SPEECH OF
HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, October 8, 1998

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am inserting into the Record two insightful and useful editorials from The Nation magazine. The first one, titled “Clinton, Starr and the Constitution” points out that “this inquiry has been driven by politics from the start.” The Nation, which has been a stout critic of Bill Clinton, notes that from the beginning of his Presidency, states that “Kenneth Starr’s impeachment report represents an assault not merely on Bill Clinton but, more significant, on the presidency, the Constitution and our democracy.”

It also rightly points out that “What the conservatives adopt by election they have thwarted by investigation. This Congress saw no important legislation passed on tobacco and children, education, childcare, minimum wage or campaign finance reform.”

The second editorial points out that the tactics of this investigation have amounted to “sexual McCarthyism.” In drawing a powerful historical analogy, The Nation points suggest that “the Enemy Other is sexual rather than political deviance.” Just like during the 1950’s, there have been secret grand jury leaks, wiretapping has been used to entrap witnesses and the legal process is being used to punish or defame people for activities that may be “politically and culturally anathema,” but not necessarily crimes. Hence the need for the public to hear all the salacious details contained in the Ken Starr report.

I bring these fine editorials to the attention of my colleagues and the public.

[From The Nation, Oct. 5, 1998]

CLINTON, STARR AND THE CONSTITUTION

Kenneth Starr’s impeachment report represents an assault not merely on Bill Clinton but, more significant, on the presidency, the Constitution and our democracy. It is crucial to the future of all three that it be repudiated before its damage becomes irreversible.

We have no great affection for the President, who has systematically betrayed almost everyone and everything for which he professed to stand during his six years in office. But those failings should not obscure the gravity of Starr’s excesses. The independent counsel’s report is not presented to stand on its own. It is not a legal document. It is the product of an investigation that was controlled power that Kenneth Starr has so improbably managed to parcel out over the years. It has shorn the nation of much of its constitutional insulation, and has fomented a public appetite for an intensity of political investigation that would be anathema to a democracy.

The Nation, in an article dated November 24, 1997, points out that “This inquiry has been driven by politics from the start.” The Nation, which has been a stout critic of Bill Clinton, notes that from the beginning of his Presidency, states that “Kenneth Starr’s impeachment report represents an assault not merely on Bill Clinton but, more significant, on the presidency, the Constitution and our democracy.”

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of the fifties exploited the nativist impulse, which identifies the foreign with the radical and the immoral.

In the days of the domestic cold war it meant HUAC, McCarthy, Nixon, and the American Legion—arguing that the best (or fellow travelers) and the worst (or Communists) was to be a “dirty Red,” an agent of an international conspiracy, a spy. The reason Arthur Miller’s play The Crucible, about the Salem witch trials of the 1690s, spoke so succintly to the 1950s was that just as there were no witches in Salem, there was no internal Red menace in the United States of the fifties. The purpose of the type of hysteria that resulted in the wholesale invasion of the rights and liberties of citizens.

Today we have independent counsel Keneth Starr, Representatives Henry Hyde and Newt Gingrich, with Chief Justice William Rehnquist waiting in the wings to preside over impeachment proceedings in the Senate—cheered on by such as the Christian Coalition and William Bennett—arguing in effect that to have (dirty) sex in the Oval Office means one should be thrown out of office. The Enemy Other is sexual rather than political and culturally anathema, but in and of themselves they were not crimes. During the fifties, that meant summoning accused members of the Communist Party (a legal organization) before official tribunals and asking them questions the investigators knew would be difficult or impossible for them to answer, thereby forcing them to choose among silence (which landed the Hollwood Ten in prison for contempt of Congress), blacklisting (which was visited on anyone who invoked the Fifth Amendment), or criminal trials (which are now considered politically anathema but in the fifties were crimes). The investigation was not to write legislation or to develop new information (HUAC, for example, already had an extensive file obtained from undercover agents on all the names it was insisting witnesses recite in public). Rather, the hearings and trials and investigations of those years were for the most part degradation ceremonies. One shudders at the prospect of Congressional hearings or a Senate trial that recycles the pornographic materials Starr claims it was necessary to assemble. In the long run history has decided that it was not HUAC’s or McCarthy’s targets that were degraded. It was the country itself. Let us not let it happen again—VICTOR NAVASKY.

TRIBUTE TO THE UKRAINIAN CULTURAL CENTER IN WARREN, MICHIGAN

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Ukrainian Cultural Center, Warren, Michigan, as they celebrate 20 years as the heart of the Ukrainian community in Michigan. The Center will commemorate this occasion with a banquet and cultural celebration on October 18, 1998.

The Ukrainian Cultural Center is home to more than forty arts, civic, cultural, educational, social, sports and youth organizations. Included in these are the member organizations of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America and other investigations of those years was not to write legislation or to develop new information (HUAC, for example, already had an extensive file obtained from undercover agents on all the names it was insisting witnesses recite in public). Rather, the hearings and trials and investigations of those years were for the most part degradation ceremonies. One shudders at the prospect of Congressional hearings or a Senate trial that recycles the pornographic materials Starr claims it was necessary to assemble. In the long run history has decided that it was not HUAC’s or McCarthy’s targets that were degraded. It was the country itself. Let us not let it happen again—VICTOR NAVASKY.

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The Ukrainian Cultural Center is home to more than forty arts, civic, cultural, educational, social, sports and youth organizations. Included in these are the member organizations of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America branch for Southeastern Michigan.

In addition to lending financial support in grants and aid to community organizations and individuals, the Center’s beautiful conference halls, classrooms, gym and social club host a variety of programs and special events throughout the year. The Ukrainian Cultural Center is not only a showpiece in the community but serves as a key site for instruction on Ukrainian literature, history, language, arts and leisure activities.

The Ukrainian Cultural Center houses the Ukrainian Museum, which collects and displays historical artifacts and religious relics. The Ukrainian Library makes available to all many Ukrainian language books and periodicals. Additionally, the Center publishes print, audio and video material relevant to Ukraine’s American community.

The Ukrainian Cultural Center is key to ascertaining the strength of the Ukrainian ethnic identity and to all teach fellow Americans bout the rich Ukrainian Culture. The Center also serves as an important forum to ring others to the history of Ukraine’s successful struggle for independence.

The Center is integral part of not only the Ukrainian community, but all of metropolitan Detroit and Michigan. It remains as one of the best examples of the many colorful ethnic backgrounds that weave such a wonderfully diverse community profile.

The Ukrainian Cultural Center has hosted many distinguished guests in the past 20 years, including two sitting U.S. Presidents and the first President of Independent Ukraine. I have had the distinct pleasure to attend a wide variety of functions at the Ukrainian Cultural Center. Some have been meetings with leaders of Ukraine; others have been social or cultural events; and still others have been for exchanges of ideas with a wide range of leaders and other members of the Ukrainian-American community which thrives in the 12th Congressional District.

On so many of these occasions, I have seen the particularly effective endeavors of Korys Potapenko, the Center’s Director of Operations, Bhodan Fodorak, President of the Center’s Board of Directors, and other officers who all do so much of their time to the Center’s unique position in the Ukrainian-American and the broader community.

I ask my colleagues to join me as we extend our sincere congratulations to the Ukrainian Cultural Center for their 20 wonderful years, and our hopes for continued success in the future.