

CONVOCAATION

21 August 1964

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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21 August 1964

HONORABLE CYRUS VANCE: Mr. President; General LeMay; Admiral Lee; General Schomburg; Gentlemen: Few Presidents have brought to the position of Commander in Chief such an intimate knowledge of military affairs as does our most distinguished speaker today. As a Member of Congress, President Johnson volunteered for active duty in World War II. He became a lieutenant commander in the Navy and was decorated for gallantry under fire in the Pacific.

In the House he served on the Naval Affairs Committee, the Armed Services Committee, the Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, and the Joint Atomic Energy Committee. Later, in the Senate, he served for 12 years on the Armed Services Committee; and for nearly 10 years, as the outstanding Chairman of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee.

We are deeply honored that he has put aside the pressing affairs of state in order to be with us today.

Gentlemen: The President of the United States.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Secretary Vance, My Fellow Americans: On this occasion, I am privileged to speak before an audience of men who know their country's strength and its full meaning to this age.

You have come from duty in Vietnam and Korea, from the Disarmament Agency and SAC, and one of you from our National Security Council staff at the White House. You are here because your Nation recognizes in each of you the presence and promise of excellence in leadership.

For the years ahead, you are thinking ahead. You will be studying the basis of our military policy, the broad context of our Nation's widest objectives and the total world environment.

As you begin this year, let me call upon each of you to challenge yourself to the fullest. In a course like this, you must be your own pace-maker and only your best will repay the honor of being chosen for this service. For your profession and for mine, these are new and challenging times.

The next 20 years will demand more of America's military men, America's diplomats, and America's political leadership than the last 200 years of our professions.

Together we shall continue to face, as we face now, a world in contest--freedom against totalitarianism, the sovereignty of the many against a sovereign few, the rule of law against the rule of men. In this contest, America's objectives will not change.

Abraham Lincoln once said: "Our defense is in the preservation of the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere."

Our purpose in this contest is to serve our rightful interests while we keep the peace with honor, but it is our purpose also to nourish in other peoples "the spirit which prizes liberty"--and to help where we can when their liberty is in danger. These purposes are unchanging, but the responsibilities of our Nation and the responsibilities of our professions are changing even now. Our responsibilities are changing in dimension and in depth both at home and abroad and our most basic responsibilities are here at home.

The world reflects America's strength. The world reacts and responds to America's success. Everywhere that America's military men have been sent in this century, the way has been made easier for them by the world's knowledge and the world's understanding of the triumphant record of America's free society.

What a nation is in the world depends on what a nation is at home. This is true not only for the United States but true almost universally among nations of both West and East.

Military and diplomatic policies and performances are being influenced and are being dominated by policies and performances at the center of the political systems. This is true for free Europe and Eastern Europe, this is true for Soviet Russia, this is true for Communist China, this is clearly and conspicuously true for the United States.

The strengthened role of the United States in the world today depends directly on the improvement achieved in the performance of our whole system since the beginning of 1961.

You know--and I do not need to repeat before you--the facts of the increase in our military strength.

We have spent more than \$30 billion in the last 4 years attempting to achieve a better defense strength than would have been spent had we followed the last Appropriation Bill of 1960.

We are today stronger in every aspect of our defense than we were 3-1/2 years ago. But the effectiveness of that strength, the faith in it among our allies, the respect for it among those who have ambitions of aggression, rests on other sources as well.

The 43 consecutive months of economic expansion--the record of the fullest employment in American history, the stability of our prices--wholesale prices have actually dropped during the greatest economic expansion in our history--the success of our space program, the legislative response to both long-standing and recently developing needs of our society--all of these are major factors in the influence we now exert for freedom and that we exert for peace around the world.

The point I am making is vital for your profession.

The military man is many persons. He is the great captain who commands fleets, air forces, and armies. He is the dedicated professional in school, on patrol, on guard. He is the draftee taking his turn at freedom's watch. He is the reservist or the guardsman leaving his home to go to summer training. He is also in a sense the civilian who devotes his mind and his energy to public service. Whoever he is, wherever he serves, the man is a product of our whole society, and he means more to peace today than he ever meant before.

As Secretary Vance observed, for more than 30 years my association with the military has been an intimate one, as a member of congressional committees, for a brief period on active duty in World War II, as a member of the National Security Council when I was Vice President, and today as Commander in Chief nothing is more gratifying, nothing more reassuring than to see, as I do every day, the quality of the new generations of military men.

Our officers and our enlisted men have no true counterparts in military history. In time of our Nation's greatest affluence they and their families willingly and courageously undertake the most Spartan sacrifices and hardships for us all. Around the globe they are, in Emerson's words, the "brave men who work while others sleep, who dare while others shy." They are fighting men--the best in the world today--but they are also thinking men, men whose mission is peace, men who are devoted to peace, stern in their respect for our democratic values. The military career today demands a new order of talent, training, imagination, and versatility. Our military men have these qualities and they have them in abundance. Seventy percent of our commissioned officers are college graduates compared to 49 percent in 1952. Seventy-three percent of all of our enlisted men are high school graduates compared to 53 percent in 1952.

I believe as I have often said that our country justly must and safely can accord to our American military men a place in our society long denied to soldiers throughout our history. I very much want our uniformed citizens to be first-class citizens in every respect. I want their wives and their children to know only first-class lives. I am in this regard directing the Secretary of Defense to speed up his present review of such matters as housing and medical care, pay, and allowances, so that we can at the earliest possible moment take whatever steps both human equity and national defense may require to enhance the standing and the morale of those who defend us. I am also directing the Secretary of Defense to review the education systems and major schools within the services and the opportunities now offered to continue civilian education while still in service in order to broaden and strengthen these programs.

One more thing:

I know and you know that in our system there is no more a sensitive relationship than between the military and the political, the military and the civilian sectors. Enemies of our system have always and will always make this relationship a point of their attack in their efforts to divide us or to implant distrust among us. I want the whole world to know that in this land there is today a strong mutual confidence between military men and civilian political leaders. This is true at every level.

I have myself the highest sense of personal trust for great officers like General Wheeler and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I have seldom if ever in my life been so inspired as by the

unselfishness of General Maxwell Taylor who gave up the highest post of his profession to leave here alone to serve freedom in far-off Vietnam simply because I indicated and implied that he might be useful there. I am proud of the service to our national defense which has been rendered since 1961 by dedicated civilian officials, too under the brilliant and driving leadership of a great Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, and an Under Secretary of Defense, Cyrus Vance. Our soldiers and our civilians are one team.

In our country's history, the oldest article of faith is the principle that we pursue today. Many others have said it since, but President Washington, our first President, said it first a long, long time ago: "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

This morning America's military men stand vigil for peace and freedom--in West Berlin and in South Vietnam, at Guantanamo and in the Seventh Fleet, in nuclear submarines under the sea and in SAC planes high in the skies. Wherever they patrol, our Nation's heart is with them. Our Nation's life is in their hands. We pray God to keep them and to speed them home in a day of peace that they will have won.

Thank you.

(10 September 1964--7, 600)H/dc:en