

should be done in the right way and that is to have hearings.

I believe we need extensive hearings on these matters. And both Senator BENNETT and Senator FEINSTEIN have agreed to do that. So if there are other campaign finance matters, we would approach those in the same manner as we did these.

It is very important we finish this legislation. We are going to do the very best we can to do that, and we are going to finish it next week.

Now, I told the Republican leader, late last night, that I am thinking of filing cloture tomorrow or Tuesday on this matter. I think people have had every opportunity to offer amendments, to debate those amendments. I am sure there will be others that will be offered and debated, I hope, today. It is an important piece of legislation. But I hope people would do their best to direct it toward what we are trying to do; that is, ethics and lobbying reform.

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the distinguished Republican leader, with me and a few others, met with the President yesterday. I told the President how much I thought of him, personally. I told him, even though my fondness for him is significant, I disagree with a number of his policies, not the least of which is what is going on in Iraq.

He announced his new plan last night, and it was basically what he told us there at the White House yesterday. The President admitted he had made some mistakes, and I think that is commendable, the right thing to do, because there have been mistakes made in the waging of that war. But by calling for escalation of this conflict, I think he is on the verge of making another mistake.

As I made clear in a letter to the President last Friday, along with Speaker of the House PELOSI, I oppose his new plan because it sends the wrong signal to the Iraqis, to the Americans, and to the rest of the world. President Bush is Commander in Chief, and his proposal deserves serious consideration by this body, and we will give it serious consideration.

In the days ahead, we will give his proposal and the overall situation in Iraq a thorough review. I received a call late last night from one Democratic Senator who has a proposal, early this morning from another Senator, a Democratic Senator, who has some ideas. We heard, yesterday, from Senator COLEMAN. He opposes the surge. Senator BROWBACK is in Iraq and issued a press release saying he opposed the surge.

But we are going to have hearings. Those hearings are starting today on the war that is raging in Iraq. Tomorrow, there will be further hearings by the Armed Services Committee. In those hearings, experts will be asked about his proposal. And when the proc-

ess is complete, we will have a vote in the Senate. As to when that will be, under Senate schedules, sometimes it is difficult to determine, but we will have one. I will not prejudice the outcome of the vote on the President's plan, but I will say this: Putting more U.S. combat forces in the middle of an Iraqi civil war is a mistake.

In November, voters all across the country spoke loudly for change in Iraq. That was the issue. In overwhelming numbers, they delivered a vote of no confidence on the President's opened-ended commitment and demanded we begin to bring this war to a close.

Last December, the Baker-Hamilton Commission—a respected panel of foreign policy experts who studied the law, patriots all—echoed the voters' call for change. The Commission, which included both Democrats and Republicans, determined the time has come to transition our forces out of Iraq, while launching a diplomatic and regional strategy to try to hold together this destabilized region.

But last night, the President—in choosing escalation—ignored the will of the people, the advice of the Baker-Hamilton Commission, and a significant number of top generals, two of whom were commanders in the field.

In choosing to escalate the war, the President virtually stands alone.

Mr. President, we have lost more than a score of soldiers from Nevada. The same applies to every State in the Union. From the State of Pennsylvania—I was speaking to the junior Senator from Pennsylvania—they lost more than 140. So many have sacrificed so much. They have done their job, these brave men and women. It is time for a policy, I believe, that honors their service by putting the future of Iraq in the hands of the Iraqis.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

ETHICS AND LOBBYING REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me echo the comments of the majority leader about the underlying bill. The Senate passed, essentially, this bill 90 to 8 last year. Because of difficulties in dealing with the other body, we were not able to complete the job. But the Senate is ready to act. Members on this side of the aisle are ready to act. I share the majority leader's view that we ought to wrap this important lobby and ethics reform bill up sometime next week, and we will be cooperating toward that end.

We made good progress yesterday. There are a number of other amendments to be dealt with. We expect to deal with many of them today and in the morning.

IRAQ

Mr. MCCONNELL. Briefly, Mr. President, with regard to the President's remarks last night, I think the American people would like to see us prevail in Iraq, succeed in Iraq. And the definition of "success," obviously, would be a stable government and an ally in the war on terror. What prevents that is violence in Baghdad.

This plan announced last night to clear and hold Baghdad neighborhoods gives the capital city a chance to quiet down, to create the kind of secure environment that will allow this fledgling democracy to begin to function.

I think the President should be given a chance to carry this out. Rather than condemn it before it even starts, it seems to me it would be appropriate to give it a chance to succeed. If it could succeed, it would be an enormous step forward in the war on terror.

Finally, let me say, it is no accident we have not been attacked again here for the last 5 years. I hope no one believes that is a quirk of fate. The reason we have not been attacked again here at home for the last 5 years is because we have been on offense in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of the terrorists are now dead, many are incarcerated, others are hiding and on the run.

The policy of being on offense has been 100 percent successful in protecting our homeland, and we are grateful for that, that no Americans have been attacked for 5 years.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 90 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the minority and the second half of the time under the control of the majority.

The Senator from Iowa.

IRAQ

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, following the other two speakers in regard to Iraq, I want to say a couple things. No. 1, anybody who criticizes what the President is proposing or anybody else is proposing or what has been done cannot get away with criticizing. There has to be another plan. I want to hear plans from people who think that what the President is doing is wrong. What would they do?

The second thing is that even the Iraq Study Group, which is very bipartisan, said there should not be a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq.

In regard to what my distinguished leader of the Republican caucus had to