

U.S. Office of Special Counsel  
Inspector General, General Services Administration

Most of these investigations are ongoing. However, at least one has been completed.

The Inspector General at the Treasury Department has corroborated some of the facts and conclusions in the Majority Staff Report.

I also know that the U.S. Attorney, who prosecuted Mr. Mancuso's senior deputy for passport fraud, is very unhappy with Mr. Mancuso's conduct in that case.

The U.S. Attorney has characterized Mr. Mancuso's conduct in that case as "egregious and unethical."

Mr. President, at this point, there are just too many unanswered and unresolved questions bearing on the allegations.

I think it would be accurate to say the case against Mr. Mancuso would not stand up in a court of law.

Successfully meeting that test, however, does not mean that Mr. Mancuso is ready to be the Pentagon's Inspector General.

The IG's must meet a much higher standard.

The IG must be beyond reproach.

Having questions about judgment and appearance—like in Mr. Mancuso's case—is not beyond reproach.

Mr. President, I will have much more to say about this at a later date.

I yield the floor.

#### THE MINNESOTA FLOODS OF 2000

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the devastating storms of last week that are affecting much of northwestern Minnesota. We are experiencing some of the worst flash flooding in over 100 years. These storms dumped more than 7 inches of rain in the Moorhead, Minnesota and Fargo, North Dakota area in an eight-hour period, swamping hundreds of basements, and streets, and acres of farm land.

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to see first hand the effects of the storm when I visited the communities of Ada, Borup, Perley, Hendrum, and Moorhead. Actually, I had originally planned before the storm on being in the area to celebrate the grand opening of the Ada Hospital following its destruction during the Floods of 1997. Just three short years ago, Ada was hit with the worst flooding in 500 years. They are still recovering from that flood.

How do you explain floods like these? They don't just happen once in a while contrary to reports of 100 or even 500-year floods, they've been happening every year in northwestern Minnesota. Last year, Ada experienced severe hail storms and a Labor Day flood. In 1998, there were three floods in February, May and June. In 1997, of course, there was the huge flood in the Red River Valley.

Swollen from the heavy rains, the Wild Rice River became a huge pool of

water 25 miles wide and 30 miles long that flowed steadily overland through northwestern Minnesota, drowning millions of dollars worth of crops in its path. The pool developed as heavy runoff collected at higher elevations in Becker and Mahnomen counties, then flowed into the Red River Valley toward Ada. You have to realize that this land is very flat, dropping only about one foot per mile, so the water moves slowly, but causes severe crop damage. Several rivers converge and flood prevention measures have failed to funnel excess water into the Red River. I intend to work with representatives from the watershed districts, and the Army Corps of Engineers to see whether past flood control measures have resulted in what has become constant flooding in this area of northwest Minnesota and what can be done to alleviate this problem in the future. I saw fields with three or four feet of water that had been planted with wheat, soybeans, and sugar beets earlier this year. Now, these crops are all destroyed, and the stench of rotting crops has begun.

Earlier this week, Governor Ventura declared this area a state of emergency so that federal, state and local emergency management officials can work together to assess the damage and see whether federal assistance will be required. As if this wasn't enough, eight counties in southeastern Minnesota were declared emergency areas and Governor Ventura has asked the federal government for money to help with their recovery following rainstorms of May 17th. I was happy to support the Governor's request and to learn that President Clinton has declared this region a disaster so that they are eligible for federal funding. This region of Minnesota received 5 to 7 inches of rain on May 17th, followed by another heavy storm May 31. Since then, even small rainfalls have resulted in overflows and drainage problems.

It's too early to tell the extent of the damage in northwestern Minnesota. Preliminary estimates include damage to 430 houses, primarily in the Moorhead area, and \$10 million damage to crops in Becker and Mahnomen counties.

But losses will go much higher. The greatest crop damage appears to be in Clay and Norman counties. There, crops have been damaged or destroyed on more than 500 square miles of land, according to county officials. That could mean \$50 million in lost crops, and half that again in out-of-pocket planting costs.

Flooding remains a serious blow to farmers in Minnesota. There are about 300 commercial farmers left in Norman County in northwestern Minnesota. They've been losing 20 or 30 farms every year recently. It's too late to plant any cash crops in that part of the state. Some farmers will plant a "cover crop" to control erosion; others simply will try to control weeds and start planning for next year.

As in every disaster that my state has faced, I've been inspired once again

by the people of Minnesota, who rally together for their communities when tragedy strikes. It's during critical times such as these that we finally understand the importance of neighbor helping neighbor. At a time when we all too often fail to make the effort to get to know and appreciate our neighbors, Minnesotans in a great many of our communities have formed lasting bonds over this past week and found their civic spirit has been restored.

Mr. President, I intend to work with Governor Ventura to examine the need for federal funding to help those Minnesotans devastated by this most recent flooding. I also want to work with the Governor, the Farm Services Administration, and the Department of Agriculture in anticipation of federal funding needs for farmers who have had severe crop losses. I stand together with my colleagues in the Minnesota delegation, and with our colleagues from North Dakota who are facing destruction in their states equal to our own. When disaster strikes, we are not Republicans or Democrats. We are representatives of the people, and we will do whatever we must to protect our citizens when their lives, homes and property are threatened.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S ROADLESS INITIATIVE

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate this week as the Forest Service has launched a series of meetings in my state and around the country to solicit comments on the Administration's proposed roadless initiative. I want to encourage Oregonians to send in their comments and attend these meetings to make their voices heard.

I am concerned that so many of my constituents will not take part in this comment period in part because they believe that this roadless policy is a foregone conclusion. Frankly, I don't think the Forest Service did much to change those feelings by including language in its draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which characterized loggers, mill workers, and people in the timber products industry in general as uneducated, opportunistic, and unable to adapt to change. Many Oregonians, not just those in resource industries, were offended by this.

I understand that the Administration has subsequently apologized, but I am afraid this incident only added to the feeling held by many Oregonians that the decisions about this roadless plan have already been made. So I want to take this opportunity today to outline some of my concerns about this roadless initiative and to encourage other Oregonians to take advantage of the remaining weeks of this public comment period to do the same.

Mr. President, the management of the roadless areas in our National Forest System has been the subject of debate for many years. We had the RARE I (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) process in the early 1970s leading

to inventories and analysis of the large roadless areas in our National Forests. Then we had RARE II under the Carter Administration.

That process was followed by a number of state-specific bills, such as the Oregon Wilderness Act of 1984, where roadless areas that were suitable for wilderness protection were so designated and other roadless areas were to be released for multiple uses. Despite the growth of the wilderness system in this country, the management of other roadless areas has remained controversial.

Now this Administration has proposed a roadless initiative that would permanently ban road construction from some 43 million acres of inventoried roadless areas. In addition, this draft EIS calls for each Forest, upon its periodic Forest Plan revision, to protect additional roadless areas, often referred to as uninventoried roadless areas. No one, not even the Forest Service, seems to know how many millions of acres that may ultimately be. So the President is proposing setting aside an additional 45 to 60 million acres of the National Forest system on top of the 35 million acres that are already designated as wilderness areas. Let me remind my colleagues that the entire National Forest System is 192 million acres and that there are numerous riparian areas and wildlife buffer zones that are also off limits to road construction. So we may well have more than half of our National Forest System permanently set aside and inaccessible to most of the public by the time this Administration is through.

What is even more alarming to me is the position of the Vice President on this issue. In a speech to the League of Conservation Voters last month, AL GORE said the Administration's preferred alternative does not go far enough. Perhaps Mr. GORE's "Progress and Prosperity" tour should make a few stops in rural Oregon so he can see first-hand the results of eight years of passive management of our federal lands—double digit unemployment and four day school weeks. As part of the Administration that is writing this rule and is supposedly keeping an open mind while taking comments from the public this month, it seems a bit premature for the Vice President to speak so favorably of an alternative that is ostensibly still being reviewed. I know the Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee and the Chairman of the House Resources Committee have requested the Vice President recuse himself from the rest of this rule-making process. I agree with the Chairmen and hope the Vice President will try to restore the public's confidence that this rule-making is not predetermined and that it is open, as required by law, to the comments and suggestions of the public.

Mr. President, some of my colleagues may ask why new roads may be needed in the National Forest System. There are many reasons, but perhaps the most urgent purpose is forest health.

A century of fire suppression followed by years of inactive forest management under this Administration have left our National Forest System overstocked with underbrush and unnaturally dense tree stands that are now at risk of catastrophic wildfire. The GAO recently found that at least 39 million acres of the National Forest System are at high risk for catastrophic fire. According to the Forest Service, 26 million acres are at risk from insects and disease infestations as well. The built up fuel loads in these forests create abnormally hot wildfires that are extremely difficult to control. This year's fires in New Mexico have given us a preview of what is to come throughout our National Forest System if we continue this Administration's policy of passive forest management.

To prevent catastrophic fire and widespread insect infestation and disease outbreaks, these forests need to be treated. The underbrush needs to be removed. The forests must be thinned to allow the remaining trees to grow more rapidly and more naturally. While some of this work can be done without roads, roads are many times required in order to carry out this necessary work. Yet this Administration apparently wants to make it more difficult to address these problems, more difficult to stop fires like those in New Mexico before they start. And the Vice President wants to go even further than that.

Why else are roads needed in the National Forest System? Forest roads provide millions of Americans with access to the National Forests for recreational purposes. With the Forest Service predicting tremendous increases in recreational visits to the National Forest System in the coming years, shouldn't there at least be a thorough examination of how this roadless plan will affect the remaining areas of our National Forests, which will apparently have to absorb most of these new visitors? And what about the needs of seniors and disabled visitors? Compounding the problem, this Administration will be decommissioning many roads currently used by recreational visitors. In its rush to complete this sweeping rule, this Administration does not seem to have the time to examine seriously the impacts of steering more and more recreational visitors to a smaller percentage of the Forest System.

Mr. President, I am also concerned about how this roadless initiative is supposed to interact with the Northwest Forest Plan. Last year, I came to the floor of the Senate and I expressed concerns about this Administration's forestry policies and its weak implementation of its own plan that was supposed to lay the groundwork for a cooperative resolution to the timber disputes of the early 1990s. Unfortunately, as our federal agencies scour the forests to survey for mosses, we continue to have gridlock in the North-

west, with none of the promised sustainable and predictable timber harvests in sight. So how much confidence does this Administration have in its own Northwest Forest Plan? By reading its roadless proposal, the answer is "not much." Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan has thorough standards and guidelines for activities in the forests covered by the plan, including road-building. This Administration had previously exempted the Northwest Forest Plan forests from its road building moratoriums because it was still clinging to the notion that its plan was the model for forestry policy in the future. Unlike those temporary moratoria, however, the Administration's roadless initiative makes no exception for the forests covered by the Northwest Forest Plan. To me, this suggests that even this Administration is acknowledging what many in the Northwest have said for some time: The Clinton Forest Plan is a failure. Rural Oregon already knew that. Now with this roadless proposal, this Administration will only make it harder for any future Administration to keep its promises under the Northwest Forest Plan. This fact is most obvious in the town of Klamath Falls in southern Oregon. Like many towns in the Northwest surrounded by federal lands, Klamath Falls was encouraged by this Administration to create jobs and economic growth through recreation and ecotourism in order to compensate for the loss of the timber jobs. Of course, it is difficult to find substitutes for the family wage jobs that the timber industry once provided for these towns. Nevertheless, rural Oregon has tried to diversify its economy.

More than three years ago, developers and community leaders in Klamath Falls embarked upon the arduous process of obtaining a special use permit to launch a winter recreation area at Pelican Butte in the nearby Winema National Forest. Millions of dollars were spent and countless hours were invested by everyone from the local forest service, to the developers, to the local government and the community as a whole. A final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision are due next year. Now, due to the fact that Pelican Butte will require three miles of road in a currently inventoried roadless area, the Administration's roadless initiative will effectively kill the plan. In its zeal to complete this plan before leaving office, this Administration apparently does not want to take the time to make reasonable accommodations for proposals that have been in the pipeline for years. Never mind the fact that the Pelican Butte project will result in a net decrease in road mileage on National Forest lands. Never mind the fact that Oregonians were told by this Administration to go and find other means to develop their economy outside of timber. The message to Oregonians is clear: If the roadless plan is to be concluded before President Clinton leaves office, there is

no time to spare to consider the effort and good will invested by the people of Klamath Falls in the Pelican Butte proposal. The fact is that this Administration doesn't care how many rural communities are left in the dust by this regulatory juggernaut.

Mr. President, all of this is very discouraging for Oregonians who have a sense this Administration has already made up its mind on this roadless initiative. It is my understanding that many of my constituents have just received copies of this draft EIS in the last few days—with half of the brief comment period already expired. Nevertheless, from the floor of the Senate today, I am pleading with my constituents to get out there during this comment period and make their voices heard. This rulemaking is too significant for Oregonians to be silent.

Mr. President, I agree with this Administration that we need a long-term resolution to the management of our roadless areas. But common sense tells us that what is needed and appropriate for one area may not be sound stewardship for another. With this roadless initiative, this Administration is talking about setting aside in one broad stroke millions of acres that are supposed to be held in trust for all Americans. Even worse, this plan is being rushed through a truncated public comment process in order to accommodate an artificial political deadline. This isn't the way to manage our precious natural resources and this isn't the way to treat our rural communities. The management of these roadless areas is a complicated question, and it deserves more than the simple answer being force-fed to us by this Administration.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS UNDER MEDICARE

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss an issue that has become increasingly important to many in Congress. As an early sponsor of legislation to provide prescription drug coverage under Medicare, I am pleased there has been progress in reaching an agreement among many proposals to provide prescription drug benefits to seniors.

Medicare recently celebrated its 35th anniversary. As with most things in life this program is now starting to show its age. Still being administered under a model developed in 1965, Medicare is quickly becoming antiquated and blind to the many advances in modern medicine. We all know prescription drugs play an increasingly important role in the health of our nation.

There are countless examples of drugs which now allow us to live longer, more productive lives. Drugs to control blood pressure, lower cholesterol, or mitigate the effects of a stroke are a few which demonstrate the measurable impact research and development can have on improving our lives. Unfortunately, the Medicare pro-

gram has not progressed as rapidly as medicine.

To that end, I introduced the Medicare Ensuring Prescription Drugs for Seniors Act, or MEDS. My bill was an early attempt to heighten the debate surrounding prescription drugs, and at the same time provide a plan that would address the needs of the nearly one third of senior citizens in this country who currently lack any form of prescription coverage. We have all heard the frightening stories of the choices that many seniors are forced to make when it comes to paying for prescription drugs. Unfortunately, many of these stories have been politicized and used to stir the political cauldron over the past several months. But the reality is that decisions between food, shelter, and medicine are all too common among our neediest seniors. MEDS was introduced to help these people.

My plan would add a prescription benefit under the already existing Part B of Medicare, without creating or adding any new overly bureaucratic component to the Medicare program. It works like this: The part B beneficiary would have the opportunity to access the benefit as long as they were Medicare eligible. Those with incomes below 135 percent of the nation's poverty level would be provided the benefit without a deductible and would only be responsible for a 25 percent co-payment for all approved medications.

My bill also provides relief for seniors above the 135 percent income threshold who may face overwhelming drug costs because of the number of prescriptions they take or the relative costs of them, by paying for 75 percent of the costs after a \$150 monthly deductible is met. Most importantly, this voluntary benefit does not have a treatment cap. Unlike both the President's plan and others currently being debated in Congress, MEDS covers all participating beneficiaries no matter what level of monthly or annual drug expenditure they incur and does not abandon seniors when they need help the most.

The House of Representatives narrowly passed a prescription drug bill that subsidizes the insurance industry and attempts to ensure coverage in all areas of the country—a difficult if not impossible task. The biggest problem with this approach is that the insurance industry has stated that it wouldn't be able or willing to provide these types of "stand alone" policies no matter how much of a subsidy they receive. Trying to establish an enormously expensive and administratively difficult plan built on the mere hope that the insurance industry will change its mind, is simply too big a risk to take when it comes to our nations seniors.

The House bill would establish a new outside agency through the Department of Health and Human Services to administer the plan. Not only will this compound the problem of administra-

tion, implementation and increasing federal bureaucracy, but it also actually delays benefits that will help our seniors today. There is no way a major new bureaucracy can be created and become effective in time to provide the help our seniors need now. At a minimum, based on similar initiatives in the past, it would take two years to gear up this kind of new government agency, which again, only duplicates existing federal bureaucracy and slows progress toward meaningful reform.

It's important these facts are understood as we continue discussing emerging plans for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. How a plan is structured could have dramatic consequences for future innovations in treatments which can enhance quality of life and in some cases save lives. If done right, we'll enable all senior citizens to access the best health care system in the world and receive the latest technology and treatment for their conditions—and do it in a way that is both responsible and expedient. MEDS accomplishes both of these goals.

In closing Mr. President, let me say, as I have in the past, the challenge before us today is to enable Medicare to shape and adapt itself to reflect the realities of an ever changing health care system. After 35 years of endless tinkering, we have a real opportunity to make it more responsive, more helpful, and more attuned to the needs of current and future retirees and disabled persons in this country through the provision of a prescription drug benefit. This is a goal to which I am wholly committed.

#### NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD ACT

Mr. L. CHAFEE. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate approved S. 148, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. I would like to thank Senator ABRAHAM and Senator SMITH for their work on this important environmental issue, and also offer my family's appreciation for Senator ABRAHAM's kind words regarding my father. Senator John Chafee was a strong proponent of this legislation, and I am proud to follow his lead in cosponsoring this bill.

Now, what is a neotropical migratory bird? Simply put, it's a bird that breeds in North America, and migrates each year to tropical habitats in Central and South America. While the name sounds technical and complicated, many of these birds are well-known and well-loved by Americans. Plovers, sandpipers, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, orioles, blackbirds, and many species of raptor and songbird are all neotropical migratory birds. Some of these birds, such as the Ruby-throated Hummingbird and the Killdeer, cover amazing distances as they travel between their summer and winter habitats.

In Rhode Island, we are fortunate to be visited by many neotropical migrants including one species of hummingbird, over ten species of raptor,