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[ERRATA]

The statement of the Senator from Maine [Ms. SNOWE], delivered in closed session while the Senate was sitting as a Court of Impeachment, was inadvertently omitted from the RECORD of Friday, February 12, 1999. The permanent RECORD will be changed to reflect the following:

TRIAL OF WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. Chief Justice, distinguished colleagues, let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the Chief Justice for his wisdom, for his infinite patience, and for conferring upon this body the judicial temperament envisioned by the Framers.

I would also like to commend both the Senate majority and minority leaders for upholding the dignity of this body, by preserving judiciousness and fairness, and maintaining bipartisanship and civility.

Colleagues, we have arrived at a juncture in our public lives that will largely define our place before the judgment of history, and I think it will be said that justice and the Constitution were well served.

Indeed, the consequences of our decision are manifest in the words of Alexander Hamilton, who wrote of "the awful discretion which a court of impeachment must necessarily have, to doom to honor or to infamy the most confidential and the most distinguished characters of the community."

Those words should weigh heavily upon us. But while the gravity of our task is humbling, the genius of our Constitution is ennobling; for we deliberate not under the imposing shadow cast by the exceptional men who framed this Nation, but in the illuminating light of their wisdom.

Impeachment was designed by the Framers to be a circuitbreaker to pro-

tect the Republic, when "checks and balances" would not contain the darker vagaries of human nature. Impeachment empowers the Senate—under the most extraordinary of circumstances—to step outside its legislative role, reach into the executive branch, and remove a popularly elected President.

Impeachment was not, however, devised as an adjunct or independent arm of prosecution. It is not for the U.S. Senate to find solely whether the President committed statutory violations.

Rather, we have a larger question—whether there is evidence that persuades us, in my view beyond a reasonable doubt, that the President's offenses constitute high crimes and misdemeanors that require his removal.

Here is the precise point of our challenge—to give particular meaning to the elusive phrase, "high crimes and misdemeanors." This task is critical, because impeachment is not so much a definition, as it is a judgment in a particular case—a judgment based not upon an exact or universal moral standard—but upon a contemporary and historical assessment of interest and need.

"High crimes and misdemeanors" speak to offenses that go to the heart of matters of governance, social authority, and institutional power—offenses that, in Hamilton's words, "relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to the society itself."

And these crimes must be of such magnitude that the American people need protection, not by the traditional means of civil or criminal law—but by the extraordinary act of removing their duly elected President.

For removal is not intended simply to be a remedy; it is intended to be the remedy. The only remedy by which the people—whose core interests are meaningfully threatened by the President's conduct—can be effectively protected.

This, to me, is what President Woodrow Wilson meant when he referred to "nothing short of the grossest offenses against the plain law of the land." This, to me, is what Framers George Mason meant when he emphasized "great and dangerous offenses."

So in determining whether this President has committed a "great and dangerous offense" requiring removal, we must first weigh all of the credible evidence to identify which acts were actually committed. Then, we must assess the gravity or degree of the misconduct. This process requires that we review the acts from their origin, and the circumstances in their totality.

The allegations in article I do not paint a pretty picture. Indeed, we are all struggling with having to reconcile the President's lowly conduct with the Constitution's high standards. And we should all be concerned with the minimal threshold that he has set, and the poor example he has created for leadership in this country.

The President himself admits he gave evasive and incomplete testimony. He admits he worked hard to evade the truth. He admits he misled advisers, Congress, and the Nation. And he looked all of America in the eye—wagging his finger in mock moral indignation when he did it.

The fact is, the truth is not our servant. The truth does not exist to be summoned only when expedient. And I find his attempts to contort the truth profoundly disturbing. A President should inspire our most noble aspirations. Unfortunately, he has fueled our darkest cynicisms.

And I resent the ordeal he has put this country through—and we should make no mistake about it—whatever else may be said, we are here today because of the President's actions. I resent the shadow he has cast on what should be—and I feel still is—an honorable profession; public service. And I

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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