

SPEECH TRANSCRIPT

NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

JUNE 5, 1964

Benediction by Brigadier General and Deputy Chief of Chaplains, United States Army:

O sovereign and almighty God and we gather here to witness the graduation of the Class of 1964 from the National War College, we wish first to make a positive act of our wills in acknowledging Thy even abiding presence for always as men nurtured in Thy love and living by Thy precepts we know that nothing is worthwhile is accomplished without Thee. These gallant officers before us were selected to attend this military institute of learning because of their outstanding records and their dedication to the highest ideals of their profession. For almost a year now they have devoted their time and energy, their minds and entire being to the acquisition of knowledge which will bring them to even higher heights in their career and fit them for greater service to the armed forces of our beloved country. Join us in this ceremony and place Thy hand of benediction upon their shoulders as they stand and receive from their superiors (?) the accolade of a job well done. Bless us also dear Lord and inspire us to emulate in our daily task the sense of duty the perseverance so evident in those whom today we honor and reward. We pray that the joy and satisfaction of this occasion will long remain with us and that our presence here with Thee will be remembered as a steppingstone to a fuller life for us and the Class of 1964. Amen.

Please be seated.

This should be a happy day for all of us. I think we have mixed emotions. I know that I certainly do. But I believe the real purpose of your year

here at the National War College has been perfectly illustrated by the recent meeting in Honolulu by the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff gathered together to try and set the plans for the United States in Southeast Asia. You men here, a combination of civilians and military, you have been doing the same thing. You've learned that no problem is purely military or purely political. You have learned to work together in respect of each other. Now this knowledge will be invaluable to you as you move on to positions of greater and greater responsibility. Our speaker this morning, a man of wide experience, both national and international, is well aware of the absolute necessity for understanding in teamwork if the United States is to retain its position in leadership and to prevent the spread of Communism. It is an honor to have him with us. And knowing of the busy heavy responsibilities that he faces it is nice to realize that he considers this occasion of sufficient importance to take a few hours of his valuable time.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr. United States Senator from Minnesota.

(Applause)

Thank you very much General, members of the graduating class, members of their families, friends.

I am getting a little redundant in constantly giving my apologies for rushing into a meeting and rushing out but this has been a rather unusual period for the Congress of the United States, at least for the Senate and I find myself right in the center of the storm. This morning we were attempting to get our quorum, General, and this is like trying to get the

(Laughter)
troops on the field while the war is underway. / Sometimes I am not even
just
sure/who the enemy is. (Laughter) I spoke to the Majority Leader just
a few moments ago and said that "you conduct the war over here and I am
going over and give a message on peace over at the National War College."
He gave me the privilege of coming here. I am very happy to be here and
know this is a very, very important occasion for you and I have wondered
a great deal what I might say, if anything, that would be worthy of your
time and attention.

just
I would to lay down/two or three predicates or assumptions that we
all ~~if~~ think would agree are necessary or sound. It's quite obvious
that we are living in very/^adistorted, disorderly world and I hope it is
equally obvious to most of us that it will be that way for a long time.
I've always felt that it was necessary to know the dimension and the
nature of the problem that one faces before he tries to fathom or fashion
a solution. And I have been of the opinion that all too often public
opinion is lead to belief, or public opinion expresses itself as
believing, that our problems are rather transitory, that all we need to
do is to be firm and somehow or other these problems wither away or
fade away. I wish that were the case. I am sure you do. If it were so
why our military establishment would have an easier time of it. There
wouldn't be any need for conferences in Honolulu and even the Congress of
the United States might look a little better if everything were so ready
for solution. But the fact of the matter is that the period we have been
going through since World War II which was only a by-product of what was
going on before World War II, ~~that~~^{but} this period is one of violent change.
Where whole new societies are coming into being, which social order of the
past is being destroyed in some areas of the world and a new social order

is being created. Out of this period of turmoil will come new policies, at least we must design some new policies if we are going to be able to in anyway control or manage/^{some} of the social forces at work. I am one that tells my sons that they must be prepared for at least the next quarter century, and I think that is being very optimistic, of dealing with an uncertain world, of living on the precipice of disaster every hour of their day. Facing the possibility of nuclear war, facing the possibility of aggression, facing the possibility of both political and economic trouble, but having said that I am confident that we are up to it, because we have been building and building well. The American people when given leadership will respond to these long ordeals. They ^{have} had the moral fibre to withstand the long struggle if they are told the truth. If they are told the whole truth, not merely the military truth, but the economic and the political. I believe our economy is stronger than it has even been and not merely on the surface. I believe that it is strong in depth and the recent effort of the President and of the Congress and the public to do something about these pockets of poverty which are like minor infections that can become major infections in the Body _____ to do something about these pockets of poverty will basically strengthen our economy. I happen to believe that we are beginning now to understand the importance of brain power. Not just fire power and not just money power and not just industrial power, but intellectual power and we are pouring more of our investment into education. We are encouraging more people to improve their educational background. In other words, to enhance their learning, to be more specialized and at the same time to have a broader base of understanding. Education has been said rightly that education is power. But education is the new wealth, too, and the

university and industry teaming up together in research and development the new emphasis upon research, the new emphasis upon science and technology, the new emphasis ~~on~~ upon humanities is a way to discipline science and technology. I think all of this is enriching and strengthening the American nation and we as people in public life, and you are because you are in the service of your government and of the country, we must emphasize this and we must emphasize to the young ^{and} ~~the~~ particularly the importance of excellence. America can no longer get by, we have too heavy a requirement upon us, the burdens of leadership are too onerous and too demanding just to get by. We can't answer our problems any longer with just a checkbook. We are going to have to find answers in terms of our thinking, of our creative imagination. In terms of well designed policies that apply across the board. So when I speak to a high school ~~graduating~~ graduating class or to a college graduating class, that is out in the academic life of our nation, I emphasize the importance of excellence. I have said and I repeat to you that the astronaut never says when he is in orbit "o.k." because that means he is in trouble. If anything is just o.k. it means that it is just getting by. What he says is "A - o.k." He is indicating that it is working beautifully. That for all practical purposes it is perfect and if it isn't perfect at least the built in safety factors still make it A - o.k. And we have to have that kind of thinking in terms of our country.

Then there is another element of strength that I think believe is coming to America. And that other element of strength is in people. In the attitude of unity that this nation needs. I want to be very serious to you about this. And it is highly controversial. I am presently engaged as a Senator, as the floor leader for what we call the Civil

Right bill - the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I am not unaware of the fact that this is a highly controversial matter, nor do I think that any of us have a monopoly upon virtue and wisdom, and that there are some people that are just wrong and bad and others of us that are just right and good. Nor do I feel that the issue of civil rights or civil wrongs, however you wish to view them, that this issue is sectional. I don't happen to believe that any one part of America is without its shame. I do believe in one citizenship. I don't believe in second class citizenship. I happen to believe that we are citizens of the United States of America and that is the only citizenship that counts -- not being a citizen of Minnesota or Mississippi or Florida or Washington or Maine or California. That citizenship, yes, has a relevancy in terms of residency, vote and taxes. ~~Exotic~~ ~~gentlemanliness~~ The honor of being an American is that you are a citizen of the United States of America and this government is the government of the United States of America. And we ought to learn to love our country ^{have} and that deep sense of pride, not only of our ~~land~~ home and our country, and our county seat, or our village or our farm or our state -- all of that is wonderful, marvelous memory and beautiful environment. But what is really important is to be a citizen of the United States of America. That is the highest honor that anyone can have. When I read the Constitution, I don't find that there are two kinds of citizens. I don't find that there is a difference between naturalized citizens and native citizens. My mother was a naturalized citizen and I think she is just as good a citizen as anybody that was born here. Maybe better. So I have never been able to buy the line -- that somehow or other just because you were lucky enough to have been born in this soil that you are a better person than someone that came here by choice and then took on the obligation of citizenship. ^{In fact} /The

Why are we against the Communists? And we are. Make no mistake
ab about it. And we're not against them just because ^{they} ~~we~~ have collective farms.
We've got some of them in the United States. We're not against them because
they have public power because we've got some very big public power projects
in the United States. And we're not against them because they have a ~~big~~
collectivized industry because some of our corporations are bigger than ~~any~~
of their industries. And we're not against them because they have a big
bureaucracy because we have one too. I think ours is much better. Ours
works. And we're not against them simply because they have a large amount
of power centered in the chief executive because ~~no~~ officer anywhere in
the world has the power of the President of the United States. But it is
a power that is responsible to an electorate, that is essentially respon-
sible to a tradition, essentially responsible to the habit of democratic
government and democratic procedures. Then what is the difference between our
way of life and the Soviets? What is the difference between Communism and
democracy? What is the difference between Communism ^{or} ~~and~~ Fascism and
democracy?

The difference is our evaluation of the human being. The difference
is our sense of values about humankind. The difference is human dignity.
That's the whole difference. We look upon the individual as a priceless
and precious entity. And that priceless, precious quality comes because
of a spiritual faith - because of a religious commitment. That's the
difference. We look upon the individual as being the center of life. We
look upon the state as the servant of the people and not because of some
political science notebook or theory but because, to put it in the simplest
terms and yet the most direct, because God created man in His own image.

There is a spiritual quality to mankind which is at the heart and core of democratic thinking. And this is the only justification for democratic institutions. Because you can't prove always that democratic institutions work better than totalitarian institutions. You can't always prove that democratic planning, for example, is better than totalitarian planning. But you can prove one thing on an article of faith - that no man ought to govern another without the other's consent. That each person ought to be treated with respect and dignity because each of us has a spark of what is called a soul or spirit - which is not given by law, which is not given by a government, which is not given by a constitution but is that is what you were born with. This is withingman. - part of the infinite and our connection with the infinite and with divine providence. This is my belief and it is for this reason that we have the struggle going on. This is what should motivate us above all in the conflict in the world today as we seek to protect areas of freedom. Not merely protect mineral resources, transportation or communication but because we're working for something that is very noble and now we come back home. I don't happen to believe that we were all born equal - neither do you. Some are stronger than others, some are smarter than others, some are better-looking than others. We know their differences. But there is an equality that should be at least ^{equally} under the law - each individual should be treated and respected within the law. And in America we do not have in the Constitution, "We the white people of the United States do ordain or establish or we the Catholics or we the Protestants or we the Jews." That is not mentioned. We have "We the people." And the word people relates finally to the word citizens, not we the Catholic or the Protestant or the Jewish citizen or

or the Moslem or the Agnostic or the atheist, but we the people of the United States. And it says in the 14th Amendment that no state shall pass any law which will deny a citizen of the United States life, liberty, or property without due process of law or shall any citizen of the United States be denied equal protection of the law.

So when we get right down to it, what we are talking about is a oneness. Now I mention this because to me it is so terribly important that we begin to think in terms of how every one can participate in the American dream or in the American community. We cannot afford the luxury of having some people as a drag on us. We cannot afford to have illiteracy at a time when we need excellence and brilliance. We cannot afford to have disease when we need health and strength. We cannot afford to have poverty when we need productivity and wealth. We cannot afford to have discrimination when we need everybody on every front at work on every occasion on every problem. And we cannot afford to discriminate in a manner that denies us intellectual capacity because we need to find answers to such things as cancer and I don't think we ought to discriminate in the research or the research dollar because of use of the race or religion or color or national origin. I guess what I'm really saying is that we are one people and we are one nation and we ought not to tolerate in our midst, if we can help it, those who seek to divide us. Now we can have unity without unanimity. Unity permits diversity but with respect for the differences. Unanimity is frequently a force - monolithic - I don't want unanimity. I don't want everybody thinking alike. I wouldn't want everybody looking alike - nor would you. I wouldn't everybody talking alike and speaking alike. We need these diverse forces. But we also need to recognize that just as there are many instruments in an orchestra that they

need to be in a sense synthesized, orchestrated, everybody must find his place. And a good conductor doesn't say, "Well, from here on out all the strings will be out or they'll play two keys lower." Because if that's the case you do not have music. You have anything else but. So as I bring my message to a conclusion to you, just let me say that in a world in which we live, we are going to need all the power that this nation can muster. And that power will not only come from what we do or from what we say but what we do. It will also come from the example which we will lead others to follow.

And I often thought that in light of the fact that most of our struggles - military now and diplomatic/^{are}being fought out in Africa and Asia and Latin America - the trouble spots of the world - that we might very well want to put our house in order so that we are prepared to at least come with a knowledge of people there - their hopes, their aspirations, their fears, their doubts and that we come also with relatively clean hands. I also hope that we can also enrich our economy by committing every one to do a good job. Now this isn't done by law alone. I know that if we pass education laws, if we pass civil rights laws, this does not change the America that is ours. But it helps. What law does is to establish standards by which we measure conduct. And what law does is to provide a framework within which men ~~of~~ good will and reason can find ^{and work out} ~~workable~~ solutions to problems. What a law does is to permit men of reason and understanding to exercise their will in a reasonable manner.

And therefore, when I hear people say that a law will not correct racial tolerance or racial bickering, I agree that a law will not. But laws

are designed to help men, to help people work out their problems withing the rules of organized society. And those of you who are entrusted with responsibility know this so well because the military code is not designed to be oppressive. It is designed to permit those who are responsible for the conduct of the military operations and those who are responsible for the maintenance of the military establishment to work out the problems within a framework of law.

Well I speak to those who have practice and have understanding. Now we're looking for the day when we can come as a nation of complete and total peace. That's a long ways off. But it is a goal that we should hold and cherish and one which we should dedicate in our efforts. I am very proud of the United States and of America and I know you are. And we need to mention this with a sense of humility but also in a sense of genuine pride. We've given much and we've asked little. We have provided a shield of defense for the whole world. And now having done that I think we must maintain that shield and never weaken it, recognizing that there are differences in weapon systems and recognizing different social forces that are at work, recognizing that at one time an enemy might at another time be a friend. We know; we can understand that. We must maintain that shield of strength but equally important, we must try to find out what it is that motivates mankind to be so troublesome. Why is it that in many areas of the world, even with powerful military forces a great nation with tremendous power is unable to bring about tranquility or to restore order. Why is it that a mighty military establishment cannot win the struggle in the

jungles - the guerilla warfare struggle? It isn't because our men are not brave. It isn't because we do not have good weapons. I read constantly about the lack of weapons or that some weapon is obsolete. I think these make nice headlines and tell very little truth. What is possible more important is that we find out why it is that there is not real loyalty to a cause, why it is that people do not seem to love their country and their government enough to make the supreme sacrifice. And I speak now for example of Viet Nam. I know very little about it. But I don't think our problem is because we have old airplanes there. And I don't think our problem is because we don't have the right weapons. I am for ^{whatever} ~~all~~ equipment the military thinks we need. I am not one that believes in giving up. But I am essentially a political man and I happen to be of the opinion that we have a great need now of trying to phase together the proper harmony and balance not only the military tactics and the military equipment and the military program that is necessary to defend a nation and a people but to find motivations for people ^{to} ~~who~~ inspire people to want to live for their country and if need be to die for their country and if need be to die for their country, to find answers for the social and economic problems that ~~might~~ cause a people to be great or cause them to lose faith. And when we find those answers, then maybe we'll be able to give leadership in the world as it ought to be given. Well that got out of hand, I didn't intend to quite do that much(laughter) I do want to congratulate you very much on your graduation and I know you've worked hard and I know you've learned a great deal. I am very proud of our military. I think you ought to hear this from a member of Congress because as I see it we have a military that has a great civilian democratic orientation.. Our of our military come some of our great men. Instead of having men who ride on

Horseback as they say. and lead a nation to dictatorship, we have men who love the cause of freedom. All through the history of this nation, it is one of the marvels of America that our military establishments, our military schools, our military training has been able to produce the quality of officer that is not only a professional officer understanding his duties and responsibilities of leadership and command but above all a good citizen and one who understands the responsibilities of citizenship and the importance of civilian activities, civilian control, and civilian prominence in the American system.

I feel the same way about our foreign service. I think our foreign service is very much abused. I think our foreign service in the main is good. And I know that there are great sacrifices that are made. And as one who is a family man, as we say, I understand a little bit about moving around because I don't like to move I like to just stay right here. I get elected and I just stay right here. But in your work you get moved around once in a while. I know what it means to a family and I want to salute the wives of the officers today as I would of the foreign service officers. I think that the United States of America is pretty lucky when it hires or pays so to speak for the professional soldier or man of the military establishment, ^{or the foreign service officer and gets} a wonderful companion that does as much for the country as for the cause as a professional. And I have seen this all over the world. I've watched the wives of American officers in the military and in our civilian forces. I've watched them lead the great voluntary organizations. Splendid examples of civil action and of social action. / So as you men graduate in this class of 1964 I only wish we had two diplomas for every one of you that is married so that I

I could give one to you who in a sense through the course has earned it through your studies and the other who as undoubtedly has earned it even more by being willing to tolerate you while you were going through the studies. Well with that I wish you well and congratulate you.

(Applause)



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org