ADDRESS BY
GENERAL MAXWELL D. TAYLOR
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY
AT COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES, TRINITY COLLEGE
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THE INEVITABILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude to President Jacobs and the Board of Trustees of Trinity College for the honor which they have bestowed upon me today. Notwithstanding the remarks they have made, I am well aware that this honor is paid to the Chief of Staff of the Army, rather than to ~~any~~ an individual. Personally, I feel humble here in the presence of the graduating class who have earned their degrees by hard work over a period of years. I know the emotions of a general who after serving safely in the rear is decorated in the presence of ~~real~~ true battle veterans.

A few years ago, I had the occasion to deliver the commencement address ~~of~~ at a nearby New England college at the time of the graduation of one of my sons. Upon learning that I might be required to speak, I wrote to my son, seeking advice and counsel. I inquired as to the circumstances, the locale, and the contribution normally expected of a speaker at graduation. After some delay, which I assumed was occasioned by conferences with faculty advisors and leaders of the student body, I received the following reply, which I quote: "As regards to your speech up here, Father, I suggest that you plan it with considerably more care than, say, a speech for the West Point Society of New York. As I think about it, you will be in a bad position here, with only 15 minutes of a long afternoon of speeches. The audience will be critical and discriminating. Any padding or bull will be instantly recognized as such. I am sure that you have thought of these points, but I felt that I should mention them." Four years later, I am still somewhat shaken by the challenge presented by a college commencement address in the academic bowers of New England. Nevertheless, I should like to develop for a few moments some of the thoughts which occur to me about public service and its inevitability in the years which lie ahead.

I wonder if the appearance of an Army officer in uniform before you today carries an ominous note to the members of this graduating class. Are you regarding me as a walking symbol of the danger that you had better look out or Uncle Sam may get you? It is quite true that, as a representative of the Department of Defense, I may be regarded as a reminder of the fact that matters of national security will always exercise a profound influence upon your lives. It is not personal or departmental malevolence which creates this situation, but rather the hard facts of the bi-polar world in which we live today. Whether we like it or not, national security is a matter of prime importance impinging in many ways upon the lives of your generation. It is inevitable that you will be called upon to perform public service contribute, directly or indirectly to this security.

The most serious problem confronting the United States ~~Army~~ today is how to remain secure in the face of the Communist Bloc threat, without at the same time destroying ourselves and our way of life through the weight of our military preparations. The basic objective of our national security policy is the preservation of the security of the United States and its fundamental values and institutions. In furtherance of this basic objective, our government seeks, by all means acceptable to the American people, ways of altering the international Communist movement to the end that it will no longer constitute a threat to our way of life.

Experience since World War II has impressed us with the need for an integrated national strategy blending all of our ~~national~~ assets in a proportion best suited to the needs of the bi-polar situation. We recognize that an adequate response to Communist expansion is by no means exclusively military. We must learn to use political, economic, and ideological assets as well. In recognition of this need for integrated strategy, we have developed a philosophy of security based upon the deterrence of war. I have often had occasion to say that the justification for the existence of the Armed Services is not the requirement to win wars, but to prevent wars from occurring. All of our military preparations find their justification in their contribution to the deterrence of war.

What are the factors which contribute to the development of deterrent strength? I would say that we seek a combination of force, physical and moral, which will produce in the mind of a possible aggressor recognition of the fact that any action against the interests of the United States and its allies will bring unpleasant and unprofitable consequences. The credibility of the probable reaction of the United States is an important part of this deterrent posture.

Insofar as deterrent physical strength is concerned, it finds expression in the ready forces of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. This strength must be tangible and clearly apparent. It cannot be a bluff, a blueprint, or a sham. It must include a ready, nuclear Air Force capable of convincing any potential enemy that aggression against the United States and its allies will result in a devastating, retaliatory counter-blow. It must also include combat ready Army forces deployed along the Iron Curtain in Europe and along the Bamboo Curtain in Korea, serving as a reminder that any aggression committed in these vital strategic areas will be met at once by the armed might of the United States. These U.S. forces supplement the indigenous ground forces which we have armed and trained as a further important component of our over-all deterrent strength.

However, we cannot deter war by military means alone. Theodore Roosevelt recommended that we "walk softly and carry a big stick." The Big Stick, represented by our military forces, is indeed important but it is useless to prevent trouble unless held in a strong hand which is guided by a clear mind and a stout heart. National military strength must be accompanied by other evidences of national soundness and durability, such as a strong economy, ~~an undivided~~ unity of purpose, and a clear determination to use all of our national assets to resist further expansion of the Communist world.

In short, if our deterrent strength is to carry conviction, it must be clear that our leaders are determined, that our public is well informed, and that our Nation is strong in things of the spirit as well as in material weapons. Neither technological nor numerical superiority is the sole key to the prevention of war. We must show a potential aggressor not only that we have ~~our~~ tangible military strength, but also that we have the mind and ~~a~~ the will capable of directing these weapons with purpose and consistency in the pursuit of our national objectives.

In whatever walk of life you may go, each of you gentlemen of the graduating class will find a role to play in contributing to the security of our country. This is a form of public service difficult to avoid even if one so desired. Clemenceau has often been quoted as saying that "war is too serious a business to be left to the soldiers." I agree to that statement and would add that neither the waging of war nor the deterrence of war is a monopoly of either the soldier or the civilian. Both call for a collaborative effort in which all classes of our citizens must engage. In this enterprise there is a place for men of all experiences, talents, and educational backgrounds. There is a place for the artisan, the business man, the scholar, and the scientist. There is the need for technically trained men, and there is a need for men trained in the liberal tradition which you have known at Trinity College.

It may appear that the military services often seem to stress the scientific and technological aspects of national defense. It is true that the scientists and the technically trained graduates of our advanced schools have come to play a tremendously important part in developing the weapon systems which are so necessary if we are to maintain our superiority in this vital field in relation to our possible adversaries. However, this concern for technology in nowise derogates from our recognition of the need for men reared in the liberal arts and social sciences to provide the wise leadership which must guide the use of the dreadful weapons which we now possess.

Certainly, most of our troubles today are related to our difficulty in utilizing wisely the products of our technological advances. We seem to understand atoms in the molecular society ~~of the molecule~~ much better than people in our own human society. The weaknesses of our deterrent posture lie more in the fields of ideology and politics than in matters of strictly military nature. There is an ever present need for broad guidance of our integrated national strategy directed by men who are capable of understanding people, hostile and friendly alike.

To discharge our responsibilities of world leadership, we would do well to learn all that we can about the Communist world. We Americans often decline to read about, to study, or to take countenance of problems which are distasteful to us. We sometimes seem to feel that we can hurt our opponent ~~enemy~~ by refusing to recognize his existence. I hope that we are learning more mature ways and recognize that if he is to be circumvented, the adversary ~~enemy~~ must be closely studied -- his history, customs, language, dogma, and mode of thought. I hope that in colleges such as Trinity many undergraduates are developing that inquiring mind which will lead them to study the forces in the world today. Henry Adams has said that the task of education is to teach one to react to the forces about him. A liberal education will encourage an understanding of the international factors upon which our security and civilization rest.

Not only must our future leaders understand the enemy, but they must understand our foreign friends. I am constantly impressed with the requirement placed upon the Army to live abroad and to adapt itself to foreign ways. Over 40 percent of our Army today lives overseas ~~abroad~~ in some 73 countries. The provision of completely trained officers to fill the key positions in these foreign ~~over-seas~~ assignments creates serious personnel problems for us. I am always impressed with the growing need for a knowledge of languages, and for an understanding of foreign history and culture on the part of the uniformed representatives of our country abroad.

By and large, we Americans are not natural ambassadors of our way of life when we are transplanted to foreign countries. We tend to insulate ourselves from contacts with the indigenous peoples and live in colonies which are, in fact, little Americas. Formerly, this defect was little more than a handicap in the conduct of commerce and trade. Today, it is a serious failing, for our success and survival in this competitive world are linked with our relationships to other nations of the Free World. Sir Alfred Zimmer defined the problem for us when he said: "International understanding is not an acquisition of the same order as French, or Constitutional history, or the laws of physics, or what we used to call Euclid. It is not a school or college subject. It is not something to be learned in class, but rather a quality of mind and spirit like happiness, or serenity, or poise. Perhaps, it can best be defined in the quality of mind and spirit which enables its possessor to feel at home in the world." It is important that this country develop a wealth of men capable of understanding friend and foe alike, and interpreting the objectives of America with confidence and conviction, of feeling at home in the world.

This matter of conviction in our national aims plays an important part in developing a national posture which will ~~deter an enemy from breaking~~ preserve the peace. We must believe in our cause if we are to convince our neighbors of our seriousness of purpose. To feel real conviction the first requirement is to understand the issues. These issues are clear, unmistakable, and of vital importance. The choices between Communism and ~~Americanism~~ Freedom are so clear-cut that there can be no room for compromise. There is no place in our scheme of things for the moral fence-sitter who would wait a little longer before reaching a judgment. Like deterrent military strength, true fervor and devotion to our cause cannot be pretense or sham. Lack of sincerity is too easily detected to permit of any deception. We must believe, deeply, in our cause if we are to carry conviction to any potential enemy that we are willing to stake our all on the defense of our principles.

Today, the requirement for national unity, stemming from the Communist threat, tends to bring a new concept to public service. Just as we are attempting to merge diplomacy, economics, and ideology with military considerations to form a unified national strategy, similarly, the distinction between the public man and the private man, between the soldier and the civilian, between the official and the taxpayer, tend to merge into a single pattern. I make this point because as Trinity men graduate today it may seem that they have a choice between public life and private life. I don't think that choice really exists anymore. Many of this graduating class will serve their country in uniform. But those who do not will have ample opportunity to do work of equal importance in an era which requires dedicated men to serve our Nation in many areas of activities.

Educated in the traditions of Trinity College and sustained by the elements of a liberal education acquired here, you gentlemen of the graduating class are well prepared to contribute to that broad and determined leadership which is an indispensable ingredient to our national war deterrent posture. You have not been called to live in an easy time in the world's history. The blunt facts are that, if we are not headed for another great war, we nonetheless face an indefinite period of tension, permitting of no relaxation of our vigil. This is a somewhat bleak prospect, perhaps, but we would do well to recognize it and make provision for the long pull. If we looked into the books of the Kremlin leaders where they list our national assets and liabilities, I am sure that we would find that they count heavily upon our unwillingness to bear for long the discomforts and hardships which are the price of world leadership. It will be the task of your generation to confound the expectations of an enemy who counts upon the rapid dissolution of our good intentions. Any inventory of our physical assets will show that they are ample to maintain our world position and to prevent war. They will be ultimately ample, however, only if they are employed by bold leaders, sustained by courage and resolution. These are the qualities of mind and character which I look with confidence to ~~Trinity~~ the graduates of today to supply in the years to come.

My sincere regards and best wishes for success to each one of you.

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