

with memories of their relatives suddenly dying in their arms, they have to try to come to terms with their own painful diseases and those of their surviving friends and relatives.

For instance, many people have more than one major condition, including respiratory problems, eye conditions, neurological disorders, skin problems, cancers and children with congenital malformations and childhood handicaps such as mental handicap, cerebral palsy and Down's syndrome. The occurrences of genetic mutations and carcinogenesis in this population appear comparable with those who were one to two kilometers from the hypocenter of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs and show that the chemicals used in this attack, particularly mustard gas, have a general effect on the body similar to that of ionizing radiation.

Ten years after the attack, people are suffering a wide spectrum of effects, all of which are attributable to long-term damage to DNA. A radio broadcast was made the day before our arrival to ask people who were ill to come to the hospital to record their problems. On the first day, 700 people came; 495 of them had two or more major problems. The cases we encountered were extremely sad.

The people of Halabja need immediate help. There is a need for specialists (such as pediatric surgeons), equipment and drugs. Even more basic than this, though, is the need for heat, clean water and careful efforts to safeguard them against further attacks. We have to realize that there is very little medical or scientific knowledge about how to treat the victims of a chemical weapons attack like this effectively. We need to listen, think and evaluate with skill, since many of these people have had exposures to strange combinations of toxic gases. They have conditions that have not been seen or reported before. We may severely disadvantage a large group of vulnerable people and deny them effective diagnosis and treatment if we are intellectually arrogant and fail to admit that we have virtually no knowledge about how to treat the problems resulting from these terrible weapons, which have been used to more powerful and inhumane effect than ever before.

The pictures beamed around the world after the attack in 1988 in newspapers and on TV were horrifying. One picture was of a father who died trying to shield his twin sons from the attack. The statue in the road at the entrance to Halabja is based on that picture. This is not a traditional statue of someone standing proud and erect, captured in stone or bronze to represent man triumphant and successful, but of a man prostrate and agonized dying in the act of trying to protect his children. A deep and lasting chill went through me when I entered the town and saw the statue, and it settled like a toxic psychological cloud over me. This proved hard to dispel; it intensified as I met the people, heard their stories and saw the extent of the long-term illnesses caused by the attack. The terrible images of the people of Halabja and their situation persist and recur in my nightmares and disturb my waking thoughts. Perhaps these thoughts persist so vividly as a reminder to me that the major task is now to try and get help for these people.

SIERRA CLUB SUPPORTS THE TROPICAL FOREST PRESERVATION ACT

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to my colleagues' attention a letter from the Sierra Club dated March 13, 1998, in support of H.R. 2870, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998.

There is widespread and growing bipartisan support for this bill, which now has over 40 cosponsors. Members of the environmental community have also voiced their support. The Sierra Club, on behalf of its 550,000 members, praises H.R. 2870 as an "innovative solution" to tropical forest preservation.

I hope my colleagues will join me in support of this important bill when it comes before us this week.

The letter follows:

SIERRA CLUB,

Washington, DC, March 13, 1998.

Re: H.R. 2870, tropical forest debt swap bill.

Hon. Robert Portman,

Hon. John Kasich,

Hon. Lee Hamilton,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES PORTMAN, KASICH AND HAMILTON: On behalf of the 550,000 members of the Sierra Club we are writing to support the early passage of your Tropical Forest Debt for Nature Swap legislation. As you know, primary forests are under assault in almost all countries. Tropical forests are being destroyed at the rate of 50 to 100 acres per minute, or 40 to 50 million areas per year—an area the size of the State of Washington. If we do nothing to stop this destruction, the majority of these lush forests may be irreparably damaged within our lifetimes.

While the causes of this destruction are complex, your legislation demonstrates that innovative solutions to their preservation can be found. H.R. 2870 follows in the tradition of the successful Enterprise for the Americas Act which led to the establishment of national environmental trust funds in many Latin American countries. These trust funds—managed by non-governmental organizations—have empowered local citizens to initiate hundreds of environmental protection projects throughout Latin America. Your bill will bring this creative initiative to the rest of the tropical countries. If properly funded, the trust funds should greatly facilitate the development of long-term solutions, designed to preserve the remaining primary tropical forests.

We welcome this initiative and urge its quick passage into law. Thank you for your leadership in helping to slow the destruction of these treasure houses of biological diversity.

Sincerely,

LARRY WILLIAMS,
Director, International Program.

LET STARR SHINE

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, it is tragic enough that doubts abound about the integrity

and motivations of many of our elected officials in the eyes of the people of this country. It is even more unjust when those doubts are planted by people we should trust. Recently, the Clinton Administration has deflected the public's attention away from the accusations against the President and toward Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr. All of the president's people are repeatedly attacking Mr. Starr and distracting him from doing his job. What makes this a tragedy is the fact that Mr. Starr is merely performing the duties legally delegated to him. Kenneth Starr is a man of impeccable integrity. He should be allowed to continue his investigation without undue interference or political attacks. In that way only, will he be able to discern the truth. I have enclosed two relevant editorials. The first was written by four outstanding former attorneys general, and was published on March 11 in the Wall Street Journal. The second article was found in The Poughkeepsie Journal, a Gannett newspaper that serves some of my constituents in Dutchess County, New York.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Mar. 11, 1998]

LET STARR DO HIS JOB

(The following statement was issued last Thursday by four former U.S. attorneys general. A related editorial appears nearby.)

As former attorneys general of the United States, we oppose the Independent Counsel Act. We believed in the past, and we believe now, that the United States Department of Justice is capable of investigating all criminal and civil matters involving the United States government. We also believe that the Independent Counsel Act raises serious constitutional issues involving, among other things, separation of powers and due process. However, we also believe in the rule of law. In *Morrison v. Olson*, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Independent Counsel Act is constitutional. Moreover, in 1994, after the law had lapsed, Congress reauthorized the Independent Counsel Act, and President Clinton signed it into law. Therefore, the Independent Counsel Act is today the law of the land, and it must be enforced.

As former attorneys general, we are concerned that the severity of the attacks on Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and his office by high government officials and attorneys representing their particular interests, among others, appear to have the improper purpose of influencing and impeding an ongoing criminal investigation and intimidating possible jurors, witnesses and even investigators. We believe it is significant that Mr. Starr's investigative mandate has been sanctioned by the Attorney General of the United States and the Special Division of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Further, Mr. Starr is effectively prevented from defending himself and his staff because of the legal requirements of confidentiality and the practical limitations necessitated by the ongoing investigations.

As former attorneys general, we know Mr. Starr to be an individual of the highest personal and professional integrity. As a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and Solicitor General of the United States, he exhibited exemplary judgment and commitment to the highest ethical standards and the rule of law.

We believe any independent counsel, including Mr. Starr, should be allowed to carry out his or her duties without harassment by government officials and members of the bar. The counsel's service can then be judged, by those who wish to do so, when the results of the investigation and the facts underlying it can be made public.

GRIFFIN B. BELL,

Attorney General for
President Jimmy
Carter.
EDWIN MEESE III,
Attorney General for
President Ronald
Reagan.
RICHARD L. THORNBURGH,
Attorney General for
Presidents Ronald
Reagan and George
Bush.
WILLIAM P. BARR,
Attorney General for
President George
Bush.

[From the Poughkeepsie JOURNAL, Feb. 28,
1998]

LET STARR DO HIS JOB

Spin doctors in Washington have apparently performed successful surgery on President Clinton's reputation—his approval ratings are soaring with the angels. But Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr's numbers are down in the cellar.

The steady beat of the president's people, all saying the same thing, has had the obviously desired effect—it's distracted the attention of the American public away from questions of Clintonian wrongdoing, and onto a special prosecutor supposedly running amuck.

Clinton's people loudly proclaim Starr really is overstepping his bounds in his investigations of the president. If he really were, there would be grounds for dismissal by the judges who appointed Starr. Or Attorney General Janet Reno, or the president himself could.

But nobody's moving to dismiss the special prosecutor. They're just making lots of noise on television about him.

Fortunately, the one person whose attention should be on questions of presidential wrongdoing, is. Starr is simply doing his job.

The major issue is not whether Clinton had affairs with Monica Lewinsky, Paula Jones or anyone else—though that certainly is a significant moral matter that he may be forced to address, if the allegations turn out to be true.

The major issue is whether the president obstructed justice. Whether he committed perjury and urged others to do the same. And whether evidence was tampered with, and witnesses bought off. That is a significant legal issue that could drive him out of the White House.

We must, of course, presume Clinton is innocent, unless he is proven guilty. He deserves that constitutional privilege as much as any American.

It's also wrong, lacking proof, to paint Kenneth Starr as the guilty party. He's just doing his job. Maybe his investigation will come to nothing. Maybe not. But let him take as much time as he needs to do that job and discern the truth.

The nation deserves truth. Not spin.

SALUTING THE ORGANIZERS OF THE THYAGARAJA FESTIVAL

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the dedicated work of an extraordinary group of citizens in my Congressional District. For the past twenty years, the Music Department at Cleveland

State University and other volunteers under the direction of Dr. T. Temple Tuttle, have organized and hosted the Thyagaraja Festival. This festival has brought musicians from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Australia to perform in the City of Cleveland and have their traditional art forms, cultures, and values celebrated and honored by political and educational leaders. The event also offers attendees the opportunity to experience an array of truly exceptional cultural performances. Audiences have come from as far as Alaska to enjoy these festivities.

In its 21st year, over one hundred volunteers assisted with food preparation and arrangements for the festival. The festival will highlight the Chief Guest, Sri Mukherjee, and the great vocalist, T.N. Seshagopalan will be honored as "Sangeetha Rathnakara," a high honorific meaning "Jewel of a Performer." In addition to the scheduled performers, who will come from India this year, 70 to 100 amateur performers are expected, and a crowd of over two thousand.

Mr. Speaker, the Thyagaraja Festival stands as a recognized commitment to international unity and an appreciation for the beauty of cultural diversity and artistic expression. Again, I salute the organizers of the 1998 Thyagaraja Festival for creating an opportunity for the City of Cleveland and our great nation to participate in an event whose ultimate objective is to increase multi-cultural awareness and acceptance, and secure global peace.

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN IN BUSINESS

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Women's History Month, I rise today to pay tribute to women in business and to express pride in the fact that the women of Chicago and Cook County have benefited from the successful programs of the Women's Business Development Center.

Based in Chicago, the Women's Business Development Center serves 2,000 women annually with counseling, training, financial assistance, certification, procurement and advocacy on behalf of women's economic empowerment. The programs of the Chicago-based center are effective, successful and benefit diverse women. These centers service an array of women and their families, including self-employment for former welfare recipients, business development, expansion and job creation.

The work of the Women's Business Development Center and other women's business assistance centers are essential to strengthening the economy of this Nation by fostering women's business development nationally.

The WBDC and women's business assistance centers are funded by the United States SBA office of Women's Business Ownership and by private and public sector support. They help support a diverse and growing population of new and emerging job-creating women entrepreneurs, including women in transition off welfare.

These centers are unique in that they provide long-term training, involve public and private partnerships for their support, and can be

measured on the basis of their economic impact. These centers have served tens of thousands of women.

The women's business assistance centers serve our constituencies by offering quality programs to effectively leverage scarce public and private resources into successful job creation, new business start-ups, and business expansion. Most of them, even after they are no longer eligible for Federal funding, continue to be sustained by the private sector.

These centers are committed to economic self-sufficiency programs that are as diverse as the women served; women of color, women on public assistance, women seeking self-employment, rural and urban women, and women starting home-based businesses. Therefore, it is appropriate that we pause to recognize the great work of the Women's Business Development Center and women's business assistance centers throughout the country.

I take special note of the work of Hedy Ratner and Carol Dougal of the Women's Business Development Center, Counselor Pope of the Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, Connie Evans, Director of the Women's Self-Employment Project, Karen Yarbrough, proprietor of Hathaway Insurance, Deborah M. Sawyer, founder Environmental Design International and other outstanding women in the City of Chicago and the state of Illinois, who provide immeasurable help and support to other women seeking to go into business.

HONORING ALEXANDRIA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM ON WINNING THE 4A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, Paul "Bear" Bryant, the legendary football coach at the University of Alabama, used a now famous quote to inspire his football team. "If you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride—and never quit, you'll be a winner. The price of victory is high but so are the rewards." Well, the Alexandria High School Football Team of Alexandria, Alabama took Coach Bryant's words to heart as they worked, practiced, and sacrificed throughout their season to be the best that they could be. It was this dedication and desire that enabled the Alexandria High School Football team to win the 4A State Championship on December 12, 1997.

While their victory deserves to be recognized, what is more impressive is that this victory marked their second state football title in three years. In addition, this team ended their season with an impressive 13-1 record.

Over the course of the season, Mr. Speaker, the 51 players of this team bonded into a well-knit family, creating a strong following not only within the high school itself, but also throughout the small town of Alexandria. In fact, this team was such an inspiration to the community that well wishers converged on the stadium as early as 3:00 p.m. (nearly four hours before the kickoff) just to find seats. Such loyal fans are normally found only on college campuses, and I believe that through such a strong following, the players and