA are part of a continuing campaign to put resource development and business interests ahead of resource protection and environmental quality. "The Bush administration views NEPA as an obstacle, not a tool," says Sharon Buccino, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "To the extent that they're removing these activities, like logging projects, from the NEPA process, they're cutting the public out of the process."

NEPA is merely a full-disclosure statute: It forces regulators to make assessments and share them with the public, but it doesn't block projects that would harm the environment. Yet environmental groups have often been able to use the government's NEPA-mandated environmental impact statements in conjunction with the other environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act or the Clean Air Act, to persuade courts to stop or significantly modify controversial projects.

Under NEPA, all government agencies—from the Interior Department to the Navy to the Small Business Administration—must study the environmental implications of major projects before undertaking them. Private companies that receive federal funds or use federal lands also fall under NEPA's umbrella.

Business lobbyists cheer Bush for using his broad administrative authority to limit the public's ability to challenge industry projects on federal lands. Supporters of the administration's approach argue that environmentalists have abused NEPA by filing thousands of essentially nuisance lawsuits that stem from a philosophical objection to, say, drilling for oil on federal land, rather than from objections to the potential consequences of a specific drilling proposal.

"A lot of challenges being raised are part of a larger strategy to oppose energy development in this country," contends Lee Fuller, vice president for government relations at the Independent Petroleum Association of America.

NEPA's defenders charge that regulators are already producing slipshod impact assessments in their rush to comply with Bush administration demands for faster action. "Asking them to do [the assessments] more quickly raises more opportunity for litigation," because careless work would leave the government open to charges of not having complied with NEPA, warns Jonathan Adler, an environmental law professor at Case Western Reserve University.

The controversy over the accelerating attempts to rein in NEPA centers on several administration actions:

A Forest Service proposal—leaked by environmentalists and slated to be formally released later this year—would allow federal

regulators to rewrite National Forest Management Plans without first assessing the environmental implications of the new plans. Forest plans are the blueprints for commercial development, recreation, and land preservation on the nation's 191 million acres of national forests and grasslands.

Bush's wildfire proposal, dubbed the "Healthy Forests Initiative," would exempt 10 million acres of national forest lands from NEPA to speed up the logging aimed at thinning the trees in those forests. The plan was drafted in response to this summer's catastrophic forest fires and would allow commercial logging companies to remove some large, healthy trees as an incentive to participate in the thinning projects. The Democratic-controlled Senate blocked Bush's proposal, but the plan is certain to be resurrected after the Republicans take control of the chamber in January.

The administration tried to exempt most U.S.-controlled ocean waters from NEPA. But in October, a federal court rejected the Justice Department's contention that the environmental law's reach did not extend beyond this country's territorial waters, which end three miles offshore. The court ruled that NEPA applies within the nation's entire Exclusive Economic Zone, which extends 200 nautical miles offshore. That case was triggered by objections to Navy sonar tests, which environmentalists claim have caused whale beachings and permanent damage to whales and other sea mammals.

In September, Bush issued an executive order requiring federal regulators to speed up environmental assessments of transportation construction projects. Transportation Department officials say the administration is also considering legislation to amend the law's application to highway and other transportation projects. The administration has not taken a position, however, on a bill introduced this year by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Don Young, R-Alaska, that would create a separate, less rigorous environmental-assessment process for transportation projects.

In May, Bush ordered expedited environmental reviews of energy-development projects. Meanwhile, Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., has urged that NEPA requirements be waived for energy development on tribal lands.

According to Forest Service officials, the administration plans to greatly expand the "categorical exclusion" provisions of NEPA to exempt certain kinds of logging projects—the logging of dead trees in burned forests, for example—from environmental impact statements. These exemptions would apply to far more than the 10 million acres included in Bush's forest fire proposal.

Meanwhile, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, which has jurisdiction over NEPA, has created an interagency task force focused on updating the NEPA process. James Connaughton, who heads the council, said the task force seeks to "modernize" the way federal regulators conduct their environmental reviews—by, for example, increasing the use of computers. Some departments, he said, "are using the Pony Express when we could be using the electron to facilitate all kinds of interagency and external communications."

Environmentalists are suspicious of the task force. "This administration," Buccino says, took "significant destructive actions related to NEPA before they had even begun the task force." Bush's critics contend that what the White House portrays as mere streamlining is actually part of a far-reaching campaign to grant polluters and developers relief from environmental safeguards by doing such things as easing restrictions

on coal-fired power plants and scuttling a Clinton-era rule that preserves roadless regions in the national forests. "They're saying, 'Trust us,' but we have no reason to trust them," says David Alberswerth, director of the Wilderness Society's Bureau of Land Management program.

Connaughton angrily denies that the administration wants to gut environmental protections and says the environmentalists' accusations are politically motivated. "I think that there is a lot of chasing after ghosts," he says. (For a Q&A with Connaughton, see p. 3476.)

OVERDUE OR OVERBOARD?

The Bush administration's aggressive efforts to limit NEPA's role represent a marked change in federal environmental policy—and in some quarters, a welcome one. "It represents a shift in the institutional perspective on NEPA," says Chris Horner, senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank. "They're saying that the statutory sprawl that NEPA has created is not acceptable. [The shift] is something that's long overdue."

But environmentalists are alarmed. Unlike the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Air Act, which deal only with certain environmental issues, NEPA is a comprehensive tool that activists can use to force regulators—and, by extension, industry—to abide by a multitude of environmental laws.

"NEPA is a procedural statute that cuts across every environmental program," says William J. Snape III, chief counsel at Defenders of Wildlife. "So rather than announce that they're going to gut NEPA, the administration has decided that they're just going to do it on an individual-sector basis. That makes it difficult for us to piece [the administration's actions] all together."

Most environmental assessments are completed without a hitch. But projects that compete for space with wildlife and wilderness areas—logging, energy development, and military action on federal lands or waterways, as well as transportation construction projects—often rise red flags with environmental activists and nearby residents. Lengthy lawsuits often ensue.

Bush administration officials insist that they're not out to stop all environmental analyses or to propose a wholesale rewrite of the law. According to Connaughton, the aim is to speed up the environmental-assessment process and focus on the biggest projects. The administration also wants to stem the flood of legal challenges to what government officials want to do on federal lands.

"There's just too many lawsuits, just endless litigation," Bush told an Oregon audience in August in introducing his forest fire plan. "We want to make sure our citizens have the right to the courthouse. . . . But there's a fine balance between people expressing [themselves] and their opinions and using litigation to keep the United States of America from enacting commonsense forest policy."

Since its inception, NEPA has been largely defined by court rulings that give it teeth. NEPA was passed during the Nixon administration but floundered until President Carter's Council on Environmental Quality outlined a regulatory strategy for systematically complying with its mandates. Since then, each agency has developed its own NEPA rules designed to mesh with the laws the agency implements.

Until those ground rules were established—and even since then—judges often were the government officials who determined what a NEPA requirement meant in a given situation. "Court decisions were pouring out," recalls James Gustave Speth, who headed the

Council on Environmental Quality under President Carter and now is dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. "It was the first major federal environmental legislation. And it became extraordinarily powerful, primarily because of the courts."

Environmentalists, who filed many of those lawsuits, see NEPA as one of the best ways to force recalcitrant bureaucrats to weight—and disclose—the environmental consequences of their proposals. "The whole purpose of the law was to slow down the government juggernaut and to make public officials think long and hard before they take any action that could be harmful to the environment," notes John Echeverria, executive director of the Georgetown Environmental Policy Project. "There's no question that environmentalists have used NEPA to block projects that they thought were ill-advised and particularly harmful."

Conservatives and industry lobbyists, for their part, say NEPA causes delays that inflate the price tag of important business and government initiatives. The Transportation Department, for example, estimates that environmental impact statements for major highway projects take an average of four to five years to complete.

"Sometimes you feel a little bit like that small rodent in a maze, trying to complete all these reviews," complains Mary E. Peters, administrator of the Transportation Department's Federal Highway Administration.

But many observers insist that NEPA's foes vastly overstate the influence of NEPA reviews. "The great bulk of NEPA projects are changed in the NEPA process, but they're not, in the end, stopped," says Yale's Speth.

Environmentalists are not the only cause of delay. Government regulators often lack funding to undertake NEPA reviews quickly. The petroleum group's Fuller says that some oil companies, eager to begin work on new projects, have begun paying the government agencies to complete the required environmental assessments. "We've found that in order to get our permitting processes moving, the only way to do that is to provide private money," he explains. Federal officials still control the studies, he adds.

The environmental reviews are also hampered by bureaucratic resistance. Even after 32 years, some regulators still oppose having to consider the environmental implications of a project early in the planning stages, according to law professor Adler. "At a lot of agencies, their decision-making process does not incorporate the sorts of factors that NEPA asks them to look at," he says. "That's one of the reasons why agencies get into trouble with lawsuits." and Snowmobiles

In April, an internal review board at the Interior Department issued a scathing judgment criticizing the Bureau of Land Management for approving coal-bed methane extraction projects in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Interior's Board of Land Appeals ruled that the environmental yardstick that regulators used to assess the projects was woefully inadequate and failed to consider the "unique potential impacts" of the proposed extraction process.

Coal-bed methane extraction, first tested in the 1990s, involves draining salty water from coal seams to tap the methane gas trapped in the coal. The tainted liquid often pours onto nearby lands. But the bureau had approved the methane leases based on studies that looked solely at the environmental effects of entirely different projects—oil and natural gas drilling in the region.

In a separate case, a federal judge recently suspended a seismic exploration project near

Arches National Park at the urging of two environmental groups. The organizations charge that the government failed to examine the environmental impact that the heavy pounding of 30-ton "thumper trucks" would have if energy companies were allowed to use them in searching for oil deposits.

Environmentalists argue that regulators are doing slap-dash environmental analyses on these and other energy projects in response to increased administration pressure to open more federal lands to mining and drilling. "This administration is indicating that every square acre of land in the West ought to be open to oil and gas" says Snape of Defenders of Wildlife. "They don't care about environmental quality or the public. This is 'Energy über alles.'"

But perhaps the most dramatic NEPA developments are occurring at the Forest Service, where Bush administration officials are rewriting the rules for managing the nation's 153 national forests. In the past, developing a forest management plan, which spells out how a forest can be used, was considered to be a "major action" that required extensive environmental impact analysis under NEPA. Now Bush officials are working on a proposal that would give forest supervisors greater leeway to revise forest plans without having to conduct in-depth environmental studies.

Under the revised rules, full environmental reviews would continue to be required when industry groups sought permission to begin specific projects, such as logging or construction of new recreation facilities. But more general changes to the forest management plan might not require extensive study, according to Mark Rey, the Agriculture Department under-secretary for natural resources and environment who has authority over the Forest Service. "In the past, we were dealing with the first generation of a forest plan, and there was no question that an environmental impact statement was going to be required," he said. "What we're saying now is, it is not as clear that revising plans or amending them involves a need for a similar level of analysis, depending on the circumstances."

Rey cites the example of a forest supervisor considering changing a forest plan to allow more snowmobiles to be used in a forest. "If we're saying that we might accommodate a greater degree of snowmobile use but that we don't have enough information right now to decide where we're going to locate the trails, then we probably would acknowledge that this issue is under consideration," he said. "But we'd do an environmental impact statement when we're ready to lay out the trails."

Logging industry officials enthusiastically support the new approach, arguing that it makes more sense for regulators to focus their NEPA resources on industry development projects than on forest management plans. "Why would you do a full-blown analysis of how you're going to basically zone a forest and manage it, when the real rubber hits the road when you propose an action," said Chris West, vice president of the timber industry's American Forest Resource Council in Portland, Ore. But environmentalists say that Rey's proposals are purposely vague and confusing. They accuse him of attempting to create loopholes to allow forest supervisors to make sweeping changes in the way the forests would be used without gaining public input or examining the environmental consequences.

The Forest Service is also considering new proposals that would make it easier to approve some logging projects without having to assess the environmental impact of each project. Agency staffers are working on "categorical exclusions" that would pave the

way for quicker approval of forest-thinning projects and logging of dead and dying trees after forest fires. Those exclusions are similar to the president's forest proposal, which would exempt some national forest lands from NEPA. Environmentalists say they'll fight those changes.

THE LONG HAND OF NEPA

Bush officials are more than happy to share their anecdotes about NEPA reviews gone haywire. They point to the case of the little town of Stillwater, Minn., 13 miles east of St. Paul, which has spent 30 years trying to build a four-lane bridge over the St. Croix River.

Bridge proponents say the new structure is needed to replace a 70-year-old lift bridge, which is on National Register of Historic Places. City officials and local developers say they hope a new bridge would divert truck traffic away from historic downtown Stillwater and increase development in communities on both sides of the bridge.

"The mayor of Stillwater told me recently that sometimes you can't see the historic town for the semis lined up to go across the bridge," says Peters of the Transportation Department.

But the \$135 million project is opposed by environmental groups, who say the new bridge would damage wetlands and mar the bluffs that line the St. Croix River, which is a "wild and scenic river" protected by federal law. Environmentalists also assert that the project would accelerate urban sprawl from the Twin Cities area into western Wisconsin. Some of these concerns are shared by the National Park Service, which has jurisdiction over wild and scenic rivers.

Over the years, several environmental analyses of the proposed bridge have been completed, but no consensus about its impact has been reached. The Transportation Department is trying to break the deadlock by including the Stillwater Bridge project on its list of seven high-priority construction projects set for quick environmental review under the president's September executive order. The department plans to add more projects to its priority list in December.

Conservatives charge that the long hand of NEPA is increasingly reaching into unlikely government programs. Horner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute cites a recent lawsuit in which environmental groups and the city of Boulder, Colo., claimed that the Export-Import Bank of the United States and the Overseas Private Investment Corp. violated NEPA when they gave developing countries more than \$32 billion for oil fields, pipelines, and coal-fired plants without first assessing the projects' contribution to global warming. Horner argues that as a result of the lawsuit, agencies could soon be pressured to consider global warming in their NEPA reviews. "You're talking about a tremendous new regulatory burden, which is going to cost you more time and money," he says.

Industry lobbyists see such delays and expanded use of NEPA as reason to dramatically scale back the environmental impact assessment process or eliminate it altogether. One industry group boldly suggested amending the law to bar national environmental groups from filing NEPA lawsuits.

In recent comments to the White House task force on NEPA, the Idaho Cattle Association recommended that NEPA lawsuits be limited to "individuals who have an economic stake in the outcome of a NEPA decision or those who are directly affected" by the project being reviewed. Connaughton of the Council on Environmental Quality says he disagrees with that proposal but understands the frustration of industry groups. "The procedural requirements of the law should not be deployed to wreak havoc," he argues.

But what the White House and industry see as abuse of the system, environmental activists see as their fundamental right to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not spent on projects that harm the air, water, wildlife, or wilderness. NEPA supporters say they fear that the environmental goals that NEPA was created to advance could be lost in the rush to speed up or eliminate environmental assessments and to restrict the public's ability to challenge their conclusions. As the Wilderness Society's Alberswerth puts it, "If you don't have judicial review, you have no guarantee that the [Bureau of Land Management] or any other agency will comply with the laws."

A TIME AND A PLAN TO TEACH PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to bring to my colleagues' attention, and to the attention of their constituents who may wish to get involved in peace education, the recently released United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education.

The study is the result of successful collaboration between the Hague Appeal for Peace—a citizen's organization dedicated to reducing wars and armed conflict and promoting reconciliation and economic development—the Government of Mexico and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs.

By working together—governments, civil society and the United Nations—the effort to sustain peace through education stands a greater chance of success.

Humankind's genius invented technological wonders in the last century that have made life more livable and longer for many. It also produced, and then governments used, the atomic bomb, and then perfected it to incomprehensible destructive capacity. We are discovering new pieces of information from direct participants about how close we came to a global nuclear exchange during the Cuban Missile crisis 40 years ago. And we are confronted with a new awareness of dangers that might arise with the use of weapons of mass destruction for terrorism.

Education alone is not a security blanket. It is not a guarantee for progressive thinking. Indeed, we have learned that young people being educated in some religious schools in the Middle East were being indoctrinated with hatred for the West and the United States.

However, in a democratic society, education is a tool for enlightenment. As H.G. Wells said in his 1921 work, *The Outline of History*, "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." We would do well to heed his warning.

Fortunately, the complacency and lack of interest in questions of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially about extant nuclear dangers and solutions, is starting slowly to break down. During talk of war and inspections of weapons of mass destruction, we find ourselves in a teachable moment.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a time in history when it is critical to embrace the idea that peace, dialogue, and disarmament can and