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 Irangate 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