

Dear ~~George Shapiro~~
CRAIG SWAN
THE NEW CHALLENGE

COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

JUNE 10, 1990

Faculty & Staff

Martin &
Mickey Friedman

President Hasselmo

1990 Graduates

Parents
& Friends

was here ~~hasn't~~
ATTENDING

NEARLY 40 YEARS AGO, I HAD MY
MY OWN UNIVERSITY [OF MINNESOTA]
GRADUATION. OUR WORLD THEN WAS SO
DIFFERENT FROM YOURS NOW. IT'S THE
SAME PLANET, BUT TOTALLY DIFFERENT
WORLDS.

I remember, well, that I
went directly from my graduation
into the Army for the Korean War

THEN, THE SOVIET UNION WAS
PURSUING AN IDEOLOGY OF EXPANSION

~~WORLD~~ AND WORLD REVOLUTION; WE RESPONDED
WITH THE DOCTRINE OF CONTAINMENT.

~~FOR US, COMMUNISM WAS A WORLDWIDE
THREAT.~~

EVERYTHING WE DID, AT HOME
AND ABROAD, WAS SHAPED BY THIS

STRUGGLE.

*Right After graduation
I volunteered to be drafted in
the Korean War.*

THE SOVIETS HAD JUST DETONATED
THEIR FIRST ATOMIC BOMB. THE IRON
CURTAIN HAD DESCENDED ACROSS
EASTERN EUROPE. NORTH KOREA WAS
INVADING SOUTH KOREA. NATO WAS
ESTABLISHED. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION WERE FROZEN
IN HOSTILITY AND WE WERE DIVIDED INTO

B1-POLAR
~~A~~ WORLD OF SUPERPOWER CONFLICT. OUR
NUCLEAR ARSENALS CAST AN
EVER-LENGTHENING SHADOW, *over* THE
WORLD. *Young* YOUNG PEOPLE DOUBTED THAT
THEY WOULD LIVE OUT ^A FULL ~~LIFE~~ LIFE

THE GREAT JOY TODAY, IT SEEMS TO
ME, IS HOW PROFOUNDLY THAT GRIM
WORLD HAS NOW CHANGED. *for the better* TODAY, ~~WE~~ *you*
CAN TRULY HOPE FOR PEACE; WE CAN
ACTUALLY PLAN A NEW WORLD BASED ON
HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, A WORLD
WHERE THE MASSIVE RESOURCES RELEASED
FROM MILITARY SPENDING CAN HELP BUILD
HUMAN PROGRESS. *and community*

of course
Home? Home?
ALL OF THIS CAME TO US SO
a
DRAMATICALLY A WEEK AGO WHEN THE
WORLD WATCHED PRESIDENT GORBACHEV
VISIT OUR COMMUNITY. THOUSANDS OF
MINNESOTANS — MANY WITH CHILDREN —
LINED OUR STREETS TO SEE AND HONOR
THIS REMARKABLE LEADER. *Because,* FOR ALL OF HIS
FAULTS , HE IS A LEADER WHO CHALLENGED
THE HOPELESSNESS OF THE OLD HOSTILITIES.
DURING THE VISIT, MINNESOTANS SHOWED
THAT WE VALUE *His* VISION AND COURAGE,
THAT WE PRAY FOR PEACE, FOR
UNDERSTANDING, ~~AND FOR THAT~~ *And A*
BROADENED SENSE OF HUMAN IDENTITY *B*

THAT BRINGS US TOGETHER AS ONE PEOPLE,
INSEPARABLE PARTS OF ONE HUMAN RACE.

NO WONDER WE WERE AWED BY
PRESIDENT GORBACHEV!

IN JUST THE PAST YEAR, WE
WITNESSED THE END OF A WORLD MY
GENERATION TOOK FOR GRANTED.

Soviet
COMMUNISM HAS COLLAPSED. [POVERTY
AND MISERY IS ETCHED ACROSS THE FACE OF
THE SOVIET UNION.] ITS EXTERNAL EMPIRE [IN
EASTERN EUROPE, AFGHANISTAN, AND
ELSEWHERE] HAS DISINTEGRATED.

Chief
EVERYWHERE, THE VOICES OF DEMOCRACY

CAN BE HEARD — IN THE BALTICS, IN

EASTERN EUROPE, IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, *unbelievably*

EVEN IN PLACES AS REMOTE FROM OUR

SHORES AS ALBANIA, MONGOLIA AND

BURMA .

OF COURSE, IT'S NOT ALL GOOD

NEWS. WE STILL HAVE A BRUTAL

COMMUNIST REGIME IN CHINA. (BUT THEN

A REGIME THAT KILLS HER OWN CHILDREN

CANNOT SURVIVE.) THE ~~SOVIET COLLAPSE~~

~~HAS CREATED A VACUUM IN CENTRAL~~

(of Eastern Europe) ~~EUROPE. THESE~~ NATIONS ~~CONTEND~~ WITH

TERRIBLE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS; SERIOUS

ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, AND NATIONALISTIC

CONFLICTS; AND DREADFUL ANTI-SEMITISM;
All Hatred which
~~WHICH~~ HAVE CURSED THAT REGION FOR
CENTURIES.

None the less
BUT, NEVERTHELESS, YOU GRADUATE
IN AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME WHEN A TRULY
PEACEFUL WORLD ~~ORDER~~ *Order* CAN BE BUILT. WE
WILL REAP THE ECONOMIC DIVIDENDS OF
PEACE. BUT, BEFORE WE START ~~LOSING~~
~~OURSELVES IN AN ARGUMENT~~ *ARGUEING* OVER THE
~~DOLLARS WHICH THE NEW PEACE DIVIDEND~~ *THAT*
MIGHT BRING, WE SHOULD FOCUS ON WHAT
HAS ALREADY BEEN WON. AND HERE I
REFER TO A PEACE DIVIDEND FOR THE
IMAGINATION. YOUR GENERATION IS NOW

FREE TO RE-IMAGINE AMERICA AND THE
WORLD IN A WAY THAT MY GENERATION
NEVER COULD.

IN MANY WAYS, IT IS YOUR
GENERATION THAT IS ALREADY CHANGING
THIS WORLD. IN CHINA , IT WAS THE
STUDENTS WHO DIED FOR FREEDOM IN
TIANANMEN SQUARE. ALL OVER THE
WORLD, YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN ~~HAVE~~ *ARE*
~~BEEN~~ AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE STRUGGLE
AGAINST DICTATORS. IN HUNGARY, A
POLITICAL PARTY MADE UP OF YOUNG
PEOPLE ELECTED SEVERAL CANDIDATES TO
PARLIAMENT *THIS SPRING.*

And AND YOU HAVE MANY ADVANTAGES:

FIRST, YOU HAVE MADE A WISE
DECISION IN CHOOSING A LIBERAL ARTS
EDUCATION. *And* IF WE EVER DOUBTED THE
IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMANITIES TO
FREEDOM, JUST LOOK AT EASTERN EUROPE!

VACLAV HAVEL [VACKLAV HOVEL] ,
THE PLAYWRIGHT, LED CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO
FREE ELECTIONS AND IS NOW ITS FIRST
PRESIDENT. IN HUNGARY, THE NEW
PRESIDENT, ARPAD GONCZ [OURPOD
GONCH] , TRANSLATED THE TREASURES OF

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE FOR
HIS NATION. THE FREE DEMOCRATS OF
HUNGARY, ARE LED BY A PHILOSOPHER AND
RUN BY A SOCIOLOGIST. A MUSICOLOGIST
GOVERNS LITHUANIA. THE POLISH PRIME
MINISTER IS A WELL-KNOWN CATHOLIC
INTELLECTUAL. AND SOLIDARITY'S LEADER
IN PARLIAMENT IS BRANISLAW GEREMEK, A
PROFESSOR OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY.

*These
show
that* *The Hungarian Really Count?*
Really Count? *you have the right*
skills
SECOND, WE NOW HAVE THE

NECESSARY TECHNICAL SKILLS THAT ARE
ALREADY TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD. WE
HAVE SEEN ASTOUNDING TECHNOLOGICAL
REVOLUTIONS IN TRAVEL AND

COMMUNICATIONS — WITH TELEVISION,
SATELLITES, COMPUTERS, FAX MACHINES
AND CHEAPER TRAVEL. *[* THEY MAKE THIS
WORLD COMMUNITY POSSIBLE IN A WAY
HARDLY EVER IMAGINED. *]* WE HAVE
LITERALLY DEFEATED TIME AND SPACE.
SOUNDS, WORDS, AND PICTURES CIRCLE THE
GLOBE IN A FLASH; TRAVEL IS ONLY A BIT
SLOWER.

THUS THIS WORLD HAS NEVER BEEN MORE
CLOSELY KNIT — ECONOMICALLY AND
TECHNOLOGICALLY. *But that is not enough.* *1 for* BUT THERE IS A
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMUNICATION
FACE-TO-FACE AND BY TELEVISION OR

TRUE
COMPUTERS. REAL COMMUNICATION
DEPENDS UPON HUMAN REASON AND
HUMAN SYMPATHIES. IT IS AN ART, NOT A
TECHNOLOGY.

THUS THE EMERGING WORLD COMMUNITY
CANNOT SIMPLY BE THE OLD LOCAL VILLAGE
WRIT LARGE. OUR WORLD NEEDS A
COMMUNITY BASED ON UNIVERSAL,
EMBRACING PRINCIPLES, NOT ON LOCAL,
EXCLUDING IDENTITIES. ~~THIS NEW WORLD~~
NEEDS YOUR IDEAS.

IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL, OUR NEW
WORLD COMMUNITY WILL HAVE A

DANGEROUS ANONYMITY, A FACELESSNESS, A
COMMUNITY OF STRANGERS. TO AVOID THIS,
WE MUST LEARN ABOUT EACH OTHER —
ABOUT OUR CULTURES, HISTORY,
GEOGRAPHY, AND LANGUAGES.

But WE ARE NOT DOING VERY WELL. WE
HAVE BEEN CALLED "THE TONGUE-TIED
AMERICANS" BECAUSE WE DON'T LEARN
OTHER LANGUAGES. OTHERS SPEAK OUR
LANGUAGE; WE DON'T SPEAK THEIRS. [THE
SOVIET UNION ALONE HAS MORE TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH THAN WE HAVE STUDENTS OF
RUSSIAN HERE.

WE ALSO SUFFER FROM AN
EMBARRASSING RATE OF "GEOGRAPHIC
ILLITERACY." ^{In} A RECENT SURVEY ~~TESTED~~
~~ADULTS IN NINE COUNTRIES. WE RANKED~~
~~IN THE BOTTOM THIRD.~~ 75 PERCENT OF US
COULDN'T FIND THE PERSIAN GULF; ALMOST
HALF COULDN'T FIND CENTRAL AMERICA.

LESS THAN TWO PERCENT OF OUR
COLLEGE STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD. WE
SEND ONLY 24,000 STUDENTS TO STUDY
OVERSEAS EACH YEAR — A SMALLER NUMBER
^{Little} THAN MALAYSIA SENDS HERE TO STUDY.

OF COURSE, THERE IS THE PEACE
CORPS, SENATOR HUMPHREY'S WONDERFUL
IDEA. UNDER IT, OVER 120,000 VOLUNTEERS
HAVE GONE OVERSEAS. IT IS ONE OF OUR
MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL
EFFORTS. IT'S MOST OVERLOOKED VALUE IS
THE TRAINING IT HAS GIVEN TO SO MANY OF US.
~~AMERICANS.~~ IT BUILDS PEACE , HELPS
PEOPLE, AND EDUCATES OUR LEADERS.

YET THE TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET FOR
THE PEACE CORPS IS ONE-FOURTH THE COST
OF A SINGLE STEALTH BOMBER. In budget years THE PEACE
CORPS ~~ONCE HAD MORE THAN 15,000~~

Program has cut the

of Volunteers in half

~~VOLUNTEERS. NOW IT HAS ONLY 6,000.~~

ALTHOUGH OUR UNIVERSITY RANKS NEAR
THE TOP IN GRADUATES ENTERING THE
PEACE CORPS, ONLY 30 VOLUNTEERS FROM
OUR UNIVERSITY WERE ACCEPTED THIS YEAR.
THAT'S PATHETIC! MINNESOTA SHOULD BE
SENDING 300 — OR, BETTER YET, 3,000 — PEACE
CORPS VOLUNTEERS EACH YEAR!

THERE IS ALSO THE FULBRIGHT
EXCHANGE PROGRAM. SINCE 1946, THIS
PROGRAM HAS HELPED OVER 60,000
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ~~GAIN~~ *Study ABROAD.*
~~KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER NATIONS;~~ MORE
THAN 100,000 PEOPLE FROM OTHER

COUNTRIES HAVE STUDIED AND TAUGHT
HERE.

*It's been
a magnificent program*

*Recently
someone
observed
that.*

THREE MEMBERS OF POLAND'S
SOLIDARITY-LED GOVERNMENT ARE
FULBRIGHT ALUMNI. MANY OF THE CHINESE
STUDENTS IN TIANANMEN SQUARE WERE
RETURNEES FROM STUDY HERE. ONE OF
GORBACHEV'S KEY ADVISERS STUDIED
AMERICAN HISTORY AS A FULBRIGHT
SCHOLAR ~~IN THE LATE 1950S. YET,~~
Declining Federal Support ~~FOR~~
UNBELIEVABLY, ~~ONE OF OUR GREATEST~~
SUCCESS STORIES HAS HAD A FLAT BUDGET
THIS PROGRAM HAS
~~FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS~~ — CAUSING A
ED
SHARP ~~DECLINE~~ IN THE NUMBER OF
REDUCTION

AS WE Talk
about a World
Community
PARTICIPANTS. LAST YEAR, THE U OF M SENT
MORE FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS ABROAD THAN
ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY. BUT EVEN THEN,
THERE WERE ONLY 21 OF THEM.

we should be sending at least
10 times that #

It must
be Remembered
WE DON'T HAVE TO GO ABROAD TO
COME IN CONTACT WITH THE REST OF THE
WORLD. ~~FOR THAT~~ THE WORLD IS RIGHT HERE. THERE
ARE MORE THAN 4,000 INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS AND FACULTY HERE ON ^{OUR} ~~THIS~~
^{COMING} ~~CAMPUS; THEY COME~~ FROM 114 DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES. ALMOST 800 STUDENTS AND
FACULTY ARE FROM CHINA ALONE, THE
LARGEST NUMBER OF ANY ^{AMERICAN} UNIVERSITY, ~~IN~~
~~THE UNITED STATES. THIS HAS BEEN TRUE~~

~~FOR A DECADE.~~ HOW WELL HAVE WE

GOTTEN TO KNOW ANY OF THEM? *I*

*strongly suspect our record
is not very good.*

SOME OF YOU WHO GRADUATE
TODAY ARE IMMIGRANTS, OR THEIR
CHILDREN. SOME OF YOU CAME HERE AS
REFUGEES FROM VIOLENCE AND
CATASTROPHE.

BUT, IN THE BROADEST SENSE, WE ARE
ALL IMMIGRANTS. WE KNOW THAT THE WAY
IN WHICH OUR ~~HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT~~
~~AMERICAN~~ ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS ~~AND~~
~~OTHER~~ COMMUNITIES TREAT EACH OTHER IS
CRUCIAL TO OUR DEMOCRATIC FUTURE.

So, WHILE WE SPEAK OF
STRENGTHENING THE WORLD COMMUNITY,
THIS MUST MEAN AN EXPANDED SENSE OF
COMMUNITY AT HOME AS WELL. (For, AS) ELEANOR
ROOSEVELT ONCE SAID: "WHERE, AFTER ALL,
DO HUMAN RIGHTS BEGIN? IT IS IN SMALL
PLACES CLOSE TO HOME. . . . SUCH ARE THE
PLACES WHERE EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND
CHILD SEEKS [EQUAL JUSTICE] EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY, EQUAL DIGNITY WITHOUT
DISCRIMINATION.] UNLESS THESE RIGHTS
HAVE MEANING THERE," SHE SAID, "WE
SHALL LOOK IN VAIN FOR PROGRESS IN THE
LARGER WORLD."

THAT'S GOOD ADVICE, BECAUSE
AMERICA IS CHANGING. AND I THINK WE
ALL KNOW THAT SOME OF THESE CHANGES
ARE VERY TROUBLING.

OUR SOCIETY HAS GROWING
DIVISIONS BETWEEN RACES AND BETWEEN
CLASSES; BETWEEN NEW AMERICANS AND
OLD AMERICANS; BETWEEN THE HAVE-NOTS
AND THE HAVE-A-LITTLE'S. WE LIVE IN A TOO
VIOLENT SOCIETY. A GENERATION OF THE
YOUNG IS BEING DESTROYED BY DRUGS
WHICH GROW MORE ADDICTIVE AND
LETHAL. MORE PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS AND

HOPELESS. TOO FEW AMERICANS ARE
RECEIVING THE EDUCATION NEEDED TO
COPE WITH OUR EVER-MORE COMPLEX
WORLD.

That's the Bad News;

So We Have Much

But The Good News is that these problems

IN FACT ~~that~~ WHILE WE ARE STILL CALLING OURS

*can
be*

*solved
SOLVED*

A POST-COLD WAR WORLD, SURELY WE
SHOULD DESCRIBE OUR TIME, NOT AS AN
EPILOGUE TO AN OLD SAD STORY, BUT A
PROLOGUE TO A NEW AND HOPEFUL ONE.

THIS STORY IS YOURS TO WRITE; IT IS YOUR

Certainly

CHALLENGE AND IT WILL BE YOUR LIFE. I

PLEAD WITH YOU TO BE A PART OF YOUR

TIME ^{*to*} MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

As PRESIDENT HAVEL RECENTLY SAID:

"THERE ARE STILL MORE DANGEROUS WALLS
THAN THOSE THAT DIVIDED EUROPE. THOSE
ARE THE WALLS THAT MUTUALLY DIVIDE
INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE AND THAT DIVIDE OUR
SOULS."

I ASK YOU TO HELP IN DESTROYING
THOSE "DANGEROUS WALLS" THAT STILL
DIVIDE US.

THANK YOU.

+ Congratulations



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