

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 its 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 Cleveland, 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.