

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

up their opposition by observing that “no vital American interest was at stake.”

Moreover, the humanitarian disaster was caused by the warlords; so intervening to ensure the safe delivery of food aid merely addressed the symptoms, not the causes, of the famine. Gates lamented “the first U.S. military intervention driven by CNN.”

In his diary, President Bush cited the shocking loss of life from the famine and the perception that America didn’t do enough to help Black and Muslim nations as justification for intervention—not exactly core national interests.

What everyone thinks of his decision, though, President Bush wisely used overwhelming force to pursue strictly defined and limited objectives. He deployed more than 25,000 troops to Mogadishu but only to secure the port and distribute food aid to needy Somalis. He refused the United Nations’ proposal to expand the mission to disarming the Somali warlords. Faced with such overwhelming power, the warlords backed down and allowed the aid to flow freely into Mogadishu.

Then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell later reflected that “within weeks, we were so successful that we had upset the economics of the marketplace. So much free food came pouring into Somalia that it became tough to make a living by farming.”

When Bill Clinton took office in January 1993, he inherited a successful, narrow mission that was drawing down. Unfortunately, he snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

He flipped President Bush’s approach of overwhelming force with limited and defined objectives on its head. By March, President Clinton turned over the primary responsibility to the UN, reduced the American presence to barely more than 4,000 troops, and expanded the mission to encompass the grandiose objective of nation-building.

Our UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright proclaimed that “we will embark on an unprecedented mission aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country.” Gates later called the plan “a pipe dream” and “hopelessly unrealistic.” Powell scoffed that “since the catastrophe had been provoked by feuding 14th-century style warlords, the solution was a dose of 20th-century style democracy.”

What happened next was all too predictable. The warlords no longer feared the shrunken American force and renewed their fighting against each other and the UN peacekeepers. By June, the militia of the most powerful warlord, Mohamed Farrah Aidid, massacred two dozen Pakistani peacekeepers. Two months later, Aidid’s men killed four Americans and wounded another four in separate bombings. Faced with American casualties, the inexperienced President felt compelled to respond, but he only authorized half measures. He deployed 450 Rangers, Delta Force operators, and Night Stalkers to cap-

ture Aidid and destroy his command structure. Though these soldiers are among our Nation’s very best, the mission creep was extraordinary.

President Clinton simply asked too much of too small a force. Mogadishu was a dense city of more than 1 million residents, including thousands of Aidid’s clansmen and fanatical supporters, some of whom probably received training from al-Qaida operatives on how to shoot down our helicopters.

Yet the elite forces immediately set themselves to the task of rolling up Aidid’s network.

Their mission on October 3 was straightforward enough for these seasoned warriors. Intelligence reports placed key Aidid lieutenants in downtown Mogadishu. Rangers would fast-rope from Black Hawks to the street at the corners of the target house to establish a security perimeter. Delta operators would hit the house and detain the targets.

Meanwhile, a convoy of Rangers would stage nearby, ready to transport our troops and their prisoners back to the nearby American base. Helicopters would provide covering fire throughout the operation. All told, the mission was supposed to last only an hour.

But this operation occurred deep in the territory of Aidid’s clan, and the fighting was intense from the moment the helicopters hit the target house. Aidid’s militiamen and angry mobs rushed to the scene and the streets erupted in gunfire and explosions. The Rangers and Delta operators fought back ferociously, securing the house and beginning to set in the defensive perimeter.

Then disaster struck. First, one Black Hawk was shot down, killing the pilots. A downed helicopter was a contingency for which the task force had planned, but it still greatly complicated the mission. Now, rather than returning to base with the prisoners, the Rangers and Delta operators first had to fight their way to the crash site, secure it, and recover the dead.

And then another disaster struck. Militiamen shot down a second Black Hawk, a contingency for which the task force lacked sufficient search-and-rescue assets. Two Delta snipers, Gary Gordon and Randy Shughart, had been providing covering fire from another helicopter. Observing a mob rushing toward the downed helicopter, they repeatedly requested permission to be inserted to protect the crash site.

Once on the ground and with nothing more than small arms, they heroically fought back the mob until they ran low on ammunition and were overwhelmed. The injured pilot, Mike Durant, narrowly escaped death and was, instead, taken prisoner. For their willingness to give their lives for his in the face of impossible odds, MSG Gary Gordon and SFC Randy Shughart posthumously received the Medal of Honor—the only Medals of Honor awarded between Vietnam and Afghanistan, to give you a sense of the intensity of the battle.

Meanwhile, the Rangers and Delta operators had moved by foot to secure the first crash site and recover the remains of their fallen comrades. One pilot was trapped under tons of wreckage, complicating the recovery mission, but there was never any question that they would stay until they succeeded. Their creed permitting nothing else: Leave no man behind.

In any event, they had no way out because the supporting convoy was decimated in the maze of downtown Mogadishu, a rat’s nest of alleys, flaming roadblocks, and enemy fire. Rendered combat ineffective, the convoy had to return to base, leaving the dismounted Rangers and Delta operators isolated at the crash site.

Bloodied and staggered, they hunkered down and prepared for the long night ahead. With Night Stalkers heroically suppressing the Somalis from the sky, the Rangers and Delta operators defended their position, tended their casualties, and continued the efforts to recover the remains of their fallen comrades. Their commanders cobbled together a new and more heavily armed convoy from the nearby 10th Mountain Division and Pakistani and Malay UN peacekeepers.

This convoy reached their position early in the morning of October 4, as they still struggled to recover the pilot’s body.

Even the endgame was frightful for these warriors. Once they finally recovered the fallen and prepared to escape, nervous and poorly prepared foreign drivers sped away before all the American troops could load up, forcing several to run what became known as the “Mogadishu mile” to a different rendezvous point. Miraculously, given all they had been through, they nonetheless made it out alive.

It is hard to overstate the ferocity of the battle. Jeff Struecker was a young Ranger who received the Silver Star for his actions. Struecker had seen combat before Mogadishu and many times after.

Years later, he said of that night:

Nothing came close to Mogadishu. I mean not even close.

I once heard the saying from GEN Scott Miller, a legend with the Special Operations world and our last four-star commander in Afghanistan. He was a young Delta captain on the ground. He observed that “I’ve seen a lot of fire-fights these last twenty years, but nothing close to Mogadishu.” I have never spoken to a veteran of Mogadishu who said anything different.

Against all odds and in spite of all of the horror, these warriors—I want to stress again—accomplished their mission and returned bloodied but victorious. They captured their targets, and they brought them out. Tragedy indeed struck, with 18 troops killed in action and more than 70 wounded. But our troops inflicted far, far more casualties. Even conservative estimates put enemy deaths over 500 and casualties over 1,000. As one Delta operator

put it to Bowden, “they’d just fought one of the most one-sided battles in American history.”

But the shocking videos of the bodies of American soldiers being desecrated and an American pilot in captivity overshadowed everything else. Most Americans had no idea we even had troops in Somalia, much less that they were engaging in such ferocious battle.

President Clinton had failed to articulate what vital national interest justified his decision to massively expand the limited mission he inherited from President Bush. He neither deployed enough troops nor gave them enough firepower and engagement authorities to complete that expanded mission.

Now, faced with political controversy, he cut and ran. His decision left many of our troops in Mogadishu confused and enraged. Many asked: If the mission was worth 18 American lives, why would they abandon it now? And if it wasn’t, what were they doing there in the first place? And what about vengeance for the dead and wounded?

President Clinton didn’t trouble himself to answer these questions. He shut down Task Force Ranger. He announced that the American forces within the broader U.N. peacekeeping mission would come home by March. He released the prisoners that Task Force Ranger had captured, including the two targets from the raid on October 3.

President Clinton later wrote that “I knew how President Kennedy felt after the Bay of Pigs.” I suppose so. He knew what it felt like to bring humiliation and shame to a great and powerful nation—and grave danger, because, among the unanswered questions was another one: What kind of lesson would it teach our enemies if America packed up and left at the first moment of bloodshed? For it wasn’t just Americans and Somalis watching. The rest of the world was also watching.

Among those watching was the obscure leader of a nascent terrorist network called al-Qaida. Osama bin Laden concluded that America, in his words, was “a paper tiger and after a few blows ran in defeat.”

In fact, bin Laden regularly cited President Clinton’s frantic withdrawal from Somalia in his many fatwas, statements, and interviews about America over the next 8 years.

That dangerous lesson is also an important reminder for us today. We can control where we commit our forces, which we shouldn’t do absent a compelling national interest. We certainly shouldn’t commit them to quixotic, Wilsonian nation-building projects. But once American power and prestige is committed, the whole world is watching, especially our enemies, and, from Somalia to Kabul to Ukraine, they will learn dangerous lessons when our leaders are timid, irresolute, and weak.

But one lesson our enemies will always take away from the battle of

Mogadishu is never challenge the American soldier on the field of battle. Against all odds and despite political constraints, our troops in Mogadishu fought with unparalleled bravery and skill. They brought back their dead and wounded. They accomplished their mission. They made their country proud.

On behalf of a grateful nation, I want to thank the men who served and sacrificed so much 30 years ago. God bless them. God bless their families. May God continue to bless America with warriors just like them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as the world now knows, over the weekend, Congress passed a short-term funding bill to prevent a government shutdown.

I want to commend Speaker MCCARTHY and the Members of the House on both sides of the aisle for finding a path forward to keep the government open for the next 45 days while the two Chambers advance full-year appropriations bills. The failure to advance those bills was, in fact, the reason why we came up against the end of the fiscal year deadline and had to resort to a short-term continuing resolution.

Now, I have made my feelings about government shutdowns crystal clear. They don’t save any money. They don’t solve any problems, and the same problems that caused you to shut down the government are still there staring you in the face when you reopen. They are not in anyone’s best interest, unless you are concerned primarily with politics and the blame game.

When the government shuts down, millions of federal workers are left without being paid. Now, that doesn’t mean they don’t have to continue doing their jobs. It just means they won’t get paid. That includes members of the military, our frontline border security personnel, and so many others. I am glad their families don’t have to confront the reality of a shutdown today.

Beyond the impact on individual workers, shutdowns impact critical functions of the Federal Government. Immigration court hearings are canceled, resulting in an even greater backlog of pending cases. The E-Verify system, which is designed to allow employers to determine whether somebody can lawfully work in the United States, is taken offline, meaning employers have no way to verify job applicants’ employment eligibility. In many cases, Federal investigators aren’t able to pursue leads of potential criminal activity, develop evidence, or even bring enforcement actions against bad actors. Programs that support our veterans, low-income families, and other vulnerable Americans are temporarily paralyzed.

So there are no winners during a government shutdown. The overwhelming majority of us—and, I believe, of the

country—understand that. So I am glad we were able to avert a crisis at the last minute. But the fact that we even landed in that situation represents a failure of Congress to govern, and it starts right here in the U.S. Senate.

At the start of the summer, it looked like the Senate would embrace the regular appropriations process, something it hadn’t done in a long time. The day this Chamber passed the legislation raising the debt limit, Leader SCHUMER and Leader MCCONNELL issued a joint statement about the process going forward. This is back when the debt ceiling legislation was signed. They said they asked the chair and vice chair of the Appropriations Committee to get regular order process started to move all 12 appropriations bills through the Appropriations Committee. The leadership also pledged to work in a bipartisan fashion to advance funding bills and noted that “expeditious floor consideration” would be key to preventing automatic funding cuts.

Well, there is no question that our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee did their job. As a matter of fact, they exceeded their expectations. Under the leadership of Chairman MURRAY and Ranking Member COLLINS, the Appropriations Committee passed all 12 appropriations bills before the end of July. Each bill received, as I said, broad bipartisan support. More than half of them passed unanimously.

So our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, on a bipartisan basis, handed the majority leader 12 bipartisan funding bills on a silver platter. They put the Senate in the strongest possible position to return to a transparent, orderly, and full-participation process, where every Member of the Senate would get a chance to participate in shaping those bills—hopefully, maybe even improving them.

But, as we know now, that is not what happened. The majority leader, which, as we know—maybe not everybody knows—is the only person in the Senate—of all 100 Senators, the majority leader is the only one who can schedule legislation for votes on the floor. And he allowed the months of June, July, August, and half of September to pass before he even attempted to put a bill on the floor.

The minibus, or the package of three appropriations bills that the Senate majority leader, the Senator from New York, put on the floor for vote, wasn’t until 18 days before the funding deadline. Now, that is a far cry from the “expeditious floor consideration” that he promised earlier this year. He had ample time and countless opportunities to move those bills across the Senate floor and to pave the way for a thoughtful and on-time appropriations process.

Instead, as we all know, we were here on Saturday, September 30, scrambling to pass a short-term funding bill to avoid a shutdown. And I remember, speech after speech after speech, the