

"Washington, seriously menaced, was incapable of self-defense—that much was clear," he wrote years later.

Staring at that map, Wallace understood that the threat was very real and his responsibility was crystal clear. Without orders—without orders—he departed for Monocacy Junction, where the roads and railroad leading to Washington and Baltimore crossed a tributary of the Potomac.

Upon arrival, he stood on a bluff looking down on the Monocacy River and the green pastures and golden wheat fields beyond it. He could see the steeples of Frederick, MD, not far off and the Catoctin Mountain on the horizon.

The peaceful summer was interrupted with the echo of distant gunfire. Soon it was clear: General Robert E. Lee had sent General Jubal Early north to take Washington. He had crossed the Potomac and was on his way east toward Monocacy Junction, perhaps to Baltimore—more likely to Washington, just 40 miles away.

Wallace had already moved with great urgency. He messaged Washington to recall troops and prepare for an attack. He called in what brigades or parts of brigades he could to augment his own men, eventually raising a force of several thousand. Then he spread them thinly along the eastern bank of the river, determined to block its bridge just long enough for reinforcements to arrive in the Capital.

On the night of July 8, the eve of the battle, Wallace laid down and placed his head on a folded coat, but anxiety made sleep impossible. Could he throw a hastily gathered and mostly green force in the way of a superior army, in an objective so hopeless? The Navy Yard up in flames, the Capitol menaced, the library inside it looted, the treasury emptied, foreign heads of state rushing to recognize the Confederacy—and then, most painfully, the image of Abraham Lincoln "cloaked and hooded, stealing like a malefactor from the back door of the White House just as some gray-garbed Confederate brigadier burst in the front door."

The next morning, July 9, when the Confederate Army of over 15,000 arrived at Monocacy River, it was met with fierce resistance from the outnumbered Federals. Rebel charges were repeatedly turned back until late in the afternoon, when Wallace, after heavy losses—nearly 1,300 dead and wounded—ordered his men to withdraw toward Baltimore.

Early's battered army paused for the night before it continued on to Washington. When he reached its gates on the 11th, Union reinforcements were waiting. A skirmish at Fort Stevens followed, and the rebels departed empty-handed.

The Union stand cost the Confederates a full day—a full day—and with it, their chance at Washington.

Monocacy. Monocacy. Monocacy is usually unmentioned among the list of consequential Civil War battles, but

today, on its 160th anniversary, we reflect on its importance. You see, had Early's men taken the Capital, however briefly, the humiliation could have persuaded a war-weary population to dismiss Abraham Lincoln.

What then would be the fate of the 13th Amendment or the eventual terms of peace? Because of Wallace's steely resolve and his men's uncommon valor, the questions went unanswered. Lincoln was reelected. The following January, the 13th Amendment to forever end slavery passed Congress. The war was over by April, and the Union was preserved. And General Lew Wallace, not unlike the hero of a novel he later wrote, was redeemed.

When it comes to words, Wallace will always be best known for "Ben-Hur," but the message he forwarded to Washington after the Battle of Monocacy is timeless too. It should inspire all of us still, a reminder that rising to our duty, no matter the odds or even outcome, can change the course of history.

I did as I promised. Held the bridge to the last.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING JAMES M. INHOFE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise this morning to discuss national defense and, in particular, the importance of the NATO alliance as quite a number of our friends from NATO have arrived in Washington to celebrate the 75th annual meeting of this important defense organization.

I can hardly talk about national defense and NATO and the importance of keeping our defenses strong without calling attention to the sad fact that our former colleague, Senator Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, passed away today. I am told that Senators LANKFORD and MULLIN will seek recognition at a later time to speak extensively about this remarkable statesman who has passed from among us, and Members will be notified of when that might be should they want to join in.

But at this point, at this pivotal moment when I wish to talk about national defense, let me just say a word or two about my friend and colleague of some 30 years, Jim Inhofe.

As a young man, as a young family man, Jim Inhofe quickly learned how to build a business and create jobs, and he did so successfully. Only a few years later, as a municipal leader, he found out how to build consensus and he took that knowledge with him to Capitol Hill as a Member of the House of Representatives and then as our colleague here in the U.S. Senate.

Jim Inhofe demonstrated that he continued to know how to build con-

sensus and get things done for his fellow Oklahomans as well as for his fellow Americans.

Anyone who knew Jim Inhofe knew that he was a dedicated Christian. Jim Inhofe was a man of great faith with, in particular, a heart for Sub-Saharan Africa. He visited there countless times, encouraged numerous—probably hundreds—of his fellow Senators and representatives to accompany him to visit some of the most challenged countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. He hosted countless Prayer Breakfasts there. He got to know the leaders in those countries and their families by name. He was a remarkable Christian friend to those in Africa.

Jim Inhofe was an accomplished pilot. He flew solo around the world at age 56. As a Member of Congress, he was known as a straight shooter who was not afraid to challenge the conventional wisdom, as he did so on numerous occasions.

Jim and his wife Kay were married for 64 years. Together, they had four children and 12 grandchildren, one of whom they found and adopted and rescued during a trip to Africa.

I would mention that Kay Inhofe has been a special friend and adviser to my wife Gayle for these decades.

Again, I am informed that Senators MULLIN and LANKFORD will lead fuller discussion of this remarkable statesman who has passed from among us. But today, as I talk about national defense and NATO, I send my love, and we in the Senate send our love and condolences to the entire family and to the State that he loved, Oklahoma.

NATO

Mr. President, I would note, as Members have seen and as the public is reading and hearing about, that this week, 32 nations are gathering in Washington for NATO's 75th anniversary summit. Our alliance has reached this remarkable milestone, 75 years. Its longevity reaffirms its past success and its enduring value.

Our bond must remain strong, particularly at this hour. We are in the most dangerous global security threat since World War II. Almost all of our witnesses before the Armed Services Committee tell us that we are in the most dangerous global security threat for generations. As we navigate today's new challenges, NATO still stands as an indispensable alliance.

In this consequential moment, NATO is receiving a new leader. I congratulate the outgoing Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, and I welcome our new Secretary General Mark Rutte.

NATO's 75th anniversary and its leadership transition provides Senators an opportunity. We have a chance to remember why NATO matters, and we have a chance to call upon every member—every Nation member—to recommit to our alliance. I call upon my colleagues in both Houses and in the administration, our friends, to recommit to this important and vital alliance.

As Mr. Rutte takes office, he has a significant challenge to confront.

Frankly, we all do. As I have pointed out from this desk numerous times, NATO faces a new axis of aggressors. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are banding together. They are banding together to help Russia in its illegal invasion of Ukraine and they are banding together to pursue their designs on the free nations of this world.

This new axis poses a set of growing, interlocking strategic threats to the United States and our allies. In their own way, they have all been supporting Russia's illegal and unprovoked war on Ukraine.

And at this moment, I would have to pause and note the shameless and vicious Russian attack just earlier this week on a children's hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine.

This act by one of the most brutal dictators that has ever walked on the face of the Earth must go answered. It cannot go unanswered. And the very idea that the free nations of this world would seek to negotiate as peers with such a brutal war criminal as Vladimir Putin, to me, is unthinkable.

What in the world makes anyone think that this person who has violated every single principle of the organization for security and cooperation in Europe would negotiate in good faith and agree to that negotiation?

So we have a bleak situation, and it highlights NATO's importance. NATO was built for such a time as this. And in meeting with the leaders yesterday afternoon on the other end of this magnificent Capitol, I was heartened to hear that principle underscored.

After the devastation of two World Wars, NATO kept the peace by deterring the Soviet Union, and thank God we did. In the post-Cold War era, the alliance's support for Ukraine has demonstrated why NATO continues to be relevant.

Most NATO members have provided substantial military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. In short, the alliance celebrates its 75th birthday from a position of strength.

But we should not interpret NATO's accomplishments in the past as a license to let down our guard now. NATO's collective strength is only as strong as its members' individual commitments.

The truth is that our allies need to spend more on defense. We need, in the United States, to spend more on defense. It is a necessity. We need to build modern, capable militaries that can stand shoulder to shoulder together in a fight against this axis of aggressors.

We need the industrial might to match that force strength. In fact, most allies are meeting their obligations. This year, 23 out of 32 NATO countries will spend at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense, up from only 7 out of 32 at the time of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We all learned a lesson at that moment 2½ years ago.

At this point, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the scheduled roll call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WICKER. Thank you very much to my colleagues and to the Chair.

The world has grown too dangerous for the remaining NATO members not to meet the 2-percent mark. We all must make it a priority to increase defense spending. It is shocking and unacceptable that some allies, especially some capable ones, have yet to reach the 2-percent requirement that they agreed to.

Friends can speak candidly to one another, and so I will. Our neighbor to the north, Canada, is among this group, which has not and, for several years in the future, will not reach its need.

I was able to meet with Prime Minister Trudeau just a few moments ago and was glad to hear him say that an announcement will be made from our friends in Canada, perhaps later this week, about a new plan to more quickly reach that 2-percent goal. And I call on him to fulfill that statement that he made to us in private. We look forward to that, and we congratulate him on that effort.

NATO allies shouldn't outsource security to others. But this challenge presents an opportunity, one that adds to the mandate we give the incoming Secretary General. The transatlantic industrial base has withered, and we also need to attend to that. And that should be part of Secretary General Rutte's new platform.

In the past, our friends of freedom have had to follow our lead as we pursue a "peace through strength" agenda. Today, Europe has not kept pace as it should.

The United States has begun investing heavily to rebuild its arsenal of democracy, and we need to continue doing so. But we are still waiting for the dramatic increase in European 155-mm artillery production. We have yet to see the expanded lines of long-range cruise missiles such as the Storm Shadow and the Scout.

We have heard promises of a reinvigorated defense industrial base in Europe, but those assurances have yet to be fulfilled.

So as he assumes office, Secretary General Rutte should join us in recognizing the 2-percent commitment is, in truth, insufficient in light of Russia's newly mobilized war economy. There are additional issues standing in NATO's way. Its members remain mired in their own domestic issues. They must, of course, attend to these domestic concerns, but they also remain tangled up in an alliance bureaucracy that struggles with basic expansions in munitions production capacity.

These challenges are significant, but Mr. Rutte and the elected governments of our alliance must not abide the status quo. We should consider this situation unsustainable, and we should say so.

NATO asks its members for 2 percent; in my 21st Century Peace

Through Strength report, I recommended that we in the United States spend 5 percent of GDP on national defense—as did President Reagan. My plan is primarily designed to deter the Chinese Communist Party, but it also calls for the United States to deepen commitments to Europe.

For a few examples, I recommend permanently stationing an armored brigade combat team in Poland. My plan proposes increasing our rotational deployments in Eastern Europe. We should also improve intelligence sharing and communication among allied forces.

Time and again, the United States has learned, sometimes the hard way, we cannot walk away from Europe. Together, the transatlantic alliance represents half of the world's economy. There is simply no way to contain Beijing's economic aggression without working together closely.

Likewise, a stagnant U.S. military budget and halfhearted European defense spending cannot contain Russia's antagonism.

So thank you for your indulgence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I understand we have colleagues here and we have a vote, but I wanted to ask unanimous consent for 2 minutes prior to the vote.

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

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, yesterday the FTC, in a 4-to-1 decision, took action in a report, an interim staff report, that show that we should all be very concerned about the activities of PBM middlemen. These are the basic people who are supposedly getting discounts for us on drug prices but then actually pocket those discounts.

The final report, which we should be receiving—this interim report we should be receiving today basically says that market concentration and vertical integration are just giving these PBMs too much market power. The point is, are we going to do anything to stop that market power and to help the public who need better transparency on price?

It also says that PBMs are engaging in self-preferencing, meaning that they are steering those rebates back to themselves, and it is affecting pharmacies. It is affecting pharmacies in my State where now in downtown Seattle, you don't have any 24-hour pharmacies anymore, and pharmacy deserts are starting to happen.

The report also shows that PBMs may be using their market shares to force independent pharmacies into unfair contracts—that is what you get when you get a concentration of a market, and then you can basically push other people out of the market—and that PBMs and manufacturers are entering into rebate agreements that may impair or block access to lower cost drugs.