

good. But under oath, for a private pleasure?

In doing this, the Office of President of the United States has been debased and the justice system jeopardized.

In doing this, he has broken his covenant of trust with the American people.

The framers also knew that the Office of President of the United States could be gravely damaged if it continued to be unworthily occupied. That is why they devised the process of impeachment by the House and trial by the Senate. It is, in truth, a direct process. If, on impeachment, the President is convicted, he is removed from office—and the office itself suffers no permanent damage. If, on impeachment, the President is acquitted, the issue is resolved once and for all, and the office is similarly protected from permanent damage.

But if, on impeachment, the President is not convicted and removed from office despite the fact that numerous Senators are convinced that he has, in the words of one proposed resolution of censure, “egregiously failed” the test of his oath of office, “violated the trust of the American people,” and “dishonored the office which they entrusted to him,” then the Office of the Presidency has been deeply, and perhaps permanently damaged.

And that is a further reason why President Clinton must be convicted of the charges brought before you by the House and removed from office. To fail to do so, while conceding that the President has engaged in egregious and dishonorable behavior that has broken the covenant of trust between himself and the American people, is to diminish the Office of President of the United States in an unprecedented and unacceptable way.

Senators, please permit me a word on my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues of the House. It is necessary to clarify an important point.

None of us comes to this Chamber today without a profound sense of our own responsibilities in life, and of the many ways in which we have failed to meet those responsibilities, to one degree or another. None of us comes before you claiming to be a perfect man or a perfect citizen, just as none of you imagines yourself perfect. All of us, Members of the House and Senate, know that we come to this difficult task as flawed human beings, under judgment.

That is the way of this world: flawed human beings must, according to the rule of law, judge other flawed human beings.

But the issue before the Senate of the United States is not the question of its own Members’ personal moral condition. Nor is the issue before the Senate the question of the personal moral condition of the members of the House of Representatives. The issue here is whether the President has violated the rule of law and thereby broken his covenant of trust with the American peo-

ple. This is a public issue, involving the gravest matter of the public interest. And it is not effected, one way or another, by the personal moral condition of any member of either House of Congress, or by whatever expressions of personal chagrin the President has managed to express.

Senators, we of the House do not come before you today lightly. And, if you will permit me, it is a disservice to the House to suggest that it has brought these articles of impeachment before you in a mean-spirited or irresponsible way. That is not true.

We have brought these articles of impeachment because we are convinced, in conscience, that the President of the United States lied under oath; that the President committed perjury on several occasions before a Federal grand jury. We have brought these articles of impeachment because we are convinced, in conscience, that the President willfully obstructed justice and thereby threatened the legal system he swore a solemn oath to protect and defend.

These are not trivial matters. These are not partisan matters. These are matters of justice, the justice that each of you has taken a solemn oath to serve in this trial.

Some of us have been called “Clinton-haters.” I must tell you, distinguished Senators, that this impeachment is not, for those of us from the House, a question of hating anyone. This is not a question of who we hate. It is a question of what we love. And among the things we love are the rule of law, equal justice before the law, and honor in our public life. All of us are trying as hard as we can to do our duty as we see it—no more and no less.

Senators, this trial is being watched around the world. Some of those watching, thinking themselves superior in their cynicism, wonder what it is all about. But others know.

Political prisoners know that this is about the rule of law—the great alternative to arbitrary and unchecked state power.

The families of executed dissidents know that this is about the rule of law—the great alternative to the lethal abuse of power by the state.

Those yearning for freedom know that this is about the rule of law—the hard-won structure by which men and women can live by their God-given dignity and secure their God-given rights in ways that serve the common good.

If they know this, can we not know it?

If, across the river in Arlington Cemetery, there are American heroes who died in defense of the rule of law, can we give less than the full measure of our devotion to that great cause?

I wish to read you a letter I recently received that expresses my feelings far better than my poor words:

DEAR CHAIRMAN HYDE: My name is William Preston Summers. How are you doing? I am a third grader in room 504 at Chase elementary School in Chicago. I am writing this let-

ter because I have something to tell you. I have thought of a punishment for the president of the United States of America. The punishment should be that he should write a 100 word essay by hand. I have to write an essay when I lie. It is bad to lie because it just gets you in more trouble. I hate getting in trouble.

It is just like the boy who cried wolf, and the wolf ate the boy. It is important to tell the truth. I like to tell the truth because it gets you in less trouble. If you do not tell the truth people do not believe you.

It is important to believe the president because he is a important person. If you can not believe the president who can you believe. If you have to no one believe in then how do you run your life. I do not believe the president tells the truth anymore right now. After he writes the essay and tells the truth, I will believe him again.

WILLIAM SUMMERS.

Then there is a P.S. from his dad:

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE HYDE: I made my son William either write you a letter or an essay as a punishment for lying. Part of his defense for his lying was the President lied. He is still having difficulty understanding why the President can lie and not be punished.

BOBBY SUMMERS.

Mr. Chief Justice and Senators, on June 6, 1994, it was the 50th anniversary of the Americans landing at Normandy. I went ashore at Normandy, walked up to the cemetery area, where as far as the eye could see there were white crosses, Stars of David. And the British had a bagpipe band scattered among the crucifixes, the crosses, playing “Amazing Grace” with that peaceful, mournful sound that only the bagpipe can make. If you could keep your eyes dry you were better than I.

But I walked to one of these crosses marking a grave because I wanted to personalize the experience. I was looking for a name but there was no name. It said, “Here lies in Honored Glory a Comrade in Arms Known but to God.”

How do we keep faith with that comrade in arms? Well, go to the Vietnam Memorial on the National Mall and press your hands against a few of the 58,000 names carved into that wall, and ask yourself, How can we redeem the debt we owe all those who purchased our freedom with their lives? How do we keep faith with them? I think I know. We work to make this country the kind of America they were willing to die for. That is an America where the idea of sacred honor still has the power to stir men’s souls.

My solitary—solitary—hope is that 100 years from today people will look back at what we have done and say, “They kept the faith.”

I’m done.

The CHIEF JUSTICE. The Chair recognizes the majority leader.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1999

Mr. LOTT. Mr. Chief Justice, pursuant to the previous consent agreement, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under that order.

The CHIEF JUSTICE. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senate, under the previous order, stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, January 19, at which time it will reconvene

in legislative session. Under that same order, the Senate will next convene as a Court of Impeachment on Tuesday, January 19, at 1 p.m. The Senate stands adjourned.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 2:53 p.m., sitting as a Court of Impeachment, adjourned to reconvene in legislative session on Tuesday, January 19, 1999, at 9:30 a.m.