**(9:13) Senator Margaret Chase Smith Condemns McCarthyism**

Source: <https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/SmithDeclaration.pdf>

**Background:** On June 1, 1950, Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine) condemned the Red Scare tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy. In a congressional speech, she attacked McCarthy’s unsubstantiated charges that ruined the careers and lives of the people he targeted. Smith reminded Senator’s that their responsibility was to defend the Constitution of the United States. At the time, Smith was the only woman serving in the Senate.

**Questions to Consider**

1. What does Smith want to remind the Senate of in this speech?

2. What rights does Smith believe are being violated?

3. According to Smith, why are the American people sick and tired?

4. What is Smith’s warning to the Republican Party?

A. “I think that it is high time that we remembered that we have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution. I think that it is high time that we remembered that the Constitution, as amended, speaks not only of the freedom of speech, but also of trial by jury instead of trial by accusation.

Whether it be a criminal prosecution in court or a character prosecution in the Senate, there is little practical distinction when the life of a person has been ruined. Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all too frequently those who, by our own words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism — The right to criticize; The right to hold unpopular beliefs; The right to protest; The right of independent thought.

B. “The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his reputation or his right to a livelihood nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation or livelihood merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs. Who of us doesn’t? Otherwise none of us could call our souls our own. Otherwise thought control would have set in.”

C. “The American people are sick and tired of being afraid to speak their minds lest they be politically smeared as “Communists” or “Fascists” by their opponents. Freedom of speech is not what it used to be in America. It has been so abused by some that it is not exercised by others.

The American people are sick and tired of seeing innocent people smeared and guilty people whitewashed.”

D. “Today our country is being psychologically divided by the confusion and the suspicions that are bred in the United States Senate to spread like cancerous tentacles of ‘know nothing, suspect everything’ attitudes . . . I don’t want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the four horsemen of calumny — fear, ignorance, bigotry and smear . . . I don’t believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest.