

civil servants, in short, they were a vital aspect of Afghan society.

Women were active members of society. They attended universities. They had the right to vote. They participated in many sectors of the work force. However, decades of war, drought, famine, and oppression have taken a hefty toll on the entire population, and women in particular.

In a country where women were once equal and respected members of society, they are now shrouded into silence. Life for women in Afghanistan no longer exists. They live in seclusion, unable to interact with others.

In 1996, a now notorious regime known as the Taliban moved into the capital city of Kabul and began imposing their strict moral code. The Afghan people awoke one morning to find that their lives had been changed overnight. The Taliban announced the imposition of their new rules over Afghanistan's national radio.

Women were no longer allowed to work or attend school. Women were no longer permitted to leave their homes without a male relative. If they were caught outside without the accompaniment they were lashed with whips. Women were no longer allowed to wear nail polish. If they did, their fingernails would be

pulled out. Making excessive noise when walking was also grounds for punishment.

Afghan women have lived under this magnitude of oppression for five years now, and it has taken its toll. Depression and suicide rates in Afghanistan have dramatically increased. Previously, suicide was virtually unheard of, now many women see it as the only means to end their suffering. Some women are choosing to end their lives by drinking a caustic soda, a solution that causes severe pain and takes three days to take effect.

I know of one Afghan woman named "Roza" who managed to escape Kabul and find refuge in America. She left Afghanistan after her husband was taken away and subsequently killed by the Taliban. His only crime was that he did not subscribe to the Taliban mentality. She was forced to flee her homeland with her four young children, eventually making her way to San Diego.

She is one of the lucky few that has managed to escape. However, even in America she is frightened to speak out against the Taliban in fear that they will punish her remaining family members in Kabul.

The plight of the Afghan women under the oppressive hand of the Taliban has been going on for over five years. These egregious

violations of human rights must end. In addition, the women of Afghanistan—freed from this oppression—must have an opportunity to play a role in the rebuilding of a more open society. Only then will Afghan children grow up believing life holds something besides being a freedom fighter or a terrorist.

TRIBUTE TO RUSH LIMBAUGH

SPEECH OF

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, Rush Limbaugh is an inspiration to all of us. Although he is facing a personal challenge, it is not stopping him from continuing to be a champion for our cherished way of life. Rush has been a strong voice for freedom, free enterprise and our military during this difficult time in history. I salute you, Mr. Limbaugh. You're a great American.