

CONSERVATION OF SPECIES AND THE ENDANGERED RHINOCEROS

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1986

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND ENVIRONMENT,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:18 a.m., in room 2318, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James H. Scheuer (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SCHEUER. The Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment will come to order.

From time to time we have had hearings on interesting and challenging and important environmental issues. Today we're going to consider the rapid loss of the world's animal species with special emphasis on the second largest land animal, the rhinoceros, that is facing extinction and for whose salvation desperate action is needed.

Now these hearings historically have not been without constructive result. We had a hearing about a year ago about a large development project in the Amazon jungle that was rapidly displacing the native Indian tribes, that was poorly conceived, atrociously conducted, and was being done with the financing of the World Bank and was in derogation of World Bank standards.

After the hearing we sent the testimony and wrote a long letter to our Treasury representative on the World Bank and asked them to petition the World Bank to stop the project. Within a matter of months, the project was stopped. That was one of the results of congressional hearings.

These hearings are designed to educate Members of Congress, but in the case of the global environment and loss of species which have global implications, we sometimes carry our educational ventures and efforts beyond the confines of the United States with some degree of success.

Well, the rhino, the world's largest land animal, is quickly being driven to the brink of extinction. The main cause of the depredation of the existing rhino herds is for their horns, which can be ground into quack medicinal remedies or carved into ornamental dagger handles. We have pictures of the daggers over there [indicating].

There's a picture of the result of the poaching. That picture on the left, I think, is one of the more gruesome and disgusting pictures representing man's greed that I have ever seen.

So for the most superficial of reasons, for these quack medicinal remedies and for dagger handles, we're destroying these magnificent beasts, the second largest beasts on Earth.

The plight of the rhino also deserves our attention not only for itself, but for what it says about ourselves, what it says about our perception of our role in this planet, how we see the world around us and this small Earth on which we live, what it says about our ability to save any endangered species, be it animal or plant.

The rhinoceros represents an acid test for our commitment to the preservation of the world's endangered species. Here we have an animal whose destruction serves no useful economic purpose, an animal that is protected by international laws that virtually all of the nations of the world that are affected in that region have joined, and an animal that enjoys enormous support from humane and conservation groups. Yet the poachers continue to deplete the rhino herds year after bloody year.

The plight of the rhino is a metaphor for the plight of all endangered species. If we can't save the rhino, we can't save any endangered species.

We have a very distinguished witness list here today. But before the witnesses, I want to recognize two very distinguished colleagues, Jim Cooper of Tennessee and Congressman Lindsay Thomas of Georgia, and ask them if they'd like to make some opening remarks.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to be with you today, and I congratulate you on the distinguished work that this subcommittee is doing on this important topic.

I regret that, unfortunately, due to the legislative schedule this late in the session when we have things like the tax reform bill coming up in just a few minutes, the attendance is not necessarily representative of the true congressional interest on this subject.

I feel that certainly next year, the next session of Congress, we will have all members on board and fighting this fight, this important fight to preserve the black rhinoceros and the other endangered species.

But I congratulate you, first and foremost, for taking time out of your busy schedule at a crucial time like this to make sure the cause is not only presented to us, the Congress, but also to the American people.

Mr. SCHEUER. Thank you very much.

Lindsay.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, thank you for letting me sit in with you today. I see here I'm on the Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment. As I told you, I'm on the Subcommittee of Fish and Wildlife and Environment; Conservation and Credit; and the Agriculture Committee as well. So I feel like this is almost a mixture of all the committees I serve on.

I'm just here as an interested party, as a member of the Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee and one concerned about the future of our animals and wildlife resources all over the world today. I'm glad to

have the opportunity to squeeze this into my schedule and look forward to the testimony.

Thank you for letting me sit in, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SCHEUER. Well, I thank you both for being here. Today we are beginning the debate, and we will have the votes on the tax bill. This is probably the most important voting day of this congressional year, and it's very much to your credit that you came. We're all grateful to you.

While you have the time, we're delighted to have you with us. Since your time is limited, if you have any questions or if you have any remarks to make during the course of the testimony, you may not be able to stay until the end, please feel free to intervene and make your remarks. Make yourselves felt and ask any questions that come to mind. OK?

All right. Now before going ahead to introduce the witnesses, I do want to thank and acknowledge the group from Rhino Rescue, USA. This group is playing a very significant leadership role in educating the public about the plight of the rhinoceros and in promoting conservation efforts, including establishing and maintaining rhino sanctuaries or wildlife sanctuaries in which rhinos can live with all kinds of other breeds in peace and serenity. Indeed, the only predator of the rhino is mankind.

So we thank Rhino Rescue, USA, for assisting us with this hearing, advising us, consulting with us, and arranging for the travel of our witnesses from Kenya.

Rhino Rescue is represented by its chairman, Thomas Schneider; by the distinguished actress and trustee of Rhino Rescue, Kathryn Harrold; and by an old and trusted friend of mine and of this committee's many prior hearings and prior battles for good causes, Bob Schule.

I also want to acknowledge the presence and the participation of Daniel Sindiyo and Dr. Esmond Bradley Martin, who have come halfway around the world from Kenya to testify at these hearings. We're grateful to them. It's been a long—that's a long trip and it's tough on the old bag of bones. It was a sacrifice to come, and we're grateful.

We'll also hear from the representative of Mr. Richard Benedick of the State Department; Mr. Curtis Bohlen—the representative, Mr. Richard Benedick of the State Department; also E.V. Curtis Bohlen, vice president of the World Wildlife Fund; Mr. Jack Hanna from the Columbus Zoo, Columbus, OH; and Edward Maruska from the Cincinnati Zoo, Cincinnati, OH.

Ohio is making a significant contribution here today. I wish we had some representation of our colleagues from Ohio.

I hope that Claudine Schneider, our distinguished ranking Republican, will be able to make it. She's vitally interested in this subject. If she can make it, she'll be here.

We would like for our first speaker now, Mr. Edmund Parsons, Office Director of the Office of Ecology and Natural Resources, Bureau of Oceans, International Environment and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, representing Richard Benedick, who's an old and valued friend of ours and who's testified before this subcommittee and this full committee on many occasions.

Mr. Parsons, why don't you chat with us informally for 6 or 7 or 8 minutes, preferably not reading your testimony but just chatting informally as if you were in our living room, and then we'll have some questions for you.

STATEMENT OF EDMUND PARSONS, OFFICE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ECOLOGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, BUREAU OF OCEANS, INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, REPRESENTING RICHARD ELLIOT BENEDICK, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, ACCOMPANIED BY DAVID TROTTER

Mr. PARSONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

It's an honor, indeed, for me to be here amongst this group of distinguished witnesses that will appear after me.

As you know, I've come recently from Rome, where we last met, where I was the deputy to Ambassador Fenwick, U.S. Ambassador to the FAO and a former Member herself of the House.

I have now come into this new, important position, and among the few things that have impressed me most has been the plight of the rhino. In preparation for this hearing, I have had the opportunity to spend some time reading into the subject and am convinced, as you have stated, that this is one of the biggest challenges confronting us now in preservation of wildlife.

A formal statement has been submitted to the committee, and I have a summary from which I was going to read but, as you've requested, I will just chat with you informally now at this time.

I do think that I should point out that in our reading of the data one of the things that we can most effectively focus on is the marketplace. And by this, I would look at the supply side of the market and the demand side.

We then have to in the State Department think of where we can most effectively be of assistance in stamping out the trade of rhinoceros products. In fact, over the past few years we have made attempts, considerable attempts, toward this end. We have made representations to a number of countries to encourage them to stop the trade in rhino and rhino products. We have encouraged countries to join CITES, which is the principal international arrangement on this topic. CITES stands for the Convention on International Trade In Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna.

We have actively pursued our membership in that organization and we note that now there are 92 members of CITES. CITES was set up in 1973 largely as a result of legislation that was passed by the U.S. Congress.

It is an effective organization. We do, however, have some problems with specific countries and we must continue our efforts in approaching those countries.

Specifically, I've noted that over 50 percent of rhino horn goes to North Yemen for making these daggers that we see pictures of here, and we have other problems in the Far East, specifically with Singapore, which is a significant trading nation for rhino products.

It is our intention to continue our representation to these countries to see that effective trade bans are put into place. In fact, in Yemen there is a trade ban but it seems not to be effective.

Also, it has been our privilege to be of assistance to concerned individuals around the globe in visiting these countries. We've been pleased to assist them in meeting the appropriate authorities in Africa and Asian countries, and we intend to continue doing so. In fact, as a result of your hearing, Mr. Chairman, I've had some discussions with these gentlemen, many of whom are here now before you.

And I think we have laid a firm groundwork for continuation of our efforts in this area, and I understand, Mr. Chairman, that you, yourself, plan a trip to Asia. I look forward to our future discussions with you so that we might be of assistance to you in this regard.

(the entire report is 170 pages. dd)



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