

That is what this is all about.

So I just hope as the debate goes on about campaign finance reform that we adopt an attitude that we should comply with the laws that are on the books right now and see how far that goes to resolving the problems.

Mr. President, I see that there is no other Senator seeking time, so I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized as if in morning business on another matter.

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

STORM CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am very honored to be serving as the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Today at 11 o'clock we will begin again the discussion on the passage of the defense authorization bill.

As chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee, I have jurisdiction over the readiness of our forces to defend America: Such things as military construction, such things as military pay, such things as training, and the like.

In carrying out my responsibilities, I have visited many, many bases throughout the world and here in the United States. I have had occasion to be recently in Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base; Fort Hood, TX; Corpus Christi Naval Base; and the Dyess Air Force Base.

My concern is that with all the people we have talked about and talked to in the committee meetings that we have had in the Readiness Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, we keep getting assurances from the administration that we are in a state of readiness that would meet the minimum expectations of the American people, and yet the information that we get as we go around certainly contradicts that. We have statements made by a number of people who are in the field. When you get past the top brass here in Washington, we find that we have very, very serious problems.

Mr. President, I plan to make several statements concerning this as the development of and discussion on this bill takes place after 11 o'clock, but I would just suggest that we have not found ourselves and put ourselves in a state of readiness that meets the minimum expectations of the American people. The administration has said many times we are in a position to defend America on two regional fronts, and I can assure you that is not the case. In fact, as we watched the Persian Gulf war, I regret to say that we are not in a state of readiness today to be able to defend America against that type of aggression.

With that, I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would first like to say I appreciate the

leadership of the Senator from Oklahoma. Senator INHOFE has done an outstanding job in working to preserve the defense of his Nation, and his comments about our lack of preparedness are very serious. I think this body, as a body traditionally considered to be the long-term evaluator of national security interests of this Nation, needs to listen to what he says. I thank him for those comments.

INVESTIGATION BY GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Mr. SESSIONS. I rise at this time, Mr. President, to make some remarks about the hearings going on in the Governmental Affairs Committee. I think they are most important hearings. I think it is important we remember that the committee, headed by the excellent and fine Senator from Tennessee, Mr. FRED THOMPSON, was commissioned by this body. They were mandated by this body to go out and discover the facts and to conduct an investigation of illegal and improper activities in connection with the 1996 political campaigns. So they have a responsibility and a duty that falls to them at this point whether they want it or not, whether they wish they did not have it, and they have to see it through and do it in a formal and proper way. I think the committee is at a point where it is not dealing with exact science, but with a process by which that committee needs to go out and find the facts, apply those facts to the law, to decide what actions ought to be taken and to evaluate it that way.

It was by a 99-to-nothing vote that this Senate, Democrats and Republicans, directed that committee to do its work. And so we ought to let them do their work and let them follow the evidence where it leads, to let them apply that evidence to the law and to analyze the results and make recommendations for the future.

A key part of that investigation is gathering the facts. I served for 12 years as a U.S. attorney. That was the Federal prosecutor for the southern district of Alabama. And, as such, I had the duty for many years—to handle major corruption-type cases involving complex white-collar crime, and so I have had a lot of experience in that field.

I have not been commenting on this case and the evidence because I think we ought to let the committee do its work. I made one previous statement about this investigation a few weeks ago addressing my concerns to the grant of immunity, and I think we ought to talk about that and a few other things today.

This investigation is dealing with a serious question, and that question is whether or not a foreign nation, not really considered a friendly nation, Communist China, may have systematically and intentionally set about to influence the American election in 1996 and, in fact, to influence American policy.

We know that the President of this United States was a great critic of President Bush because he said President Bush was too accommodating to China and needed to be more tough in dealing with China. And then, after he becomes President, we know that he now is a leading spokesman in this country for accommodation with China.

So whatever that is about, the facts in this case will have to tell us. But I do think it is clear that we are dealing with unusual types of problems with campaign financing. This may not be only a technical violation of the law, but it is a situation in which we may have a foreign power, an adversary, a Communist nation, with the largest standing army in the world, attempting to influence elections.

We need a bipartisan effort, similar to those conducted in the past. We need the spirit of Howard Baker in the Watergate hearings who, as a Republican, made sure that he cooperated in that investigation and sought the truth. We need the spirit of Warren Rudman, Republican, who participated in the Iran/Contra matters that were investigated here. He always sought to get to the truth regardless of politics. I have not seen that, frankly, by some in the leadership in the other party on this committee. It seems to me there has been too much partisanship.

Now that those committee hearings are proceeding, they need to proceed professionally and objectively and all members need to pull together to find out the facts and get the truth out.

I did want to talk, Mr. President, about the question of immunity. We had the not unusual, if you are familiar with complex prosecutions, situation yesterday when the committee hearings commenced that the ranking member from the Democratic Party announced that Mr. John Huang, who had been the main focus in the investigation, was prepared to testify if he were granted immunity.

I think we have to be very careful about that. In fact, at this point, I would advise the members to say no to immunity at this point in the process. There may come a time when immunity is necessary, but at this point I do not think it is. That is my experience after many years of prosecuting. You use immunity, first and foremost, to get the testimony of the little fish, to find the people who may know something about the case, and then that helps you develop the real facts of the case and go on to the higher-ups.

I was very concerned a few weeks ago—and it is the only comment I have made about this matter since I have been in the body—when members of the Democratic Party were refusing to grant immunity to little fish in this case. Now that they are talking about one of the top ones, they are suggesting that maybe we ought to grant immunity to him, but they were objecting to and questioning the wisdom of granting immunity to what they called

the nuns and the priests in the Buddhist temple, those who have taken vows of poverty, and they have yet given large contributions to the Democratic campaigns, and the investigators want to ask them questions about where that money came from because there was a clear suggestion it was not their money, that somebody had given them that money and then they had taken it and made the contribution, and that would be technically a crime. And their lawyers were saying, as good lawyers would, "we will tell you about it but my people didn't understand this; they are not political sophisticates; we will tell you who told us; we will tell you who gave us the money; we will tell you who did it; but we don't want you to turn around and prosecute us."

So that is the type of circumstance the committee must decide. You may not want to prosecute those people anyway. They may not have understood what they were doing was against the law. So that is an appropriate circumstance for the committee to consider immunity.

I thought it was critical and a matter of stonewalling of that investigation to, across the board, just deny consideration of immunity for those people, and now we are dealing with a situation in which on the first day of the hearings comes the announcement that Mr. Huang, under some complicated theory, would be prepared to testify if he is given immunity for everything he did except being a spy.

Well, my observation is that that is not a good way to proceed, and there are several reasons why that is true. First of all, Mr. Huang wants to come in and get immunity from the things that it appears there may be such evidence right now to convict him of.

That is not a bad deal, if they have evidence to convict you of a number of crimes. Let us say maybe it is money-laundering or maybe it is a violation of the Hatch Act or maybe it is the Ethics in Government Act or Illegal Foreign Contributions Act or campaign finance laws, in which you deliberately run money through someone else's name so that it would appear to come from them and not from someone else. Those kinds of things can be violations of the law.

The investigators have done a lot of work on this. Perhaps they already know the basic facts, and probably Mr. Huang knows what they know also. So it would not be unusual for a good lawyer representing Mr. Huang to see if he could not pull a little gambit, if he could come in on the first day of the hearings when everybody's attention is focused on other things and announce, if you give me immunity, I will tell you what I know, but just remember, I don't need immunity for being a spy because you don't have the evidence about that perhaps. Maybe that is what he is thinking.

The context of this thing is very troubling to me. My advice to the

members of that committee would be to be very, very careful about it.

There are a number of other things that are troubling to me. You have to remember that the grant of immunity can in fact undermine prosecutions later. We have to know that the Department of Justice, even though those of us on the Senate Judiciary Committee and others have called on the Department of Justice to appoint an independent prosecutor and Attorney General Janet Reno has declined to do so, the Department of Justice is conducting an investigation of Mr. Huang. They may already have evidence which indicates that he has committed crimes against the United States. And if that is true, then it is a real serious thing for the Senate to go through the process of granting him immunity. In fact, I would think it would be very bad at this point; of all the people who are most prominently involved in this, who played a high role—and he was a high Department of Commerce official. These problems are serious. Huang is a major player in the campaign finance scandal that we are seeing unfold, and I think he ought not readily be given any grant of immunity. I think it would undermine the legitimate prosecution that could go on later.

As a prosecutor, one thing I always tried to avoid was to be in a situation in which I granted immunity to the main crook in the case. If you have five people involved and you need the testimony of some others to maybe bring out the details, you do not give that immunity to the main crook. You do not give immunity to the person you have the most evidence against already.

That does not make sense. I think that this is a gambit, this is an attempt to rush in here while this committee has a well-planned schedule to bring in the evidence that is in existence about this scandal and to bring it all to the fore, to disrupt that process.

The committee ought to stay the course. They ought to bring in the evidence from every source, and when they have all the evidence brought in, they then ought to objectively, coolly and professionally consider whether or not Mr. Huang deserves immunity, but until then I say no. I think we ought to be very careful about this process. It is a very serious thing.

Finally, let me just say that this process is important. The people of this country are entitled to know that there has been an objective and thorough evaluation of the allegations that have been so prominently talked about here. I think that is important. I think Americans expect that. They would be concerned, rightly, if one of the primary persons alleged to be involved in wrongdoing who could have been involved in maybe a half a dozen different criminal activities, were to be given immunity at the very beginning of these hearings, and therefore perhaps end up with a situation in which you have prosecutions against lesser

offenders and the main culprit goes free. That is a very serious matter. And sometimes in America, as one writer said a number of years ago, we suffer from a colossal inability to discriminate among levels of wrongdoing.

I would say to you that if some of the facts here turn out to be true, we are dealing with a very serious violation of American law and campaign procedures involving millions of dollars, involving a Communist nation, a Communist power attempting to influence this Nation. I think that committee has to see it through. They have to get the facts and call the shots, no matter what the consequences.

Mr. President, I salute the leadership of Senator THOMPSON and others on that committee. I believe they are doing a good job and I am confident that the truth will come out. I believe in this process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak not to exceed 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time set aside for Senator MACK has expired. This is morning business. Without objection, the Senator may proceed.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, the entire legitimacy of this body and the House of Representatives, of the Presidency and of the administration, depends upon its members, in the case of the Presidency the President himself, having been freely chosen by the American people in an election campaign conducted under certain rules consistent with the statutes and the Constitution of the United States. It is a set of serious allegations about violations of those existing rules that is at the heart of the investigation now being conducted by the Governmental Affairs Committee.

There are many who say the rules ought to be changed, and there can be legitimate debate over how much and in what direction those election campaign rules ought to be changed. The issue here and now, however, arises under the current rules, arises under serious allegations about violations of those current rules: The Hatch Act, the misuse of the White House, the use of covert foreign contributions to affect the outcome of the elections, money laundering, and a number of other violations of what the laws relating to the election of the President of the United States are right now. In this connection we have the unfortunate spectacle that many—most of the key witnesses, of those who know the facts, of those who participated in the alleged violations, have either hidden themselves overseas beyond the reach of any subpoena or have stated that they will exercise their fifth amendment rights and will refuse to testify unless they are immunized against the very offenses which so clouded last year's Presidential election. In that connection, we have the regrettable response, a response almost without precedent, on

the part of one of the parties, that finding these witnesses is a Republican problem, that grants of immunity to minor participants will not be approved. How markedly, how strikingly this contrasts with the investigation of Watergate, with Iran-Contra, in which the party whose actions were being investigated cooperated fully in attempting to determine the truth of these allegations.

As we all recognize the vital importance of free and open and fair elections conducted in accordance with the rules, so, it seems to me, we must all recognize the importance of determining whether or not there were serious violations of those existing laws, because if we cannot enforce the law as it exists today, what point is there in debating whether or not we ought to change and tighten those laws? We need the investigations that are being conducted, both here in the Senate of the United States and in the House of Representatives today, to cast light on what actually took place during the course of last year.

We asked for a special prosecutor. We needed the Department of Justice in order to determine whether or not there were criminal violations that should be prosecuted in the criminal courts of the United States. But the classic justification, the rationale for this Senate investigation is the determination of facts: The breadth and extent of the violations of law that took place last year, who the violators were, what consequences the committee of the Senate feels should stem from those violations, and then and only then whether or not there should be additional laws applicable to the next set of elections. This inquiry and this investigation is of vital importance to the American people. The American people deserve to know precisely what took place during the course of the 1996 Presidential election campaign, on both sides; the breadth and the extent of violations of law, who violated the law, and who knew about and benefited from those violations.

I call on all of the Members of the Senate to cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the determination of those facts and express my hope that the results of this investigation will be enlightenment and far better practices in the future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, yesterday the chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee began his hearings on the alleged political campaign finance irregularities of 1996. After all that has been written and reported in the press and elsewhere, it is time. Even before these hearings, a lot of facts are already known and how much more these hearings will reveal yet has to be seen. Knowing all the roadblocks that could be posed in these hearings and these investigations, they may reveal very little, or we may be surprised at some of the findings. Nonetheless, the hearings

must move forward. This body and the other body, the House of Representatives, has the unsavory duty to investigate, reveal and inform the American people. I know no one in either Chamber relishes this assignment. To some it tends to polarize, and to some it confirms what they have already known.

John Quincy Adams, who returned to the House of Representatives after serving as President of the United States, in a heated debate over slavery, of which he was an ardent opponent, said, "Duty is ours; results are God's."

The nature of these hearings is different, especially when we talk about campaign financing. This one involves foreign entities attempting to politically infiltrate the American system. That is the concern of all Americans and in particular those of us who have taken the oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States in face of foreign and domestic assault. To do otherwise is just not accepting our sworn duty and our obligation to the American people.

Alexis de Tocqueville, author of "Democracy in America," way back in the early 1800's, wrote that America is great because America is good. When America ceases to be good, it will cease to be great. That is as true today as it was then.

The alleged violations of the 1996 campaign did not start just in 1997. One must remember, back in the fall of 1996, about mid-October, when the Democratic National Committee failed to file its campaign report with the Federal Election Commission—some excuse that the accountants did not have it ready or it was not ready to go. In fact, I don't recall whether it was filed at all until the elections were over in 1996. The point is, could full disclosure be working if there were obvious irregularities? If there were, did they take the attitude, "Why should we file?" Were there campaign activities that could prove embarrassing right before the election? And I would ask, is that not the main purpose of the present laws, full disclosure—full and timely disclosure of campaign activities? Maybe the present law is working. Maybe, under the present law, we know what we know today. We must ponder that.

The China connection has lots of us concerned. In fact, Americans should be outraged at such an allegation, let alone proof. What was going on when John Huang received top security clearance without even a background check, 5 months before he began working at the Commerce Department? Why did this person still have a security clearance when he began working at the DNC? Why did John Huang attend over 100 classified briefings, hold 95 meetings at the White House, have frequent access to the President of the United States? I want to know that. I want to know why it was allowed to happen. The American people deserve to know. And we have the duty to inform them.

It is apparent that inquiry is necessary because it seems to me that this administration was willing to do whatever it took to win an election. The facts that we know now—not allegations but facts—tell us that they broke current and existing laws. Are they above the law? I don't believe so—as none of us are. They inadvertently allowed our national security to be compromised? One has to question that.

So, the Governmental Affairs Committee is fulfilling a constitutional responsibility by conducting oversight to find out whether the current laws have been adhered to, of which we know some of them were not.

It is their duty to discover what laws were broken, and then we can decide what can be done to improve enforcement of those laws.

This is about money laundering, illegal foreign contributions and unlawful receipts of campaign funds within Federal buildings. There is credible evidence out there that indicates this administration was engaged in all of these violations.

It is my hope, Mr. President, that these hearings will get all the facts out in the open for the American people. I commend Senator THOMPSON and committee members for assuming that responsibility. It is an awesome responsibility and one that is not taken lightly by any Member of the U.S. Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives. It is time that we proceed to get this out in the open and let the American people judge what is right and what is wrong.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, July 8, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,354,619,850,034.63. (Five trillion, three hundred fifty-four billion, six hundred nineteen million, eight hundred fifty thousand, thirty-four dollars and sixty-three cents)

One year ago, July 8, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,154,104,000,000. (Five trillion, one hundred fifty-four billion, one hundred four million)

Five years ago, July 8, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,971,809,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred seventy-one billion, eight hundred nine million)

Ten year ago, July 8, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,326,070,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred twenty-six billion, seventy million)

Fifteen years ago, July 8, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,076,916,000,000 (One trillion, seventy-six billion, nine hundred sixteen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,277,703,850,034.63 (Four trillion, two hundred seventy-seven billion, seven hundred three million, eight hundred fifty thousand, thirty-four dollars and sixty-three cents) during the past 15 years.