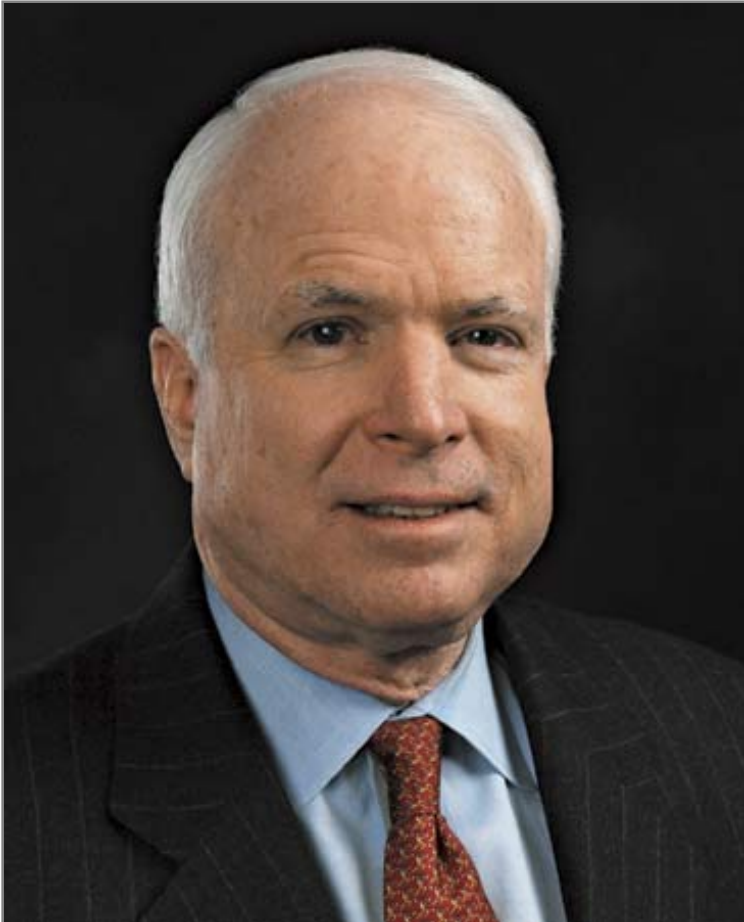


John McCain



John McCain.

*Courtesy, Office of U. S. Senator, John
McCain*

John McCain, in full John Sidney McCain III (born August 29, 1936, Panama Canal Zone), U.S. senator who was the Republican Party's nominee for president in 2008 but was defeated by Barack Obama. McCain represented Arizona in the U.S. House of Representatives (1983–87) before being elected to the U.S. Senate (1987–).

Although a self-

described conservative “foot soldier in the Reagan revolution,” McCain clashed with his party’s right wing on a wide range of issues. Long a favourite of reporters, who admired what they saw as his directness, he garnered a reputation as a political maverick.



John McCain (left) with Pres. Ronald Reagan at the White House, Washington, D.C., 1987.

Carol M. Highsmith—Carol M. Highsmith Archive/Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (digital. id. pplot 13557-00737)

QUICK FACTS ABOUT JOHN MCCAIN

The table provides a brief overview of the life, career, and political experience of McCain.

John McCain

Birth

Aug. 29, 1936, Panama Canal Zone

Party, state

Republican, Arizona

Religion

Episcopalian (raised), attends Baptist church

Married

Yes

Children

7

Education

B.S., U.S. Naval Academy,
Annapolis, 1958

Experience

Senator, U.S. Senate, 1987–present
Republican nominee for U.S.
president, 2008
Republican candidate for U.S.
president, 2000
Representative, U.S. House of
Representatives, 1983–87

Reelection year

2022

Current committee assignments

Senate Committee on Armed
Services (chairman)

- Subcommittee on Airland (ex officio)
- Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities (ex officio)
- Subcommittee on Personnel (ex officio)
- Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support (ex officio)
- Subcommittee on Seapower (ex officio)
- Subcommittee on Strategic Forces (ex officio)

Senate Select Committee on
Intelligence (ex officio)

Senate Committee on Homeland

Security and Governmental Affairs

- Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (member)
- Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management (member)

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

EARLY YEARS AND MILITARY SERVICE



(Right to left) John McCain's father, John S. McCain II, and grandfather, John S. McCain I, aboard ...

Admiral John S. McCain, Jr. Collection/U.S. Navy Historical Center photo

McCain had strong Southern roots—his great-great-grandfather, William A. McCain, owned a Mississippi plantation with more than 50 slaves and died fighting for the Confederacy in 1863—but he believed that his heritage lay almost entirely inside the country's military.

The son and grandson of U.S. Navy admirals, he graduated from the United States Naval Academy near the bottom of his class in 1958, his low class rank attributed to indifference

both to disciplinary rules and to academic subjects he did not enjoy. He then served in the navy as a ground-attack pilot. In 1967, during the Vietnam War, McCain was nearly killed in a severe accidental fire aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Forrestal*, then on active duty in the Gulf of Tonkin.



John McCain (centre) surrounded by Hanoi residents in Truc Bach Lake after his plane was shot down ...

Veterans History Project/Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Later that year McCain's plane was shot down over Hanoi, and, badly injured, he was captured by the North Vietnamese. In captivity he endured torture and years of solitary confinement. When his father was named commander of all U.S. forces in the Pacific in 1968, the North

Vietnamese, as a propaganda ploy, offered early release to the younger McCain, but he refused unless every American captured before him was also freed. Finally released in 1973, he received a hero's welcome home as well as numerous service awards, including the Silver Star and the Legion of Merit.

McCain retired from the navy in 1981, after his life had



Cindy and John McCain after his presidential nomination acceptance speech at the Republican ...

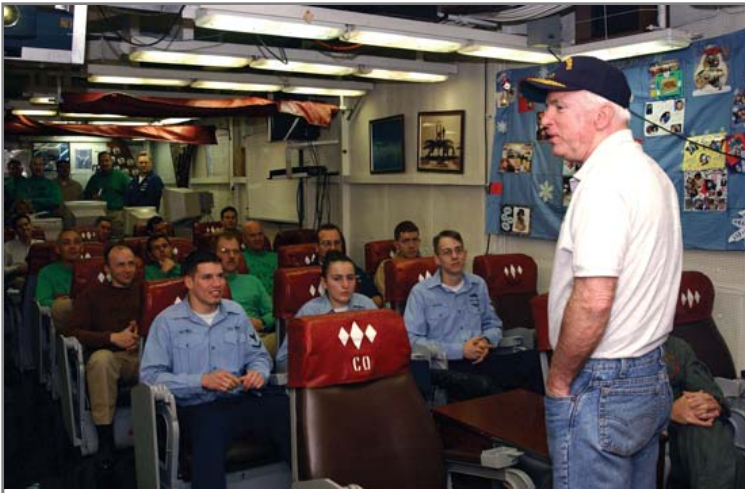
Carol M. Highsmith/Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

changed course. In 1977 he became the navy's liaison to the U.S.

Senate, which he later called his "real entry into the world of politics and the beginning of my second career as a public servant." Three years later his first marriage ended in divorce, which he confessed was due to his own infidelities; soon after, he married Cindy Lou Hensley of Phoenix, a teacher who was also the only child

of Marguerite Smith and Jim Hensley, founder of the third largest Anheuser-Busch beer distributorship in the country. McCain had now acquired the personal connections and financial resources required to realize his political ambitions.

POLITICAL CAREER



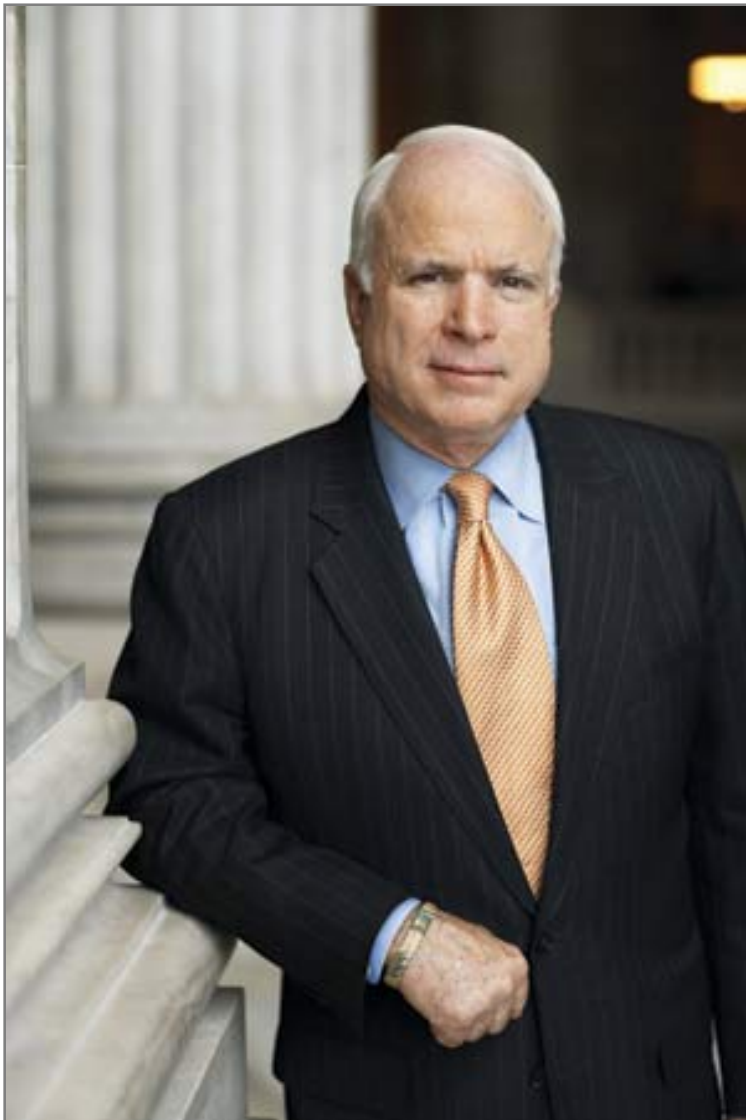
John McCain aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* several months after the start of the ...

PhoM 3c Hines/U.S. Navy photo

McCain relocated to Arizona, and in 1982 he was elected to the House of Representatives. After serving two terms, he successfully ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate in 1986. Two years later he gained national visibility by delivering a well-received address to

the Republican National Convention. But McCain also became embroiled in the most spectacular case to arise out of the savings and loan scandals of the 1980s, as a result of his connections with Charles Keating, Jr., the head of the Lincoln Savings and Loan Association of Irvine, California, who had engaged in fraud. Although cleared by the Senate in 1991 of illegalities in his dealings on Keating's behalf, McCain was mildly rebuked for exercising "poor judgment." Duly embarrassed, McCain became a champion of campaign finance reform; he collaborated with the liberal Democratic senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, and, after a seven-year battle, the pair saw the McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act signed into law in 2002. The legislation, which restricted the political parties' use of

funds not subject to federal limits, was McCain's signal achievement on Capitol Hill.



John McCain, c. 2007.

John McCain 2008/www.JohnMcCain.com

On most issues—including military spending, labour legislation, abortion, and gun regulation—McCain's record in the Senate was basically conservative. Yet quite apart from campaign reform, McCain took stands on specific issues that distanced him from the conservative Republican mainstream in Washington. Despite his years in captivity in Vietnam, McCain

strongly advocated restoring diplomatic relations with that country, finally achieved in 1995. He led unsuccessful efforts to enact a new federal tax on tobacco products that would fund antismoking campaigns and help the states pay for smoking-related health costs. On immigration reform,



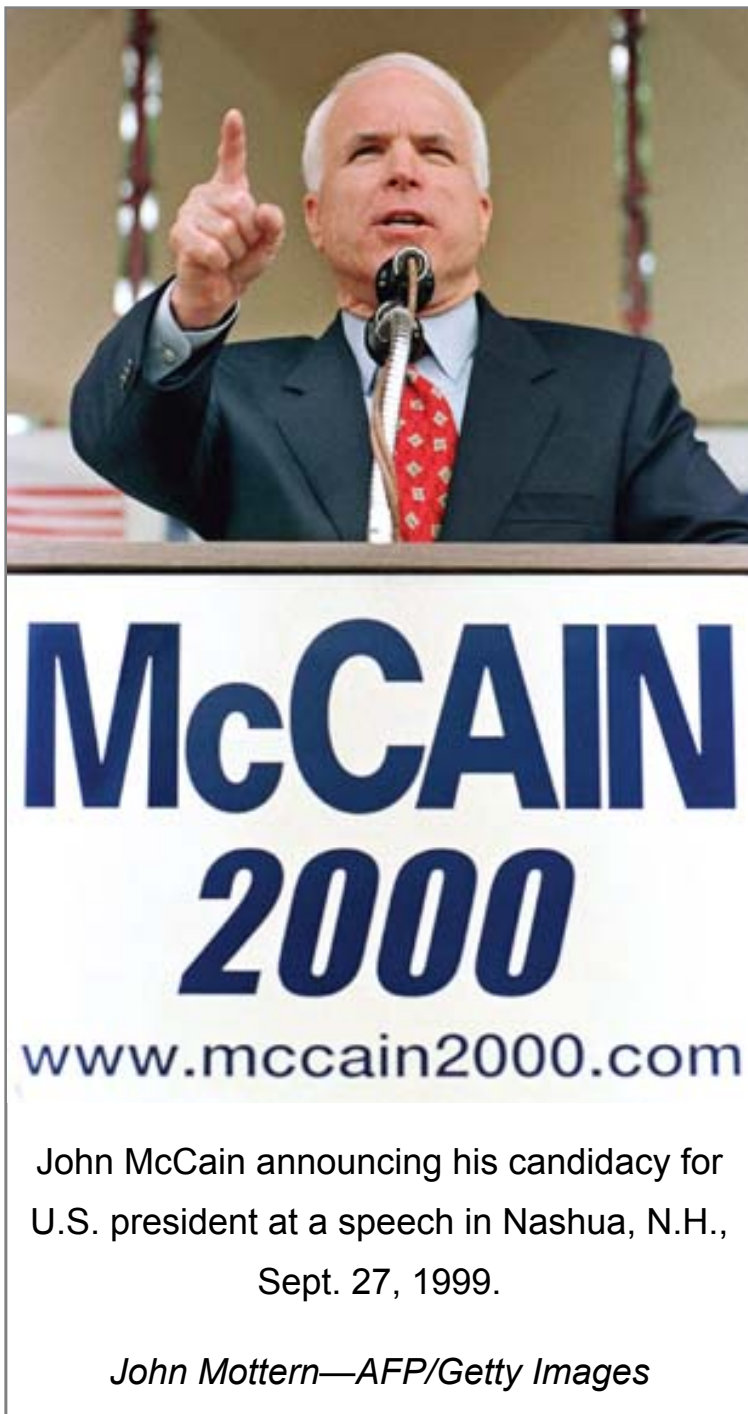
(From left to right) Senators Carl Levin, John Warner, and John McCain applauding U.S. service ...

C PhoM Johnny Bivera/U.S. Navy photo

health care, restriction of so-called greenhouse gas emissions (a primary cause of global warming), reduction of pork-barrel government spending, regressive tax cuts, and the political power of religious conservatives, McCain stood out. His critics

claimed that his contrarian stance was calculated and mostly for show and that the favourable impression it made inside the news media far outweighed the political risks. Still, with congressional Republicans increasingly marching in lock step during the 1990s, McCain's dissent made him look like a genuinely unconventional conservative.

In 2000, promising the country "straight talk" and extensive government reform, McCain ran for the Republican presidential nomination, competing against Texas Gov. George W. Bush. Bush prevailed after a strenuous fight, including an especially brutal effort by the Bush campaign in the South Carolina primary. McCain eventually recovered from his devastating defeat, campaigned hard for Bush's reelection in 2004, gave unswerving support to the Iraq



War, and, after initially opposing Bush's tax cuts, voted against their repeal.

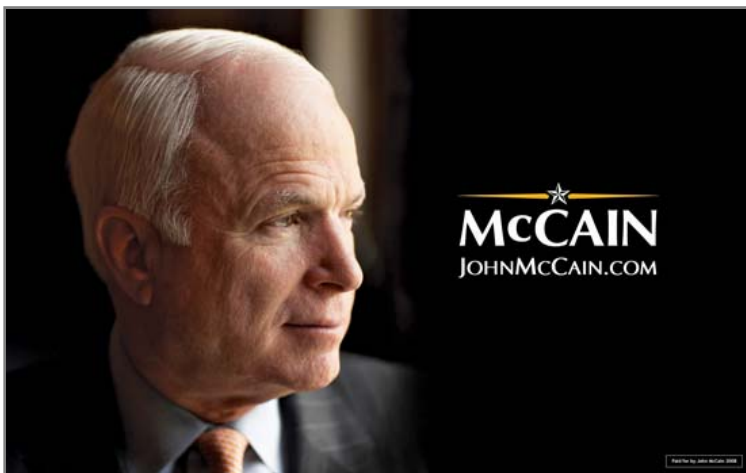
In 2007 McCain announced that he would once again seek the Republican presidential nomination. Despite his rapprochement with the Bush family, his campaign seemed to be in serious trouble as the election year approached, lacking money and a clear political base. But after a decisive victory in

New Hampshire and a strong showing on Super Tuesday, McCain took a commanding lead, and he secured the nomination with his victories on March 4, 2008. In late August he chose Sarah Palin, the governor of Alaska, as his vice presidential running mate.



John McCain and Sarah Palin on the cover of *Newsweek*, Sept. 8, 2008.

PRNewsFoto/Newsweek/AP Images



Memorabilia from John McCain's presidential campaign.

McCain faced a challenging political climate in the general election. After 40 years of conservative dominance, the public seemed eager to start anew. By aligning himself with President Bush, McCain gained powerful political resources, but it remained to be seen how much Bush's hard-core supporters, especially among religious conservatives, would rally to McCain's cause, despite his efforts to court them. By sidling up to Bush, McCain also contradicted his reputation for independence, made himself look

John McCain 2008/www.JohnMcCain.com

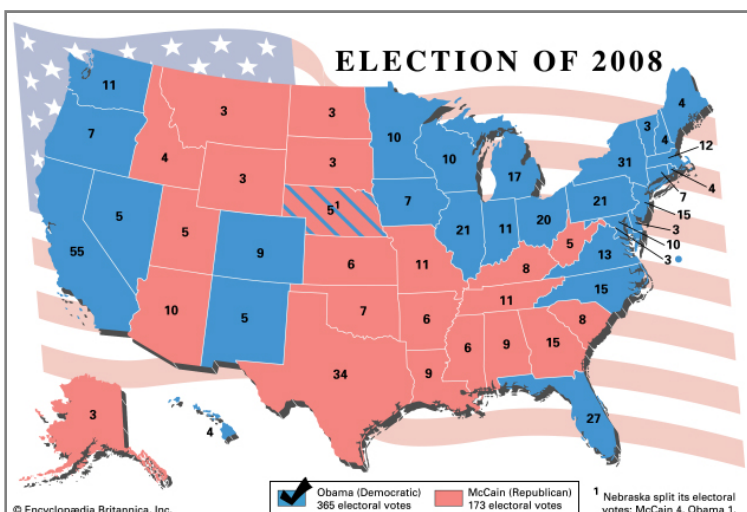


John McCain celebrating his 69th birthday a day early with U.S. Pres. George W. Bush in Phoenix, ...

Joyce N. Boghosian/The White House

inconsistent on key issues (including taxes), and identified himself with a president who in his second term earned the longest sustained period of public disapproval ever. McCain remained far more popular with the public than his party did, but, as he took on Democrat Barack Obama, he faced the humbling irony that, having been defeated by George W. Bush in 2000, he might find himself defeated by the legacy of Bush's presidency in 2008.

Indeed, in the event, McCain lost to Obama. Trailing in the initial opinion polls, McCain appeared to rebound following the Republican national convention in early September. His choice



Results of the American presidential election, 2008.

Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

of Palin, a social conservative, as his

running mate—the first female ever nominated to a Republican national ticket—initially stirred great excitement, particularly within the party's social conservative base. But Palin soon received harsh criticism from many commentators, including conservatives, who claimed her lack of experience raised doubts about McCain's judgment. The outcome became almost inevitable when, later in September, the failure of some major investment houses and banks signaled the start of what became widely described as the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. McCain strangely suspended his campaign, just prior to the first scheduled presidential debate, in order to work on a congressional bailout of the financial industry. He then just as suddenly decided to participate in the debate, which made him look erratic—and when House Republicans rejected the proposed bailout bill, he looked ineffectual as well. Obama wound up winning nearly 53 percent of the popular vote—a decisive margin, but no landslide—yet also captured not only all of those states that had gone for John Kerry in 2004 but also a number of historically Republican states won by Bush in the 2000 and 2004 elections, including Colorado, Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, and Virginia.

Humbled but determined that his political legacy would not be as a failed presidential candidate, McCain returned to the Senate, where he continued to play a prominent role. In 2013, as part of the “gang of eight” group of Republican and Democratic senators, McCain pursued a bipartisan solution to immigration reform that included a “path to citizenship” for undocumented immigrants. In August 2013, at the request of President Obama, McCain and South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, McCain’s longtime colleague and friend, traveled to Egypt, where they held separate meetings with that country’s new interim leaders and with the Muslim Brotherhood. After Republicans gained control of the Senate in the 2014 election, McCain became the chairman of the powerful Armed Services Committee.

In 2016 McCain faced and ultimately fended off a primary challenge from former state senator Kelli Ward, whose adamant opposition to amnesty for illegal immigrants and whose calls to secure the border differed starkly from McCain’s tolerant stance but were in keeping with the strident approach taken by Donald Trump as a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination and as the party’s standard-bearer in the general election. Initially McCain provided consistent, if tepid, support for Trump’s candidacy, despite Trump’s criticism of what he characterized as McCain’s failure to support veterans and

even after Trump controversially maligned McCain's military record, saying that he liked "people who weren't captured." In October 2016 McCain withdrew his endorsement of Trump after a hot-mic video from an infotainment television program in 2005 surfaced in which Trump boasted to a reporter about sexual exploits that were grounded in predatory behaviour.

After Trump won the presidency, McCain was among a small group of Republicans who were critical of the new chief executive's warm overtures to Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin, in the face of the consensus within the U.S. intelligence establishment that the Russian government had meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. McCain joined Democrats in calling for the creation of a special committee to investigate the Russian intervention in the election and the possible collusion by the Trump campaign in that effort.

In mid-July 2017, following surgery to remove a blood clot over McCain's left eye, it was announced that McCain was suffering from glioblastoma, a common but extremely malignant brain tumour. Joining other ex-presidents and a chorus of McCain's Senate colleagues in offering messages of support for McCain, Obama tweeted, "Cancer doesn't know what it's up against. Give it hell, John."

McCain coauthored several books, including *Faith of My Fathers* (1999), *Worth the Fighting For: A Memoir* (2002), *Why Courage Matters: The Way to a Braver Life* (2004), *Hard Call: Great Decisions and the Extraordinary People Who Made Them* (2007), and *Thirteen Soldiers: A Personal History of Americans at War* (2014).

Sean Wilentz

"John McCain". *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.*

Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2017. Web. 01 Dec. 2017

<<https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-McCain>>.

Army Chief of Staff salutes Sen. McCain

By Devon L. Suits November 16, 2017



SHOW CAPTION +

1 / 7

JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL, Va. -- The Army recognized Sen. John A. McCain in a "Salute from the Chief" ceremony Tuesday for his efforts in strengthening America's national security, eliminating wasteful government spending, and assisting in government reform.

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Mark A. Milley presented McCain with the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal for his lifetime in service to America, both as a representative for the people of Arizona in the U.S. Congress and as a retired U.S. Navy captain.

"I will try to live up to your expectations of me, but we have a lot more to do," McCain said.

"Thank you for your service and thank you for your sacrifice," the senator said to a packed hall. "I promise after 60 years -- I'm not ready to quit."

Although he was grateful for the recognition, McCain gave credit to all the men and women who have served alongside him and said he was thankful for their inspiration, leadership and resolve.

A VOICE OF CHANGE

"We're here to honor an American patriot -- a true American legend," Milley said. "One who has demonstrated extraordinary service to our nation and its people through life in and out of uniform."

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee since 1986 and as the chairman since 2014, McCain has played a key role in the Army's overall readiness by providing the necessary resources to "fight tonight," the general said.

Previously, McCain advocated for and authorized the "2009 Army Temporary End Strength Increase," to improve the Army's dwell time during persistent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Army officials. Since then, the senator has advocated for a larger ground force to help meet the Army's requirements around the world.

"He understands the contributions of all the services to the joint force. He understands war. He understands that winning at war requires Soldiers and Marines to slug it out on the ground," Milley said.

In addition to an increase in resources, McCain has been a consistent voice of reform. He is determined to make the Defense Department and military services more responsive to the needs of the president, Defense secretary, combatant commanders, and the American people, Milley added.

Furthermore, the senator has made improvements to the military's acquisition processes by empowering each service chief to enact changes to the procurement process and help ease the burden, Milley said.

The senator has also been a "strong supporter to get rid of the continuing resolutions and the Budget Control Act so we can get some stability in the [Army's] long-term, predictable funding," the general said.

"He takes his duties and responsibilities seriously," Milley said. "He knows that he has Soldiers' lives in his hands and it is his duty to hold [flag officers] accountable. He has questioned and sometimes sparred with all of us: political appointees, combatant commanders, and service chiefs.

"He is not doing it for self-aggrandizement. He doesn't do it for praise or theater. Senator McCain cross-examines us for one simple reason -- he wants us to be better," the general added.

BRAVERY, SELFLESSNESS, HONOR

Growing up, McCain was a fan of history and literature. His favorite book was Earnest Hemmingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls," Milley said. The book tells the story of a man named Robert Jordan, a fictional American ex-patriot who abandoned all his comforts for a cause greater than himself.

"Senator McCain said to me, reading this book changed his young life, and from that point forward, he aspired to Jordan's courage and nobility," Milley said. "I doubt that pre-teen McCain had any idea how he would go on to display these characteristics consistently throughout his young life."

As the son and grandson of Navy admirals, McCain decided to join the family business. He enrolled in the U.S. Naval Academy in 1954, launching his 22-year career as a naval aviator, the general said.

On July 29, 1967, McCain narrowly survived the first of several near-death experiences in the Navy. While in the Gulf of Tonkin aboard the USS Forrestal, a missile accidentally fired from a nearby plane and struck the fuel tanks on McCain's aircraft, triggering a massive fire that ultimately cost the lives of 134 sailors -- the worst Naval disaster since World War II, according to officials.

After the incident, McCain requested a transfer to support the USS Oriskany. In his new position, McCain pushed to strike a thermal power plant in Hanoi, Vietnam. That day came, and on Oct. 26, 1967, while on a bombing mission over Hanoi, his A-4E Skyhawk was shot down.

"It was a calculated risk, a risk that he begged his squadron operations officer to put him on," the general said.

Severely injured during the ejection from his aircraft, McCain would spend the next five and a half years as a prisoner of war in the

infamous "Hanoi Hilton."

"He endured months and years of continuous, uninterrupted torture -- and years of solitary confinement," Milley said.

"[Even] when given the opportunity to escape that hell ... with an offer of early release from the North Vietnamese, he refused," he added. "He endured many more years of abuse and torture, but he kept faith. He kept faith with his fellow prisoners. He kept faith with the Navy, and he kept faith with the United States of America."

On March 14, 1973, McCain was released. He continued to serve until his retirement in 1981. His military honors include the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Believing in a cause greater than himself, McCain continued to serve the nation, winning a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives from the First District of Arizona. After two terms in the House, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1986.

Looking back at the senator's life and relating it to Hemmingway's story, Milley said: "Robert Jordan was brave, dedicated, capable and selfless. He risked his life, but never his honor.

"Senator John McCain has time and again demonstrated those same characteristics of bravery, dedication, extremely capable and selfless service. He has risked his life, and he has risked his political standing, but not once has he risked his honor."

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Friday, December 01, 2017

John McCain: Neglect of US military 'almost criminal'

by Jamie McIntyre and Travis Tritten | Nov 15, 2017, 7:03 AM

McCain ON A TEAR: Sen. John McCain, battling brain cancer at age 81, was back in full prosecutorial form yesterday as he ranted about the continued decline of U.S. combat readiness over the past several years. "In that time, we've seen military readiness decline to nearly unprecedented levels, a crisis in pilot and aircraft maintenance personnel retention, numerous cases of senior officer misconduct," McCain said at a hearing for Pentagon nominees. "The military readiness crisis has impacted every service from ship collisions, aircraft crashes and vehicle accidents to personnel shortages in critical roles, like aviation and cybersecurity," McCain said. "And by the way, the Congress is also complicit in this almost criminal behavior."

ZEROING IN ON THE PILOT SHORTAGE: McCain, a former naval aviator, berated the Pentagon for policies he said are worsening the shortage of combat pilots, now close to 2,000 in the Air Force. A big problem is not pilot pay, but all the bureaucratic hoops pilots must go through that have nothing to do with flying, such as numerous staff assignments, relocating every two to three years, and required military education courses, he said. The "outdated requirements" are mandated by the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act, or DOPMA, which McCain called "an overly rigid system that is increasingly unable to cope with the demands of the modern force." It's driving pilots away, he argues. "All of this is done to turn every officer into the military's next general or admiral," McCain said. "Well, not every officer wants or needs to be a general officer."

"Their complaint isn't money. They want to fly airplanes, and that's what they're not able to do. Sixty percent of our FA teams aren't flying. They're flying less hours per month than Russian and Chinese pilots are," McCain said. "We're in a bidding war with the civilian airliners. You're not going to win it. The way you're going to win it is for them to be proud to wear the uniform of the military."

IT'S PERSONAL: McCain says he met last week with families of some of the 10 sailors who died on the USS John S. McCain, the Aegis destroyer named for his father and grandfather. A Navy investigation blamed the ship's collision with a commercial vessel on poor seamanship by commanders and crew that were overworked and undertrained. "I can tell you that they believe that their young people were not

provided with what they needed to effectively operate in defense of this country," McCain said. "For example, hundred-hour work weeks. Do you know anybody that works a hundred hour work week continuously ... efficiently?"

"I don't like looking at those mothers whose children's deaths could have been prevented. This is a serious issue, and I'd say it's pretty obvious, according to the chief of naval operations that it could have been prevented."

HOUSE EASILY PASSES NDAA: The \$700 billion National Defense Authorization Act is now headed to the Senate. The House **overwhelmingly approved the must-pass annual policy bill in a 356-70 vote** despite warnings from some Democrats that the \$634.2 billion in base defense spending cannot be realized unless Congress acts to lift a \$549 billion budget cap for 2018. "The increased spending included in this bill are hollow numbers and we are failing to deliver a credible or sensible long-term plan to the Defense Department," said **Rep. Niki Tsongas**, the ranking member on the House Armed Services tactical air and land forces subcommittee.

The NDAA bill authorizes more hardware and troops than requested by Trump, with 90 Lockheed Martin F-35 joint strike fighters, 24 Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornets and 14 new Navy ships. That includes three littoral combat ships built by Lockheed Martin and Austal USA. "I'm proud to say this bill sends the signal to our Navy, the industrial base and our adversaries that a 355-ship Navy is not just a theoretical idea but rather an achievable reality," said **Rep. Rob Wittman**, the chairman of the House Armed Services seapower and projection forces subcommittee who has been pushing to increase the size of the current 278-ship fleet.

The NDAA must now be taken up by the Senate, where it is also expected to pass and be sent to **President Trump** for his signature, even though there is still no clear plan in Congress on how to fund the annual bill. Lawmakers in both chambers have rallied around the cap-busting authorization and say it's needed to rebuild a military that is overburdened and underfunded. Trump himself has touted the \$700 billion goal in speeches on several occasions. "It is morally wrong to send men and women out on missions with our military for which they are not fully supported, fully trained, equipped with the best equipment our country can provide," said **Rep. Mac Thornberry**, the House Armed Services chairman. "It's wrong for us to do it and that's

exactly what's been happening.”

Good Wednesday morning and welcome to Jamie McIntyre's Daily on Defense, compiled by Washington Examiner National Security Senior Writer **Jamie McIntyre** (@jamiejmcintyre), National Security Writer **Travis J. Tritten** (@travis_tritten) and Senior Editor **David Brown** (@dave_brown24). [Email us here](#) for tips, suggestions,

calendar items and anything else. If a friend sent this to you and you'd like to sign up, [click here](#). If signing up doesn't work, shoot us an email and we'll add you to our list. And be sure to follow us on Twitter [@dailyondefense](#).

HAPPENING TODAY: At noon, the Senate will vote on confirming **Mark Esper** to be the next Army secretary.

McCain Threatens New Hold on Nominees: Irate over a report in *USA Today*, which said recruits with a history of self-mutilation and other mental health issues can now seek waivers under a new Army policy, McCain [raised the possibility of holding up nominees](#) or even proposing a new law blocking the waivers. “We should have been told about this before it showed up in a USA Today article,” McCain said. “To just announce that we're changing the criteria for requiring people to serve in military is not something that this committee finds acceptable. So, we may have to act legislatively to prevent you from doing it.” The pushback came during an Armed Services confirmation hearing with **Anthony Kurta** who is nominated to be principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness; **James McPherson** to be Army general counsel; and **Gregory Maggs** to be a judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

WHAT USA TODAY REPORTED: McCain read from the newspaper account during questioning of McPherson, and asked “Are we seeing the same movie over and over again?”

Here are the nut graphs from USA Today's report: “People with a history of ‘self-mutilation,’ bipolar disorder, depression and drug and alcohol abuse can now seek waivers to join the Army under an unannounced policy enacted in August, according to documents obtained by USA TODAY.

“The decision to open Army recruiting to those with mental health conditions comes as the service faces the challenging goal of recruiting 80,000 new soldiers through September 2018. To meet last year's goal of 69,000, the Army accepted more recruits who fared poorly on aptitude tests, increased the number of waivers granted for

marijuana use and offered hundreds of millions of dollars in bonuses.”

ARMY CRIES FOUL: Later in the day the Army pushed back against the USA Today account, calling it “inaccurate, unfair,” and alleging it “substantially misinterpreted” a simple administrative change. “Recent reports that the Army has changed medical entrance standards for those with mental health issues are inaccurate,” said a

statement from **Lt. Gen. Thomas Seamands**. “The Army has made no such policy change and follows the accession standards prescribed by the Department of Defense.”

The Army said the only change was in delegating some authorities for granting waivers to the specific commands involved, such as Army Recruiting Command, or State Adjutant General, in the case of the National Guard. “Unfortunately, this simple, administrative change has been substantially misinterpreted,” Seamands said, “It’s also important to note that the conditions themselves have been unfairly characterized.

“For example, a child who received behavioral counseling at age 10 would be forever banned from military service were it not for the ability to make a waiver request,” Seamands said. “We’re not prepared to close the door on such individuals who are otherwise medically, mentally and physically qualified for military service.”

NOMINEES MOVING QUICKLY, FOR NOW: McCain had only just agreed to restart hearings on nominees late last month after another dispute with the Pentagon over sharing information on operations around the world. Since then, Armed Services has been considering nominees at a rapid clip with hearings for 15, and it voted Tuesday to move three more to the Senate floor: **Robert McMahan** to be assistant secretary of defense for logistics and materiel readiness; **R.D. James** to be assistant secretary of the Army for civil works; **Bruce Jette** to be assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology; and **Shon Manasco** to be assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs.

TRANSGENDER SERVICE: During yesterday’s SASC hearing, **Sen. Richard Blumenthal** pressed Pentagon nominees McPherson and Kurta on transgender military service, which Trump in August ordered to end. “Do you agree with, I know, a number of members on this committee including myself, that the military and our country are made stronger with our ability to draw all individuals who are able to meet rigorous requirements that our armed services demand, requirements for training, for deploying, for fighting, for defending our country without any discrimination?” McPherson said he agreed on that for the Army. “We are a standards-based organization and anyone who meets those standards, mentally, physically, should be able to serve their country while wearing the uniform,” he said. Kurta answered simply,

"Senator, I agree."

TRANSGENER SURGERY: The Pentagon confirmed an active-duty service member received a sex reassignment surgery on Tuesday following [a report by NBC News](#).

"Because this service member had already begun a sex-reassignment course of treatment, and the treating doctor deemed this surgery medically necessary, a waiver was approved by the director of the Defense Health Agency," **Dana White**, the

Pentagon chief spokesperson, said in a statement. The procedure, which was done in a private hospital, will be covered by the military as it awaits the new transgender service policy ordered by Trump. The president has given Defense Secretary **Jim Mattis** a March deadline to eliminate coverage of sex- and gender-reassignment surgeries as part of the effort to roll back the Obama administration policy of open transgender service. Mattis issued interim Pentagon guidance that the status quo will remain in place until the new policy is finalized next year.

REFUSING TO START WORLD WAR III: U.S. military officers won't "blindly" follow a hypothetical presidential order to launch a nuclear strike, if that order is determined to be illegal, a former top nuclear commander testified before Congress yesterday. "It's important to remember that the United States military doesn't blindly follow orders," said retired **Gen. Robert Kehler**, who led U.S. Strategic Command from 2011 to 2013, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "A presidential order to employ U.S. nuclear weapons must be legal. The basic legal principles of military necessity, distinction, and proportionality apply to nuclear weapons, just as they do to every other weapon," he said.

Kehler, whose duties at the Nebraska-based Strategic Command rendered him directly responsible for American nuclear forces, appeared as part of a panel of witnesses testifying about the scope and limits of presidential authority over nuclear weapons.

[The committee convened the hearing over concerns](#) over whether Trump might order such an attack on North Korea without congressional approval, citing some of the president's recent rhetoric, such as his threat that North Korea "will be met with fire and fury, like the world has never seen."

"We are concerned that the president of the United States is so unstable, is so volatile, has a decision-making process that is so quixotic, that he might order a nuclear weapon strike that is wildly out of step with U.S. national security interests," **Sen. Chris Murphy** said. "Many Americans share my fear that the president's bombastic words could turn into nuclear reality," said **Sen. Ed Markey**.

Other witnesses testified that the process for ordering a nuclear strike is so streamlined there would be no time for discussion about whether the president's order was legal. "It would be too late," said **Bruce Blair**, a former nuclear missile launch officer and a co-

founder of Global Zero, which advocates for elimination of nuclear weapons.

The hearing was called by Republicans, but Democrats have introduced legislation to limit the president's authority launch a first strike, absent an imminent threat. Some members cautioned that tying the president's hands could throw off the delicate

calculation of deterrence. "We cannot have a bunch of bunker lawyers that basically — or activists, up and down the chain, who decide that they're going to disobey any order that they disagree with," said **Sen. Marco Rubio**.

MORE ISIS LEADERS KILLED: Four senior Islamic State leaders have been killed due to coalition airstrikes over the past three weeks, the Pentagon announced yesterday. The four targets were **Yusuf Demir**, an ISIS media official, **Omer Demir**, an external operations coordinator, **Abu Yazin**, an senior leader and a weapons facilitator, and **Abdellah Hajjiaou**, an external operations plotter.

"The removal of these key terrorists disrupts ISIS' weapons engineering activities and their ability to recruit and train terrorists," said a news release from Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve. "It also reduces their ability to plan and conduct terrorist attacks, both within Syria and Iraq and abroad."

BOGUS RUSSIAN CLAIM: The Russian Defense Ministry on Tuesday tweeted out what it called "irrefutable evidence" that the U.S. is supporting the Islamic State, including screenshots showing the U.S. providing aerial cover.

The accusation, via the official @mod_russia account, included what appeared to be overhead thermal imagery purportedly showing an ISIS convoy on Nov. 9 leaving Abu Kamal in Syria for the Iraq border, with air cover provided by the U.S. It didn't take long for eagle-eyed Twitter users to realize it wasn't an ISIS convoy, but actually a screenshot from the mobile phone game "AC-130 Gunship Simulator." You can see the photos [here](#), which the Russian MoD has since taken down.

ZING! A spokesman for the coalition to defeat the Islamic State fired back on the accusations during a briefing with reporters later in the day. "I would say the Russian Ministry of Defense statements are about as accurate as their air campaign," **Col. Ryan Dillon**, spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve, told reporters. "And I think that is a reason for them to start coming out with their latest barrage of lies."

Dillon told reporters that Russia was making the accusations in order to cover for its own battlefield mistakes in Syria. "They are currently having some setbacks, particularly with the civilian casualty allegations of the 50 who were reportedly killed by their strikes in Aleppo," Dillon said. "You've got what happens with their partners in the

strikes in Aleppo, Dillon said. You've got what happens with their partners in the Syrian regime in Abu Kamal saying that they liberated the city, and they're not in the city, they're still fighting there and had some setbacks in Deir ez-Zor recently."

UNIMPRESSED WITH STATE: Secretary of State **Rex Tillerson's** plan to reform and reorganize the State Department is not going well, according to a pair of leading senators. State Department officials gave a "very unsatisfactory" update to the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee in a staff meeting last week, Chairman **Sen. Bob Corker** said during a Tuesday hearing.

Those conversations stoked bipartisan concern about the department's leadership on an issue that Tillerson has identified as one of his top priorities. "I don't think they're anywhere close to having a plan to present relative to the reforms that they want to make there," Corker, a Tennessee Republican, said Tuesday.

THE RUNDOWN

AP: Analysis: Progress by China envoy in N. Korea won't be easy

Wall Street Journal: U.S. fight against Islamist terror moves to airwaves

Stars and Stripes: No leadership shake-up so far in wake of Niger ambush

War on the Rocks: The courage to end generational wars

Defense News: Raytheon: Saudi-based Patriots intercepted over 100 tactical ballistic missiles since 2015

USNI News: Navy: 'No decisions have been made' in reactivating Perry frigates

USA Today: Trump hails 'tremendously successful' Asia trip; analysts not so sure

Daily Beast: There's no real check on Trump's power to end the world

New York Times: U.S. hires company with K.G.B. link to guard Moscow embassy

Stars and Stripes: Outrage sparked after airman takes knee; Air Force says he felt faint

Foreign Policy: Two unexpected ways in which mercenaries affected ancient battles

Defense One: Can Russia help the U.S. as much as Trump says it can?

Calendar

WEDNESDAY | NOV. 15

7:30 a.m. 300 1st St. SE. Breakfast series with **Gen. Darren McDew**, commander of U.S. Transportation Command. mitchellaerospacepower.org

8 a.m. 2401 M St. NW. Defense Writers Group breakfast with acting Army Secretary **Ryan McCarthy**. centermediasecurity.org

8 a.m. 201 Waterfront St. Logistics Officer Association Symposium 2017. logisticsymposium.org

8 a.m. 45425 Holiday Dr. Navy League board of directors meeting. navyleague.org

9 a.m. 1201 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Kleptocratic regimes and national security: A pervasive threat and how it can be neutralized. Hudson.org

10 a.m. National Harbor, Maryland. Air Force **Gen. Darren McDew**, commander, U.S. Transportation Command, speaks at the Logistics Officer Association Symposium 2017, Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center.

10 a.m. 1616 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Prospects and challenges of building the 350-ship Navy with three former service secretaries. csis.org

10 a.m. Rayburn 2172. Hearing to mark up various bills. foreignaffairs.house.gov

2 p.m. Dirksen 419. Attacks on U.S. diplomats in Cuba: Response and oversight. foreign.senate.gov

4 p.m. 1030 15th St. NW. Book discussion of "Russia's Border Wars and Frozen Conflicts." atlanticcouncil.org

THURSDAY | NOV. 16

8 a.m. 201 Waterfront St. Logistics Officer Association Symposium 2017. logisticsymposium.org

8:30 a.m. 1616 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Sixth Annual Transatlantic Forum on Russia. csis.org

9 a.m. 1030 15th St. NW. Nuclear strategy and security in the second nuclear age conference. atlanticcouncil.org

9:30 a.m. 1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Strengthening military readiness: The role of military families in 21st century defense with **Anthony Kurta**, performing the duties of under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. brookings.edu

10 a.m. Dirksen G-50. Nomination hearing for John C. Rood to be under secretary of defense for policy and Randall G. Schriver to be assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs. armed-services.senate.gov

10 a.m. Senate Visitor Center 217. Closed hearing on new counter-terrorism guidance with **Maj. Gen. Albert M. Elton II**, Joint Staff deputy director for special operations and counterterrorism. foreign.senate.gov

10:15 a.m. Rayburn 2168. F-35 joint strike fighter cockpit demonstrator flights with a discussion of the Lockheed Martin weapons program and its capabilities. f35.com

5 p.m. 1957 E St. NW. Opportunities and challenges of a complex future: NATO ACT report launch with **Gen. Denis Mercier**, NATO supreme allied commander for transformation. atlanticcouncil.org

FRIDAY | NOV. 17

8 a.m. 201 Waterfront St. Logistics Officer Association Symposium 2017 with a keynote speech by Air Force Secretary **Heather Wilson**. logisticsymposium.org

8 a.m. 3301 Massachusetts Ave. NW. U.S.-Finland Defense and Security Industry Seminar. ndia.org

3 p.m. 1616 Rhode Island Ave. NW. A book talk with author Serhii Plokhy about "Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation." csis.org

MONDAY | NOV. 20

12 p.m. 1201 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Is Lebanon Saudi Arabia's new zone of confrontation with Iran? hudson.org

TUESDAY | NOV. 21

2:30 p.m. 1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Kings and presidents: Whither the special relationship with Saudi Arabia? brookings.edu

TIME

'It's Time to Wake Up.' Read John McCain's Speech to Naval Academy Graduates

By **Eli Meixler** October 31, 2017

Republican Sen. **John McCain** addressed the Brigade of Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy on Oct. 30, thanking recruits for accepting the “sacrifices” of military service and recalling his own military and political career in a speech that was by turns lighthearted and stirring.

McCain, 81, who described himself as an “undistinguished member of the Class of 1958” and served in the Navy until 1981, also cited some of the values celebrated at U.S. Naval Academy, including the importance of “sacrificing for something more important than yourself” and a commitment to “do the right thing, thanks or no thanks.”

McCain, who has been embroiled in several **public spats** with President Donald Trump, used his speech in Annapolis, Maryland to warn against “parties that preach resentful nationalism rather than enlightened self-interest, nativism rather than equal justice.”

Read McCain’s full remarks below:

Thank you, Senator Warner.

And thank you to the Brigade of Midshipmen. Yes, I was once one of you. Six decades ago – in the age of sail – I was an undistinguished member of the Class of 1958. My superiors didn’t hold me in very high esteem in those days. Their disapproval was measured in the hundreds of miles of extra duty I marched in my time here. To be honest, I wasn’t too thrilled to be here back then, and I was as relieved to graduate – fifth from the bottom of my class – as the Naval Academy was to see me go.

I wasn't the first or last midshipman to have had a complicated relationship with this place. But I realized a little later in life that I had underestimated the effectiveness of my education here. I hadn't fully appreciated all that the Academy was trying to teach me.

We were all electrical engineering majors in those days. I doubt I would have made a very good one. But the Academy taught other lessons, which I would find later, when I needed them most, had somehow managed to stick. Lessons about sacrificing for something more important than yourself. Lessons about courage and humility. About friendship. About the meaning and responsibilities of honor.

My appreciation for those lessons and for the friendships I made here bring me back often. So does my gratitude for the life of adventure the Naval Academy prepared me for, and for the privilege of being a bit player in the story of America that the Navy made possible.

I grew up in eventful times and I've served in eventful times. I've seen America become a more just and prosperous country, coming ever closer to the ideals set down by our Founders. I've seen America organize and lead an international order based on liberty, mutual security, free markets, and the rule of law that liberated millions upon millions from tyranny and poverty. But we need only look back upon my own lifetime to understand how hard-fought those victories were.

I was born in 1936. In February of that year, German troops reoccupied the Rhineland and Europe's war-weary democracies failed to respond. In March, a radical militarist prime minister was appointed in Japan. In May, Fascist Italy annexed Ethiopia, and in June – adding insult to injury – Germany's Max Schmeling knocked out Joe Louis in the 12th round of their bout in Yankee Stadium.

In July, Franco's forces from North Africa landed in Spain and the Spanish Civil War began. In August, the summer Olympics took place in Berlin, and although we Americans remember those games for the stirring achievements of Jesse Owens at the time they were understood as a symbol of Germany's resurgence and by some – as a vindication of Hitler's leadership. Fascism, we were told, might be the wave of the future.

That same month the Soviet government began its infamous show trials of former Bolshevik leaders and many observers saw Stalin's sham justice as a necessary step in the consolidation of a

socialist alternative to Depression-era democracy. Another wave of violent purges soon followed and again found its apologists while claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands.

The world was soon engulfed in another world war. The human, economic and spiritual toll of that conflict remains incalculable to this day. 682 Naval Academy graduates gave their lives in the struggle against Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan. This is a tragic but comprehensible loss. But what are we to make of a number like 60 million war dead? Of the hundreds of thousands of villages and cities destroyed, and the untold resources spent that might have been put to humane and productive use had our enemies not embraced their ideologies of conquest and domination? How do we make sense of the human capacity for such evil? After Auschwitz, mankind looked different.

And yet the generation of leaders that brought the democratic powers through the storm of that war did not succumb to despair. Their sense of responsibility and history demanded they build new institutions dedicated to the prevention of another global calamity, which they did with remarkable vision and persistence.

The statesmen who built the successful liberal international order after World War Two grasped three basic truths.

First: that tyranny is always a threat to peace because it is an affront to all humanity's natural desire for freedom.

Second: that liberal institutions are nevertheless fragile, and must be affirmed with conviction at home and abroad.

Third: that the American example and American leadership are indispensable to securing a peaceful and prosperous future. Our failure to remain engaged in Europe and enforce the hard-won peace of 1918 had made that clear. There could be no more isolationism, no more tired resignation – no more 'America First.'

Fascism was defeated in 1945. Communism eventually succumbed after a long and costly Cold War. Containment, often through military means, was vitally important, but ultimately communism collapsed because Soviet tyranny could not meet the basic spiritual and material

needs of its terrorized subjects, while the American example brought unprecedented happiness and prosperity to millions of ordinary people.

As we wrestled to overcome injustices in our society, the Soviet system ossified and was sustained only by its propaganda and secret police. It couldn't prevail in the global struggle for hearts and minds. Ronald Reagan understood this and had the moral confidence to affirm America's commitment to the spread of democracy.

President George H.W. Bush handled the collapse of communism in Europe with consummate skill. Under his stewardship, the basis for a lasting post-Cold War order was firmly established – a renewal of the liberal framework for international cooperation that we and our allies had erected in 1945.

Who could have imagined in the depths of the Cold War that a collapsing Soviet Union – still a nuclear super power – would peacefully accede to the reunification of Germany, or to the independence of all of its satellite states? And yet it happened.

But the contrast between the hopeful atmosphere of 1991 and the current circumstances of our world is a stark one. We have gone from an interval when the global success of democracy seemed assured to a time in which the seductions of authoritarian rule find favor with many; when self-interested leadership excuses naked aggression with weak rationalizations; when ethnic grievances haunt the old and religious fanaticism fires the minds of the misguided young.

How did we end up here? Why do many Americans ignore our moral and historical knowledge and seek escape from the world we've led so successfully?

There are many wise answers to those questions. My own is: we are asleep to the necessity of our leadership, and to the opportunities and real dangers of this world. We are asleep in our echo chambers, where our views are always affirmed and information that contradicts them is always fake. We are asleep in our polarized politics, which exaggerates our differences, looks for scapegoats instead of answers, and insists we get all our way all the time from a system of government based on compromise, principled cooperation and restraint.

All the while the associations, rules, values and aspirations that comprise the international order we have superintended for three-quarters of a century are under gathering attack from regimes

that desire a world less just and less free and more corrupt. And they are under attack from forces within liberal democracies themselves, parties that preach resentful nationalism rather than enlightened self-interest, nativism rather than equal justice.

It's time to wake up.

I believe in Americans. We're capable of better. I've seen it. We're hopeful, compassionate people. And we still have leaders who will uphold the values that made America great, and a beacon to the oppressed.

But I don't take that for granted. We have to fight. We have to fight against propaganda and crackpot conspiracy theories. We have to fight isolationism, protectionism, and nativism. We have to defeat those who would worsen our divisions. We have to remind our sons and daughters that we became the most powerful nation on earth by tearing down walls, not building them.

But that isn't your job. Not directly. It belongs to those of us who hold office and are responsible for making sure you're sent where you're needed and equipped and ready for your missions.

You will be asked to defend America's interests overseas, and thereby to defend the ideals that encompass and transcend those interests. You will protect the international order that American politics, with all its inefficiencies and human frailties, has done so much to create.

Many of you will risk everything for your country. You will make sacrifices for your fellow Americans, who won't be asked to make sacrifices for you. That's your calling. Thank you for accepting it. I promise, there will be compensations for the hard times you endure. You will have lives of adventure. You will have the best company. And you will know a satisfaction far more sublime than pleasure.

I know that because I'm not the only McCain to have been prepared for that duty by the traditions and values imparted to me here and by the example of other better Americans who walked through these gates. My father was here, and his father before him. Like me, their standing was closer to the bottom than the top of their class.

My son, Jack, is the non-conformist in the family. He managed to reach the upper half of his class, even to be a midshipman officer. But his forbears, though less accomplished midshipmen,

nevertheless left here to devote the rest of their lives to our country, in war and peace, good times and bad. And each of us considered himself to be the luckiest man on earth.

I know what you will risk and what you will receive in return. I know America is lucky to have you, and that you will think yourselves lucky to serve America. Even in the worst of times – and they come for most of us – you'll know that to serve this country is to serve its ideals – the ideals that consider every child on earth as made in the image of God and endowed with dignity and the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is a noble cause. It is your cause, and it's worth living and dying for.

I have, sometimes unwittingly and often imperfectly, served that cause all my adult life. Like your service, mine began here in this place of honor and honor's demands. I arrived a rebel without a cause, and left much the same. But I would discover that a sense of honor had been imparted to me here that would speak to me in the darkest hours.

And so I come back, again and again, to the place where I learned to dread dishonor and from where I embarked on an eventful life, in good company, in the service of my country and its great cause.

May your lives be as lucky as mine. Godspeed. Semper Fidelis. Fair winds and following seas.