

It is not even the first time this year that a Member of Congress has been assaulted while in town for work. But this is what private American citizens are facing every single day, like the 22,000 people who had their car stolen in Chicago this year or the 20,000 victims of felony assault in New York City. This sort of brazen violence against anyone should be a wake-up call for local officials.

Last year, a 54-year-old man was murdered at a gas station in Washington by a group of teenagers attempting to steal his car. The city is now averaging two carjackings every day, and these crimes are increasingly being committed by young people.

At a certain point, the American people who visit our Nation's Capital by the millions every year might expect the city's liberal government to finally start getting serious about securing the streets, but even as senseless violence increases, local leaders are bent—bent—on undermining public safety.

One member of the DC Council—the same soft-on-crime panel that tried to weaken sentencing for repeat offenders earlier this year—proposed recently that local courts be required to provide a written explanation before releasing violent criminals before trial. The courts' response? Such a requirement was “not feasible” because it would “significantly increase” their workload. All this in a city where prosecutors declined to even prosecute two-thirds of the arrests last year.

American families deserve to feel safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods and certainly in the Nation's Capital. It shouldn't take another assault or carjacking or homicide to convince leftwing local leaders to start actually doing their jobs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

CRIME

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my honor to represent the State of Illinois and the city of Chicago. I cannot tell you how many times Members of the Senate and the House in the other party have gone to the microphones to condemn the city of Chicago and its crime rate.

Let me tell you point-blank, there is too much crime in the city of Chicago, but it is not the only city in America that suffers from that problem. Cities large and small have problems every single day with violent gun crime. My hometown of East St. Louis is a tiny little town of 20,000, 25,000 in comparison to the large metropolis of Chicago. Yet the rate of gun violence there is even higher in East St. Louis than it is in Chicago.

We have to do everything we can to deal with it. Let me tell you what “everything we can” means. It means we have to look at the flood of guns coming into these cities from out of State, primarily, without background checks, that are getting into the hands of

criminals, who are turning around and killing innocent people. To ignore this flood of guns in the United States of America and condemn crime is to basically take a position that you are not going to look at reality. And that is what we are faced with.

We have to have a sensible policy when it comes to background checks, universal background checks, to make sure guns are not ending up in the hands of people who will misuse them. When they confiscate thousands of guns every year, which they do in Chicago, they find that they come from the surrounding States, which have lax laws, if any, when it comes to checking the background of purchasers. That is a critical element. If you raise that issue on the floor of the U.S. Senate, you will have the whole side of the aisle—the other side—coming here and waving their arms about Second Amendment rights.

I want to tell you, we need common sense when it comes to guns and gun safety. I want that to be part of the conversation on making our cities safer.

The second thing I want to really raise is personal to the Senate. If you want to stop crime in the streets of Chicago or any city—Cleveland or Chicago, for example—one of the first things you need is a competent, aggressive criminal prosecutor, a person known as a U.S. attorney who works as part of the 85 U.S. attorneys across the United States enforcing the strong Federal laws we have enacted.

So why don't we have a U.S. attorney in the city of Chicago? Why don't we have a U.S. attorney in the city of Cleveland? Because of the objections of one Republican Senator who has come to the floor over and over again to stop these appointments from taking place. The nominees have been cleared. They have gone through background checks. Both sides, Democrats and Republicans, have approved them. They are sitting on the calendar, and they cannot move because one Senator from the State of Ohio, a Republican Senator, refuses to lift his hold and give us a chance to vote on them.

So you can give all the speeches you want on the floor of the U.S. Senate from every Member on the other side about how we have to end crime in the city of Chicago, but do me a favor. Speak to this one Senator and convince him that a competent, aggressive criminal prosecutor as U.S. attorney in the city of Chicago is one step toward that goal. To ignore that and to let him hold up this nominee is just unfathomable and inexcusable.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, another point I would like to make is that over the weekend, we managed to avoid a government shutdown with a 45-day extension, a bipartisan continuing resolution. Keeping the lights on is a win for the American people. It used to be con-

sidered just normal procedure around here. Now it is a reason for celebration and victory because we have such a discordant and dissident group heading up Congress on both sides of the Rotunda.

I am disappointed that, unfortunately, the continuing resolution did not include critical funding for the war in Ukraine. It is impossible to explain to my constituency why, when the Ukrainians are in the midst of fighting and dying every single day for their nation against the war criminal Vladimir Putin, this Congress somehow or another managed to pass a spending bill for 45 days and not include more funding for the Ukrainian cause. This assistance is absolutely essential to make sure we stop the aggression of Russia against this tiny country.

A small group of isolationists and Russian sympathizers—largely MAGA extremists in the House—threatened to hold the entire country, the United States, hostage over this funding despite the overwhelming bipartisan support for Ukraine. Ronald Reagan and John McCain must be turning over in their graves.

I am glad that after the vote on Saturday, Senators SCHUMER, MCCONNELL, MURRAY, COLLINS, COONS, and GRAHAM released a joint, bipartisan statement reaffirming the Senate's commitment to supporting Ukraine and addressing the funding in the weeks ahead. I couldn't agree more.

Let's keep this in perspective. The American people have been generous to Ukraine, but this critical assistance that has halted and reversed Russian aggression accounts for only about one-half of 1 percent of all the Federal spending in our country. So for a modest investment by U.S. standards, we are keeping hope and freedom alive in Ukraine while they are offering their lives. Our European allies have stepped up and provided even more assistance than the United States, and I am glad they have. It is a joint effort.

Quite simply, Putin is willing to keep sending Russian conscripts to their death in the hopes that we in the democratic transatlantic alliance will get tired of his war of tyranny. I hope we never do.

Putin is counting on the West, NATO, the United States to grow weary of his Ukrainian war of attrition. We cannot let him prevail by this approach. We have to be organized and unified in our effort.

GENERAL MARK MILLEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate issue, I would like to address the announced retirement of U.S. GEN Mark Milley.

On January 17, 1961, 3 days before he was to leave office, President Dwight Eisenhower addressed the American people. His political farewell to the Nation surprised a lot of people. They expected him to give the “old soldier's speech,” like Douglas McArthur. Instead, Eisenhower surprised many by

issuing a strong warning about the dangers of the “military-industrial complex.” He described that complex as a “conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry” and “[w]e must not fail to comprehend its grave implications” of that alliance.

His words were a warning to his successors of one of the many dangers they could face in the coming years. The words are often quoted because they were so surprising.

I thought of President Eisenhower’s warning just last Friday when I heard the parting words of another military leader who served our Nation with wisdom, courage, and unwavering devotion—GEN Mark Milley, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In his farewell address, General Milley spoke of those in uniform who have died defending our freedoms, of the many who have shed blood and sacrificed limbs in that cause, and of brokenhearted Gold Star families who have lost loved ones.

Then he said that the U.S. military exists for one purpose, in his words: “to defend democracy.” “Our military,” he said, “is unique among the world’s militaries.” Why? Because, in General Milley’s powerful words, “We don’t take an oath to a country. We don’t take an oath to a tribe . . . to a religion . . . to a king, or queen, or a tyrant or a dictator. And we don’t take an oath to a wannabe dictator.” We take an oath, he said, to the Constitution, to the ideas, ideals, and values of democracy. That, he said, is our “moral North Star.”

Obviously, General Milley has a sense of history. He realizes that despite the strength of our military, the real strength of America is written in the Constitution, which we have all sworn to uphold. He rose to the occasion time and again, particularly under former President Donald Trump.

I had private conversations with him over the years. The question I had to ask him was very carefully scripted. I said to him: If you were given a choice between Commander in Chief or the Constitution, which one prevails? He said: That is simple—the Constitution. That was the North Star he lived by as general of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He served our Nation in uniform for 43 years. He was a combat infantryman and Green Beret. General Milley served 5 years in combat zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan. He knows the meaning of service and sacrifice, and he knows the value of offering your life for this country and its Constitution.

He was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by former President Trump and continued in the post under President Biden. His four years as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were some of the most tumultuous in recent history. They included many successes. They included helping Ukraine to defend against Russia’s illegal invasion and helping to unite NATO. The NATO alliance has never been stronger. And we can thank Presi-

dent Biden, but also General Milley and all those in uniform who made that possible on our side of the Atlantic.

We need to make sure that that security alliance is stronger in the years to come to stop war criminals like Vladimir Putin. There were also grave dangers, including an armed insurrection against the government of the United States right here in this Chamber, under General Milley’s watch.

I know he measured carefully exactly what response we could bring to the occasion; that insurrection mob was a total surprise to so many. But his greatest test may have been containing the impulses of a former President who didn’t understand the role of the military—and I have to offer, I don’t think he basically understands the Constitution—a President who reportedly wanted to use troops, American soldiers, to suppress legitimate demonstrations by the public, exercises of their right to speech, and who prized loyalty to himself over loyalty to our Constitution. That was the force General Milley was up against.

In recent days, that former President has told his followers that in times past, General Milley’s actions would have resulted in execution. Can you imagine he said that, former President Trump said that of General Milley? Once again, a thinly veiled exhortation to political violence from the former President.

As members of this Senate, we take an oath to protect and defend not a party or a President, but the ideals and values of our Constitution. May we all honor that oath with the same dignity, courage, and strength of character as General Milley. And my parting word is gratitude to his family, to his wife Hollyanne, his son Peter, and daughter Mary. I thank the family. How many sleepless nights must have been a part of that household, wondering if the father and the husband would come home safely. Well, he did, and thank God he did, because he brought America home with him. He deserves some time off. He said he is going to try to get some rest. But I am sure he is going to be in demand. A man of his character and reputation deserves it.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of James C. O’Brien, of Ne-

braska, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (European and Eurasian Affairs).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF MOGADISHU

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, today is the 30th anniversary of the Battle of Mogadishu. At this very moment 30 years ago, nearly 100 Rangers and Delta Force operators were pinned down in the city, caring for the wounded and fighting off thousands of heavily armed Somali militiamen. Helicopter crews from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment—the Night Stalkers—provided aerial fire support.

One of the most intense battles of modern times had been going for 7 hours. It would continue through the night for another 8 hours. In the end, 18 Americans died and more than 70 were wounded.

This epic battle was immortalized in the classic book “Black Hawk Down” by Mark Bowden and dramatized in the movie of the same name. What most Americans know about the battle comes from his excellent reporting. What Bowden made clear is sometimes overlooked: These warriors accomplished their mission.

The veterans of that battle should hold their heads high with pride, and the Gold Star families of those 18 fallen warriors in Mogadishu should know that their husbands, sons, and fathers were, indeed, heroes—no less than the men who jumped into Normandy or stormed Iwo Jima.

Unfortunately, their leaders in Washington failed these heroes. No modern battle better reflects some enduring truths we ought to keep in mind today. We should only commit our forces when our vital national security interests are at stake, when the mission is so critical that it justifies American casualties, if necessary.

Once committed, we should provide our troops with every last thing they need to fight and win, without tying one hand behind their backs. And we should be mindful of what dangerous lessons we teach our enemies when we handcuff our troops or squander their battlefield victories.

Let’s go back to how those Rangers, Delta operators, and Night Stalkers wound up fighting for their lives in the streets of Mogadishu. In 1992, an estimated 350,000 Somalis had starved to death in a famine of biblical proportion. The American media highlighted the atrocious suffering in Somalia, but the famine primarily resulted not from natural disaster but from rival warlords fighting a brutal civil war.

The warlords stole food-aid shipments to profiteer, feed their own clans, and starve their enemies. Hunger was just another weapon. After the election and with the approval of President-elect Clinton, President Bush decided to intervene. He acted against the counsel of many of his senior advisers. CIA Director—and, later, Secretary of Defense—Bob Gates summed