United States and the people of the United States that his office would soon make final decisions about what steps to take, if any.

Mr. Ray's statement, as reported in the Washington Post, that this is still an open investigation and that he wants six new attorneys and $3.5 million more belies Mr. Starr's formal representation to the Congress and to the people. In commenting on Mr. Ray's latest statements, Pulitzer Prize winning columnist Maureen Dowd noted that even Javert, the driven policeman in the book ''Les Miserables,'' who was singularly focused on capturing Jean Valjean ''jumped into the Seine at some point.''

I am not urging Mr. Ray to jump into the Potomac. I am saying—and I am confident that this is the opinion of the majority of the people in our country—that Mr. Ray needs to bring this investigation to a close and to do it now.

The Lewinsky matter is over. The Paula Jones case is over. They were traumatic times for the country. The public has suffered. The President has been punished. It is time to move on. To extend this investigation with new attorneys and more money and more time is to punish the country. The country doesn't deserve it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that today's editorial from the New York Times entitled ''Reining in Robert Ray'' and today's op-ed piece from the Washington Post by Richard Cohen entitled ''Independent Counsel Overkill'' be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 13, 2000]

REINING IN ROBERT RAY

There are worrying signs that Robert Ray, the career prosecutor who succeeded Kenneth Starr as independent counsel investigating President Clinton, shares his clumsy predecessor's problem in winding up an investigation. Mr. Ray at this point should have a concise two-point agenda—to deliver a report summing up the findings of his office, and then go home. Instead he is beefing up his staff. Moreover, he makes it no secret that he is actively considering indicting Mr. Clinton after he leaves office in connection with the same issues that were argued at the impeachment trial last year.

In other words, Mr. Ray intends to drag out his mandate nine more months. ''It is an open investigation,'' he told The Washington Post this week. ''There is a principle to be vindicated, and that principle is that no person is above the law, even the president of the United States.''

Mr. Ray is right about that principle, and we have consistently favored vigorous inquires into the president's personal and campaign finances and his truthfulness under oath.

But respect for the rule of law does not require a suspension of reasonable prosecutorial discretion.

It would be a disservice to the Constitution to set a new precedent of indicting former presidents over offenses adjudicated in the context of impeachment that received an adequate and punishing airing in the Senate trial. Responding to the new stirrings in the independent counsel's office, Vice President Gore said yesterday that Mr. Clinton had no intention of pardoning himself should he be indicted while president, or accepting a pardon from his successor. That is laudable, if true. Yet the possibility of criminal charges against the president should not be on the table at this late date. The nation has moved on, and once he has completed his overdue reports, so should Mr. Ray.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 13, 2000]

INDEPENDENT COUNSEL OVERKILL

(By Richard Cohen)

Something happens to an ordinary man when he becomes an independent counsel. His chest must swell, his biceps must bulge and he probably cannot pass a phone booth without feeling the urge to change his clothes. Such a man is Robert W. Ray, the successor to Ken Starr, who earlier this week told The Post he just might indict Bill Clinton after the president leaves office. Stay in that phone booth, Bob.

Ray's warning is backed by a reconstitution of the office. Six new lawyers have been hired. A new investigator has been brought on board. An FBI agent has been detailed to the staff, and Ray plans to spend even more money in the next six months than he has in the last—for a total of $6.6 million. From what he says and the way he has been acting, it seems Ray might put the cuffs on Clinton just as the new president says, ''So help me God.''

Why? ''There is a principle to be vindicated,'' he told The Post's David Vise, ''and that principle is that no person is above the law, even the president of the United States.'' This, of course, is the sort of thing you find chiseled over courthouse doors, contradicted only by what transpires in the courthouse itself. Some people are above the law. The envelope, please.

The first is Richard Nixon. Guilty of obstruction of justice, of using our very government to cover up his crimes and lying so often about so much that I don't think he spoke the truth for his entire last year in office, he nonetheless was given a deal: resign the presidency and you will not be indicted. Just to make the deal sweeter, Gerald Ford, his successor, pardoned him.

Next comes Spiro T. Agnew, Nixon's first vice president. A more mendacious fellow never occupied that office. He extorted. He accepted bribes. He lied. Yet he too was allowed to resign his office, pay a wee fine—and go his merry way. An ordinary man would have gone to jail. Agnew too was above the law.

These are not happy facts, but they are true nevertheless. They reflect a coming to terms with reality that, in the end, persuaded prosecutors to abandon their plans to seek indictments. The stakes were greater than the fate of a single man and, besides, some felt Nixon and Agnew had been punished enough. They were ruined men.

The reality is that Clinton, too, has already paid a penalty. He is only the second president to be impeached and he has undergone the most mortifying and virtually molecular examination of his private life. To most Americans, the matter must seem closed. It sure seemed that way to Richard Posner, the federal judge whose wisdom was recently enlisted in a vain attempt to settle the government's case against Microsoft.

Posner is the author of a book about the Clinton investigation, ''An Affair of State,'' for which he was criticized by Ronald Dworkin, a New York University law professor who is as eminent on the left as Posner is on the right. Dworkin wrote recently in the New York Review of Books that as a sitting judge, Posner should never have written about an ''impending'' case.

Nonsense, replied Posner in the current issue. ''A prosecution of President Clinton, while conceivable as a theoretical possibility, is not imminent and in fact will almost certainly never happen.'' He even restated it by saying, ''Almost no issue of policy has a smaller probability of someday becoming a legal case.'' Clearly, Robert Ray has not read Posner.

But he should. We all know Clinton lied. We all believe he perjured himself, and I, for one, do not excuse him for any of it. A president, of all people, should not lie under oath. Still, it has all been played out, talked to death in the House and Senate, yakked to smithereens on television and bound for posterity by Ken Starr.

Ray can indict Clinton anywhere he has a grand jury. But Washington's the town where the president works, where he lives and where he was deposed. If there was a crime, Washington's the crime scene. A trial there would mean a jury pool drawn from a majority black city where, in most neighborhoods, no one has seen a Republican since the Garfield administration. But no matter where he was tried, it likely would be by people who feel that a person who lies about sex, while technically wrong, is guilty only of committing common sense. A conviction is out of the question.

Give it up Bob. Your best way of serving the country is to close down your office, lock the door and put Clinton behind you.

Much of the country already has.

ONE YEAR OF COLUMBINE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, one week from today, we will memorialize the worst school shooting tragedy in our nation's history. The very mention of Columbine High School strikes a nerve with the American public. It reminds us of a horrendous scene of children, screaming and running from their assailants, while SWAT-teams descended on to their otherwise calm neighborhood. On April 20, this year the nation will remember, but for the students of Columbine, those few hours of April 20, 1999 are replayed over and over again every day in their minds.

The survivors of Columbine revisit the massacre daily. They are reminded of that day by the fragments of ammunition in their bodies, or the scars cut deep in to their skin. When they see trenchcoats, they shudder, when they hear or smell fireworks, they get flashbacks. At such young ages, they have endured unimaginable physical and emotional pain. They have been poked and prodded by nurses, physicians, surgeons, physical, occupational and recreational therapists, and clinical psychologists. Some of them have found peace, others are still angry and frightened. A few can not tell their stories but many can tell them over and over again.

For Columbine-survivor Valeen Schnurr, ''The nights are always the

worst.'' Valeen is in college now, but Columbine is still very much with her. She writes, ''Inevitably, I find my thoughts drifting into nightmares, terrifying images of the library at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. The sound of students screaming as explosives and gunshots echo through the school; the burning pain of the bullets penetrating my body; the sound of my own voice professing my faith in God; seeing my hands fill with my own blood; and my friend Lauren Townsend lying lifeless beside me as I try to wake her.''

''In the mornings when I look in the mirror, the scars I see on my arms and upper body always remind me that it's not just a nightmare, but the memory of a real event that will stay with me for the rest of my life. The scars are a part of me now, but they help me to remember that I've been blessed with a second chance at life.''

Another survivor, Kelsey Bane, talks about how she felt on her first day back at Columbine. ''On August 16, 1999, a new school year began. Only this year, I wasn't full of excitement. Instead, I was full of emotions I can't describe, because I was headed back to my school—Columbine High—for the first time since April 20. I was scared out of my mind, but I knew that whatever I did that day would determine the way I would live the rest of my life. So I went to school; I faced my fears and my nightmares from the past four months and got ready to begin a new school year.''

Over the last year, ''[it] has gotten harder, as I expected it would. Sometimes I can't remember what used to occupy my thoughts, because now my mind is overwhelmed by these horrific experiences. Our lives will never be the same—and I don't think I will ever fully accept that.''

Nicole Nowlen, who was a relatively new student when the tragedy occurred, wrote ''nine pieces of buckshot hit me; four exited and five are still inside. When school started at Chatfield High [in May], I wasn't physically ready, so I finished my sophomore year with a tutor and went back to Columbine in August.''

''It's been like this roller-coaster ride ever since. October and November got too crazy. First they arrested a kid [from Columbine] for making threats to finish the job. Then there was the six-month anniversary, and Mrs. Hochhalter [the mother of Anne Marie Hochhalter who was badly injured] killed herself. In all my classes, the kids never stopped talking about the shooting. It was depressing, so I decided to be home schooled.

''I started seeing a counselor in November . . . Things are better now, so I'm not going anymore. I may go again, but for now I'm at a good point.''

''What helped me the most was Gerda Weissman Klein. She's a 75-year-old Holocaust survivor who came to speak at our school in January. She's really the only one who understands what happened to all of us.''

For the students of Columbine, every day is a struggle, every day takes another act of courage. There is nothing we can do in Congress to change that, but there is something we can do to protect other students from the nightmares, the anger, and the pain, as told by these students. Congress owes it to Columbine to try to end school shootings and reduce access to guns among young people. As of this one-year anniversary, Congress has failed to do so.

Columbine victim Valeen Schnurr wrote, ''People on the outside don't realize how horrible it can actually be. We're the ones who can get everyone motivated and involved in making changes.'' I only hope Valeen is right. Her story should motivate Congress to strengthen our laws and save the lives of America's children.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEFENDING THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I was disappointed to hear one of our fine Senators, an able attorney, take the floor just a few minutes ago to commence a new round of attacks, it appears, on the new independent counsel, Mr. Ray.

We went through a period of time in which a person in this country was trying to enforce the law, trying to complete his duty as a sworn officer of the court, an individual asked to serve by the Attorney General of the United States, Mr. Starr, who conducted himself with restraint, propriety and fidelity to duty—a thankless task. He then gave up that office. Now it appears that Mr. Ray will be subjected to the same type of remarks. It is really disturbing and frustrating for me to hear that. I hope we don't hear that beginning. He simply made the obvious statement to the paper that the President can be indicted after he leaves office. He said that the investigation is not complete. He is charged with completing the investigation. He has an obligation to complete it, and he should complete it. I don't think anyone would suggest that he ought to stop before the evidence is gathered, that he ought not to fulfill his duty and responsibility that has been given to him. So I am really concerned about that.

During the impeachment trial—and I hate to even recall that, but I didn't start this discussion tonight—I remember that those on the other side of the aisle said even if a crime were committed, that would be something a prosecutor would deal with but it did not require us to impeach. Obviously, that is true. People could have believed that crime was committed and that an impeachment vote was not required. But that does not suggest a prosecution should not go forward. We have a principle in this country that is chiseled into the walls of the Supreme Court building: Equal Justice Under Law.

The Supreme Court made clear during the Nixon case, and at other times, that no American is above the law. They say, well, you would never prosecute another citizen in America for committing perjury in a civil case. That is silly. Well, I suggest that is not accurate. People are prosecuted for perjury in civil cases. I served as a U.S. attorney for 12 years in Mobile, AL. I remember very distinctly a young police officer who accused the chief of police of corruption. He was his driver. He made allegations in a deposition, and lawsuits were filed against the chief of police in Mobile, AL, who was an African American. They were coming after him. He repeated that under oath, and it turned out to be totally bogus. He eventually admitted it was bogus. He came to me as a U.S. attorney, a Federal prosecutor—it was a Federal lawsuit—and I believed it ought to be prosecuted. We charged that young man for that stupid, perjurious, felonious act. He pleaded guilty to it, as well he should have.

I don't know why the President is above that. If he did a crime, he ought to answer for it. I remember when this matter was at one of its intense points, I shared a private conversation with a distinguished Senator on the other side of the aisle. I shared with him that maybe the President ought to just admit he did something wrong, say he did it to the world, say he didn't tell the truth, ask the Congress to not impeach him, ask the American people for forgiveness, and say when he serves his term and walks out of there, he is willing to plead guilty to any crime he committed and ask for the mercy of the court. Now that would have ended the whole thing. That would have taken a manly act on his part, which I didn't really see occur during that time.

So I don't know how it ought to be handled. But I don't believe a duly appointed special prosecutor needs to be subjected to abuse on the floor of the Senate for doing what he is instructed to do and charged with doing by the courts of America. And to say it is like Russia, I don't appreciate that one bit. What is like Russia is when leaders lie, cheat, steal, and maintain their office.