

Building, to hear the legislative presentation of the AMVETS, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Gold Star Wives of America, Fleet Reserve Association, The Retired Enlisted Association, Military Officers Association of America, and the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 29, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, FEDERAL SERVICES, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services and International Security be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 29, 2007 at 10 a.m. for a hearing entitled, Eliminating and Recovering Improper Payments.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. It is my understanding a quorum call is not in progress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is not. The leader is correct.

THREATENED PRESIDENTIAL VETO

Mr. REID. Mr. President, earlier this week the Senate took an important step for our troops and for the security of our Nation. For the first time since this ill-conceived war began more than 4 years ago, a bipartisan majority of the Senate told the President to change course in Iraq. As the American people know, this war has lasted going into 5 years, costing the lives of more than 3,200 Americans and tens of thousands of wounded troops, many of whom I met yesterday at Walter Reed. It has also depleted our Treasury of over \$400 billion.

Despite these facts and the brave sacrifice of our troops, the violence continues unabated in Iraq. Our troops are enmeshed in an unquestionable civil war. The people who attacked us on 9/11 have not been brought to justice, and America is less secure today than it was on 9/11.

After all of that, one would think every Member of this body would recognize we are on the wrong path. The more we look at this, it is clear that more of the same will not produce a different result; that success requires a different course. As General Petraeus has said, there is no military solution in Iraq. In fact, he said only 20 percent can be solved militarily; the rest has to

be solved diplomatically and economically. That is clear.

Unfortunately, as evidenced by the votes of many of my Republican colleagues and the words of the minority leader on the floor earlier today, this is not the case. There are still too many Members of this body, including the minority leader, who are willing to give this administration a blank check and a green light to proceed down this failed path. It is a long path, with failure every step of the way.

The supplemental spending bill contains an important change of course in the President's Iraq policy, something we, as a separate, independent branch of Government, have the right to do. Our Founding Fathers, when they drafted the Constitution 220 years ago, set forth the few words that have directed this country for more than two centuries: that there would be three separate branches of Government, not any one more powerful than the other—the House and the Senate make up the legislative branch, the judiciary, and executive branches of Government.

We have every right to do what we did. For 6 plus years the President has ignored us. The Republican House and Senate have given him everything he has wanted. But now there is a new Congress. He can't do that anymore. We have constitutional responsibilities. We have to fulfill those responsibilities.

On November 7 the American people spoke very clearly. They said: We want a change of course in Iraq. That is what we legislated this week.

The supplemental spending bill contains important changes in the course of the President's Iraq policy. Given the importance and urgency of this legislation, I am surprised to hear the minority leader discredit this bill and the need to change course in Iraq the way he did earlier today. Senate Democrats believe our troops should get the funding they need without further delay. The only question is whether President Bush and the Senate Republicans will prevent that from happening.

The Senate has now acted and the ball is squarely in the President's court. However, before even being presented with the final version of the legislation, the President has promised a veto. This appears to be nothing more than a strategy designed to score political points, not doing a thing to assist the troops. I am sorry the minority leader has become a facilitator of that strategy.

Senate Democrats will continue to fight to provide the troops the funds they need and a real strategy for success. We have taken an important step in that direction this week, and we will continue to press the President and congressional Republicans to join us in this effort.

This is our constitutional responsibility. I am disappointed and somewhat in a state of disbelief that our President would threaten a veto without

even seeing the final legislation. We have obligations, and we are going to fulfill those obligations.

Does the Senator from Pennsylvania wish to speak?

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I came to hear the majority leader's concluding comments and to put a statement in the RECORD.

Mr. REID. I do have to say to Senator SPECTER, I haven't had a chance to compliment him lately, but I have done it in the past. Even though it has been 25 years since I practiced law, I look back with great, fond memories of my practice of law. I did a lot of trial work. From the first day I arrived in Washington, I recognized the intellectual, legal brilliance of the Senator from Pennsylvania. I say that without any question. He is someone who has made Washington a better place because of his probative questions always. I appreciate having the opportunity to congratulate the Senator once again on his skill as a lawyer. He has used it well in the Senate.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am grateful to the distinguished majority leader for those comments. I am going to drop in on his speeches more often. Now that I know what to expect, I will show up on all occasions.

Senator REID is a distinguished lawyer and a trial lawyer. He exhibits those skills on this floor with frequency and fluency and erudition. Every now and then our legal training comes through.

We have just finished a lengthy proceeding in the Judiciary Committee on the issue of the resignation of the U.S. attorneys. The distinguished Senator from Rhode Island, former U.S. attorney, was there and participated. We are determined to find out all the facts before coming to judgment.

In the course of those proceedings, there were a lot of questions, and some of the legal skills of a number of the people were present. We have a great many lawyers on the Judiciary Committee. We have some who are not lawyers. All performed well today.

Again, I thank the Senator.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could, through the Chair, say to my friend from Pennsylvania, one of the things we learn as lawyers, which is certainly important, and I wish it would rub off on all Members of this body—I have been in trials with people, and these have been tough cases, but we would walk out of there, shake hands, and become better friends as a result of our adversarial positions.

I wish that would happen on the Senate floor more often. We can disagree on issues, but it should not make us disagreeable. I know the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania and I, on rare occasions, have disagreed on issues, but instead of weakening our bonding, it strengthens it because it reminds us—I am confident for him as it does me—of our days in the courtroom, where you would have someone whom you would oppose on an issue, but it

did not mean you opposed them as a person. We would have a responsibility. We were simply doing as a lawyer what that person we represented would have done if they had our education and training.

So as we finish this very difficult week, I again say I look back with such—

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, one addendum to what the majority leader has said; that is, the interaction among Members is not understood unless you either are a keen observer of the Senate or have been here for a while. But the relationships are very important. It is the development of skills on accommodation.

One of the facets about the Senate that has always intrigued me is what happens between the votes when we are all captive here, so to speak. You have to wait a while for late Senators to show up—though not as long with the new majority leader—and there are conversations that go on. A tremendous amount of business is transacted. In a sense, it is like there is a certain aspect of a social event—not quite a cocktail party without cocktails—but a lot of business is transacted. There are a lot of accommodations and a lot of learning about personalities and how to come together on issues.

We have too much partisanship in this body. This aisle that separates the Democrats and the Republicans is too wide much of the time. But there are also occasions where we come together and work together. I am pleased to say in the last few days I think we are going to meet the majority leader's timetable on an immigration bill, where we have to come together.

It is experience and relationships and skills which lead us to many conclusions, notwithstanding all of our problems. Nobody said it better than Churchill, that the system has lots of failings, but it is the best compared to any other system. Sometimes we muddle through, but at least we get through.

Well, I see the real Republican leader on the floor, so I am going to give him his podium.

Mr. REID. Finally, I would say, in closing here, one of the things I have found in this legislative body that is so unique is, if a Member of the Senate gives their word to a Democrat or Republican, or whatever combination thereof, that is it; there need be nothing in writing. The agreements that are made in this body last for years and years. Once you tell a Member of this body: "This is the deal we have," that is the way it is, and I have never had anyone change that. On one occasion, I am sure it happened. I am sure it was from a misunderstanding. But in all the 25 years I have been here, all you need is somebody to tell you what they are going to do, and that is the way it is. That speaks well of everyone serving here.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—  
S. 1071

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1071, which was introduced earlier today by Senators LANDRIEU and LOTT; that the bill be read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, there are objections on this side. I, therefore, have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would say, very briefly, Senator LANDRIEU has spoken at great length on this issue. Senator LOTT has talked to me several times about this issue. I hope we can get this cleared in the near future.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—  
H.R. 137

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 91, H.R. 137, that the bill be read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me say to the majority leader, we are close to being able to get this measure cleared, but, regretfully, we are not there yet. So, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on this I am very disappointed. There are 3 million members of the Humane Society in America. For every one of them, this is their No. 1 issue; that is, to stop the viciousness, the barbarity of having animals fight each other. People bet on this, as we all know. It is done in several States, and it should be stopped.

That is what this is all about. I am not going to belabor the point, but this is something a number of people on both sides of the aisle feel strongly about. I would think in the next go-around whoever is objecting to this should step forward and state their objection.

We are going to have to—on one of these days when there is not a lot to do; I don't know when that will be, but we will find some time—we are going to have to file cloture on this because it is unfair we are being stopped from moving on a bill that is entitled "Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act." I think that says it all.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT  
AGREEMENT—S. 5 AND S. 30

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, April

10, following morning business, the Senate proceed en bloc to the consideration of S. 5 and S. 30; that the bills be debated concurrently for a time limitation of 20 hours, with the time divided as follows: 5 hours each under the control of the majority and Republican leaders or their designees; 5 hours each under the control of Senators HARKIN and BROWBACK or their designees; that no amendments or motions be in order to either bill; that upon the completion of debate, the bills be read for a third time en bloc, and that each bill be required to receive 60 affirmative votes to pass; and that if neither achieves 60 votes, then S. 5 be returned to the Senate Calendar, and S. 30 be placed on the Senate Calendar; that S. 5 be the first vote in the sequence; and that there be 2 minutes of debate between the two votes, with the time equally divided between the majority and Republican leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of all time, the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bills covered under this agreement; if either or both of the bills pass under the provisions provided in this agreement, then the motions to reconsider be considered laid upon the table.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S. 30 be held at the desk.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, again, I do this often because it is necessary often, and that is we do a lot together. This is a unanimous consent on one of the most contentious issues in the country today: stem cell research. The distinguished Republican leader and I were able to work this out. I expressed appreciation to him and the others who felt so strongly about this on the other side of the aisle. This will be good. We can move on after this matter is determined one way or the other when we return from our work period.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 49 through 52; Calendar Nos. 56, 57, and 58; Calendar No. 60; Calendar Nos. 62 through 70; Calendar No. 71, with the exception of BG John F. Kelly, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk; that the nominations be confirmed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed at the appropriate place in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and that the Senate resume legislative session. I would also note that these have all been cleared on this side of the aisle.

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