

The original documents are located in Box 133, folder “June 5, 1974 - Speech, Air Force Academy Commencement, Colorado Springs, CO” of the Gerald R. Ford Vice Presidential Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY COMMENCEMENT

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

JUNE 5, 1974



GOOD MORNING, SECRETARY McLUCAS, GENERAL BROWN, GENERAL CLARK,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, MEMBERS OF THE CADET WING AND, PARTICULARLY,
THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 1974. *your parents & friends.*

TOMORROW MARKS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORMANDY INVASION.
THIRTY YEARS AGO THE LONGEST DAY WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN. BEFORE IT WOULD
END, A BEACHHEAD WOULD BE CARVED OUT OF THE FRENCH COAST BY AMERICAN
AND ALLIED INFANTRY AT A FEARFUL PRICE.

IN THE PRE-DAWN HOURS OF THAT FATEFUL DAY, WAVE AFTER
WAVE OF C-47s PASSED OVER THE CHANNEL COAST, AND PARATROOPERS
HURLED THEMSELVES INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE FRENCH SKIES. GLIDER-
BORNE INFANTRY DROPPED SILENTLY BUT NOT ALWAYS SAFELY INTO THE
FIELDS BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES.



NORMANDY WAS A COMBINED OPERATION. IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT ALLIED GROUND FORCES FIGHTING THEIR WAY ACROSS THE BEACHES. NEITHER / COULD IT HAVE SUCCEEDED WITHOUT THE NAVAL FORCES THAT GOT THEM TO THE BEACHES AND, BY COVERING FIRE, HELPED TO KEEP THEM THERE. HOWEVER, ITS SUCCESS ALSO RESTED ON THAT UMBRELLA OF AIR COVER THAT GAVE CONTROL OF THE SKIES OVER THE ENGLISH CHANNEL AND THE FRENCH COAST TO THE ALLIED FORCES. THAT AIR SUPREMACY WOULD ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE INVASION WHICH WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE THIRD REICH. IN LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER NORMANDY, THE WAR IN EUROPE WOULD BE OVER.



IT WOULD TAKE LONGER TO SECURE THE PEACE IN THE PACIFIC,
BUT THERE, AS IN EUROPE, AIR, SEA AND LAND FORCES WOULD SUCCESSFULLY
CONCLUDE THE GREATEST MILITARY TASK UNDERTAKEN IN THIS NATION'S
HISTORY.



IN THE THIRTY YEARS SINCE THAT LONG DAY, THIS COUNTRY
HAS FOUGHT IN KOREA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA TO MAINTAIN A FRAGILE WORLD
PEACE. ~~THAT~~ THAT FRAGILE PEACE HAS BEEN CHALLENGED NOT ONLY BY WAR BUT
BY MANY SUCCEEDING CRISES---THE BERLIN AIRLIFT IN 1948, THE LEBANON
CRISIS IN 1958, THE BERLIN CRISIS IN 1961, AND THE CUBAN MISSILE
CRISIS IN 1962, TO MENTION SOME BUT NOT ALL.



LAST OCTOBER THE MIDDLE EAST ERUPTED IN THE THIRD ARMED CONFLICT IN LESS THAN TEN YEARS. ITS VIOLENCE WAS SO INTENSE, ITS REPERCUSSIONS SO FAR-REACHING THAT AGAIN WORLD PEACE HUNG IN THE BALANCE. WITHIN DAYS, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT CARRYING SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT VITAL TO THE STABILIZATION OF THAT SITUATION WERE WINGING THEIR WAY FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT TO THE AZORES, THENCE OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN TO TEL AVIV -- AN UNMATCHED AIRLIFT OPERATION WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, PROVED THE WORTH OF THE C-5A.



THE TRUCE AGREEMENT JUST SIGNED BY ISRAEL AND SYRIA IS A
TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND THE JUDICIOUS EXERCISE OF AMERICAN
POWER IN SUPPORT OF UNITED STATES POLICY.

IN BOTH CONFLICT AND CRISIS, WE HAVE SEEN AGAIN AND AGAIN
THE ROLE PLAYED BY AMERICAN FORCES AS GUARDIANS OF THE PEACE. IN
EACH OF THESE OPERATIONS SO INDISPENSABLE TO OUR PEACE-KEEPING MISSION,
AIRPOWER WAS A VITAL PART.



HOWEVER, NEITHER AIRPOWER NOR OTHER MILITARY STRENGTH IS SUFFICIENT. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR ARMED FORCES THAT WE HAVE WELL-TRAINED AND HIGHLY MOTIVATED LEADERS. SHORTLY YOU WILL TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE RANKS OF THOSE WHO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP FOR THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE. AS IS CUSTOMARY, A FEW OF YOU WILL BECOME OFFICERS IN OTHER SERVICES. HOWEVER, IT IS THE TASK OF EACH OF YOU TO PROVIDE THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP NECESSARY TO INSURE THAT OUR ARMED FORCES ARE SECOND TO NONE.



You have no apologies for the profession you have selected. In a recent National Poll of American institutions, the military was selected first overall, other, including the Congress, the Courts & the Executive.

WITHIN THE HOUR THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY WILL BECOME YOUR
ALMA MATER. DURING YOUR COMING MILITARY CAREER YOU WILL BE
ASSIGNED TO THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH. SOME OF YOU WILL
TRAVEL INTO SPACE. I SUSPECT THERE WILL BE THOSE IN THE CLASS OF '74
WHO WILL STEP ON THE DISTANT PLANETS.



as you leave for your new assignments
HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE SEVERAL GUIDEPOSTS WITH YOU:

ONE IS DUTY, ANOTHER IS DEDICATION, AND THE LAST IS DISCIPLINE. IN *They have a military heritage but,*

A COMPLEX WORLD THEY ARE RATHER BASIC.

DUTY IS A SIMPLE BUT VERY DEMANDING WORD. IF YOU ARE GIVEN A TASK, YOU MUST BE STEADFAST ENOUGH TO SEE IT THROUGH TO COMPLETION. SO, WHETHER YOU ARE ASKED TO STAFF A PAPER, PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SOME UNIT, OR FLY AN IMPORTANT MISSION, UNDERSTAND THE ORDER AND EXECUTE IT TO THE VERY BEST OF YOUR ABILITY.



DEDICATION IS GENERALLY THOUGHT OF AS AN OBLIGATION TO
A CAUSE. TRADITIONALLY, THE CAUSE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF OUR
COUNTRY IS TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM AND TO SAFEGUARD THE INSTITUTIONS
OF THIS REPUBLIC. THIS IS BEST EXPRESSED BY THE OATH WHICH YOU WILL
TAKE AS A COMMISSIONED OFFICER: "TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES AGAINST ALL ENEMIES, FOREIGN
AND DOMESTIC." TO THAT PLEDGE, YOU MUST INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY
DEDICATE YOURSELVES.



THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE IS BEST CHARACTERIZED IN A SPEECH
BY A FORMER POW, ADMIRAL JIM STOCKDALE, WHICH APPEARED IN THE
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. ADMIRAL STOCKDALE, (A NAVY PILOT WHO WAS
RELEASED EARLY LAST YEAR AFTER SEVEN-AND-A-HALF YEARS OF CONFINEMENT
IN NORTH VIETNAM,) APPLAUDED THE MERITS OF PLEBE YEAR AT THE NAVAL
ACADEMY AND HOPED THAT NONE WOULD EVER DILUTE THE DISCIPLINE
ASSOCIATED WITH ANY MILITARY PROGRAM.



*and we are
honored & pleased
to see a member
here today*

TO JIM STOCKDALE AND OTHER POW'S, SELF-DISCIPLINE WAS
VITAL TO SELF-RESPECT, WHICH IN TURN WAS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR
SURVIVAL. IT IS THAT SAME DISCIPLINE WHICH HAS MADE YOUR HONOR
CODE SO IMPORTANT TO YOU. THE UNDERSTANDING OF HONOR -- AND
INTEGRITY -- MUST BE A VITAL PART OF YOUR LIVES, AS MUST DUTY,
DEDICATION, AND DISCIPLINE.



I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE TWO OBSERVATIONS IN CLOSING. THE FIRST RELATED TO YOU IN A PERSONAL WAY. YOUR THOUGHTS ARE PROBABLY RACING AHEAD TO THE NEXT FEW HOURS, DAYS, AND MONTHS AS YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT, FURTHER SCHOOLING, FLIGHT TRAINING, AND FOR MANY, MARRIAGE. BUT AS YOU LEAVE THE ACADEMY, REMEMBER YOU HAVE BEEN SUPERBLY TRAINED. BEFORE YOU STANDS AN UNBOUNDED HIGHWAY OF OPPORTUNITY. THE ONLY LIMITS ARE YOUR PERSONAL AMBITION AND DESIRES. PEOPLE CARE NOT WHETHER YOU WERE FIRST OR LAST IN YOUR CLASS. ALL OF YOU BEGIN NOW AS EQUALS. AIR FORCE HISTORY, AS FAR AS YOU ARE CONCERNED, BEGINS TODAY.



THE SECOND RELATES TO YOUR COUNTRY. YOU SHOULD UNDER-
STAND THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORLD TOWARD THE UNITED STATES AND TAKE
PRIDE IN BEING AN AMERICAN. IN THE DIFFICULT DAYS OF OCTOBER 1973
SURROUNDING THE MIDDLE EAST WAR, TO WHOM DID THE EGYPTIANS, SYRIANS,
AND ISRAELIS LOOK FOR GUIDANCE AND WISDOM IN THIS TURBULENT TIME?
DID THEY ASK MR. BREZHNEV OF RUSSIA TO INTERCEDE ON THEIR BEHALF?

directly

1



DID THEY ASK THE LATE PRESIDENT POMPIDOU OF FRANCE, OR PRIME MINISTER HEATH OR WILSON OF ENGLAND TO PROVIDE A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT? NO, THEY ASKED PRESIDENT NIXON OF THE UNITED STATES, BECAUSE THEY KNEW HE COULD GET THE JOB DONE. AND WHEN THE DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS WERE SUGGESTED, WHO WAS ASKED TO REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF BOTH THE ARAB NATIONS AND ISRAEL? NOT MR. GROMYKO OF THE SOVIET UNION AND NOT FOREIGN MINISTER ^{JOBERT}~~GAUBERT~~ OF FRANCE OR FOREIGN MINISTER CALLAGHAN OF ENGLAND. NO, THEY ASKED FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER, BECAUSE *respected & trusted* THEY ~~RESPECT~~ HIM AND THE THINGS THAT AMERICA STANDS FOR.

Let me re-emphasize in these days when some are pessimistic about America or cynical about pride as American, I say other Nations & other People Trust America & respect Americans.

We should be proud of America & proud to be Americans.



FINALLY, I WOULD SAY TO YOU THAT IN THE DAYS AND YEARS
AHEAD YOU WILL FIND YOUR ULTIMATE STRENGTH IS NOT IN THE ARMAMENTS
YOU MAY CONTROL, NOR THE PLANES THAT YOU MAY FLY. RATHER IT WILL BE
IN THE KNOWLEDGE YOU ACQUIRE. FOR YOU THE LEARNING PROCESS HAS JUST
BEGUN. YOUR DEGREE FROM THE ACADEMY IS BUT A FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE
UPON WHICH YOU MUST BUILD, STEP BY STEP, VERY MUCH IN THE MANNER
DESCRIBED BY LONGFELLOW WHEN HE WROTE: "THE HEIGHTS BY GREAT MEN
REACHED AND KEPT WERE NOT OBTAINED BY SUDDEN FLIGHT. BUT THEY, WHILE
THEIR COMPANIONS SLEPT, WERE TOILING UPWARD IN THE NIGHT."

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOD SPEED!

####



Commencement Address by Vice President
Gerald R. Ford

U.S. Air Force Academy
Colorado Springs, Colo.
June 5, 1974

~~COMMENCEMENT SPEECH AT AIR FORCE ACADEMY~~

~~FOR RELEASE AT 9A.M. WEDNESDAY, COLO. TIME~~

~~Insert A~~

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of the Normandy invasion.

Thirty years ago the Longest Day was about to begin. Before it would end, a beachhead would be carved out of the French coast by American and Allied infantry at a fearful price.

In the pre-dawn hours of that fateful day, wave after wave of C-47s passed over the Channel coast, and paratroopers hurled themselves into the darkness of the French skies. Glider-borne infantry dropped silently but not always safely into the fields behind the German lines.

Normandy was a combined operation. It could not have been achieved without Allied ground forces fighting their way across the beaches. Neither could it have succeeded without the naval forces that got them to the beaches, and, by covering fire, helped to keep them there. However, its success also rested on that umbrella of air cover that gave control of the skies over the English Channel and the



Insert B

X

It would take longer to secure the peace in the Pacific. But there, as in Europe, air, sea and land forces would successfully conclude the greatest military task undertaken in this nation's history.



~~Insert A~~

* Good Morning, Secretary N^s Lucas, Gen. Brown, Gen. Clark, Distinguished guests, Members of the Cadet Wing and, particularly, the graduating class of 1974.



French coast to the Allied forces. That air supremacy would ensure the success of the invasion which was the beginning of the end of the Third Reich. In less than a year after Normandy, the war in Europe would be over.

~~A~~ *Insert*

In the thirty years since that Long Day, this country has fought in Korea and Southeast Asia to maintain a fragile world peace. *That fragile*

~~peace that~~ has been challenged not only by war but by many succeeding crises. ~~The~~ Berlin airlift in 1948, the Lebanon crisis in 1958, the Berlin crisis in 1961, and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, to mention some but not all.

Last October the Middle East erupted in the third armed conflict in less than ten years. Its violence was so intense, its repercussions so far-reaching that again world peace hung in the balance. Within days, United States Air Force aircraft carrying supplies and equipment vital



to the stabilization of that situation were winging their way from the North American continent to the Azores, thence over the Mediterranean to Tel Aviv -- an unmatched airlift operation which, incidentally, proved the worth of the C-5A.

By Israel and Syria

The truce agreement just signed is a tribute to American diplomacy and the judicious exercise of American power in support of United States policy.

In both conflict and crisis, we have seen again and again the role played by American forces as guardians of the peace. In each of these operations so indispensable to our peace-keeping mission, airpower was a vital part.

However, neither airpower nor other military strength is sufficient. It is essential to the effectiveness of our armed forces that we have well-trained and highly motivated leaders. Shortly you will



take your place in the ranks of those who provide the leadership for the United States Air Force. As is customary, a few of you will become officers in other services. However, it is the task of each of you to provide ~~the~~ ^{the} quality of leadership ~~so~~ ^{necessary} to insure ~~our~~ ^{that} our armed forces are second to none.

Within the hour the Air Force Academy will become your alma mater. During your coming military career you will be assigned to the four corners of the earth. Some of you will travel into space. I suspect there will be those in the Class of '74 who will step on the distant planets.

However, I would like to leave several guideposts with you:

One is Duty, another is Dedication, and the last is Discipline. In a

complex world they are rather basic. (~~we have heard of the~~ [?]
~~these are the~~ ^{?)}

Col. Blake



Duty is a simple, but very demanding word. If you are given a task, you must be steadfast enough to see it through to completion. So, whether you are asked to staff a paper, provide support to some unit, or fly an important mission, understand the order and execute it to the very best of your ability.

Dedication is generally thought of as an obligation to a cause. Traditionally, the cause of the Armed Forces of our country is to protect our freedom and to safeguard the institutions of this Republic. This is best expressed by the oath which you will take as a commissioned officer:

SUPPORT **OF THE UNITED STATES**
"To ~~uphold~~ and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic." To that pledge, you must individually and collectively dedicate yourselves.

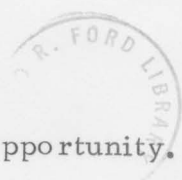
The need for Discipline is best characterized in a speech by a former POW, Admiral Jim Stockdale, which appeared in the Congressional



Record. Admiral Stockdale, a Navy pilot, who was released early last year after seven-and-a-half years of confinement in North Vietnam, applauded the merits of plebe year at the Naval Academy and hoped that none would ever dilute the discipline associated with any military program.

To Jim Stockdale and other POW's, self-discipline was vital to self-respect, which in turn was essential to their survival. It is that same discipline which has made your Honor Code so important to you. The understanding of honor -- and integrity -- must be a vital part of your lives, as must Duty, Dedication, and Discipline.

I would like to make two observations in closing. The first relates to you in a personal way. Your thoughts are probably ^{racing ahead} running ~~rampant~~ ^{to} the next few hours, days, and months as you prepare for your first assignment, further schooling, flight training, and for many, marriage. But as you leave the Academy, remember you have been



superbly trained. Before you stands an unbounded highway of opportunity.

The only limits are your personal ambition and desires. People care not whether you were first or last in your class. All of you begin now as equals. Air Force history, as far as you are concerned, begins today.

The second relates to your country. You should understand the attitude of the world toward the United States and take pride in being an American. In the difficult days of October 1973 surrounding the Middle East War, ~~an area that has seen four wars in twenty-five years~~ ^{to} whom did the Egyptians, Syrians, and Israelis ~~look to~~ ^I ~~#~~ for guidance and wisdom in this turbulent time? Did they ask Mr. Brezhnev of Russia to intercede on their behalf? Did they ask the late President Pompidou of France, or Prime Minister Heath or Wilson of England to provide a solution to the conflict? No, they asked President Nixon of the United States, because they knew he could get the job done. And when the delicate negotiations



were suggested, who was asked to represent ^{the views of both} ~~the~~ Arab nations and Israel?

Not Mr. Gromyko of the Soviet Union and not Foreign Minister Gaubert of France or Foreign Minister Callaghan of England. No, they asked for Secretary Kissinger, because they respect him and the things that America stands for.

Finally, I would say to you that in the days and years ahead

you will find ~~that~~ your ultimate strength is not in the armaments you may control, nor the planes that you may fly. Rather it ~~should~~ ^{will} be in the knowledge you acquire. For you, the learning process has just begun. Your degree from the Academy is but a foundation of knowledge upon which you must

build, step by step, very much in the manner described by Longfellow: ~~what~~

he wrote:

"The heights by great men reached and kept were not obtained by sudden flight, ^{PR} but they, while their companions ~~toiling~~ ^{toiling} slept, were ~~ascending~~ ^{ascending} upward in the night."

Congratulations and God Speed!



COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS BY VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD
U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 1974

FOR RELEASE AT 9:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY, COLORADO TIME

Good morning, Secretary McLucas, General Brown, General Clark, distinguished guests, members of the Cadet Wing and, particularly, the graduating class of 1974.

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of the Normandy invasion. Thirty years ago the Longest Day was about to begin. Before it would end, a beachhead would be carved out of the French coast by American and Allied infantry at a fearful price.

In the pre-dawn hours of that fateful day, wave after wave of C-47s passed over the Channel coast, and paratroopers hurled themselves into the darkness of the French skies. Glider-borne infantry dropped silently but not always safely into the fields behind the German lines.

Normandy was a combined operation. It could not have been achieved without Allied ground forces fighting their way across the beaches. Neither could it have succeeded without the naval forces that got them to the beaches and, by covering fire, helped to keep them there. However, its success also rested on that umbrella of air cover that gave control of the skies over the English Channel and the French coast to the Allied forces. That air supremacy would ensure the success of the invasion which was the beginning of the end of the Third Reich. In less than a year after Normandy, the war in Europe would be over.

It would take longer to secure the peace in the Pacific. But there, as in Europe, air, sea and land forces would successfully conclude the greatest military task undertaken in this nation's history.

In the thirty years since that Long Day, this country has fought in Korea and Southeast Asia to maintain a fragile world peace. That fragile peace has been challenged not only by war but by many succeeding crises -- the Berlin airlift in 1948, the Lebanon crisis in 1958, the Berlin crisis in 1961, and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, to mention some but not all.

Last October the Middle East erupted in the third armed conflict in less than ten years. Its violence was so intense, its repercussions so far-reaching that again world peace hung in the balance. Within days, United States Air Force

(more)

aircraft carrying supplies and equipment vital to the stabilization of that situation were winging their way from the North American continent to the Azores, thence over the Mediterranean to Tel Aviv — an unmatched airlift operation which, incidentally, proved the worth of the C-5A.

The truce agreement just signed by Israel and Syria is a tribute to American diplomacy and the judicious exercise of American power in support of United States policy.

In both conflict and crisis, we have seen again and again the role played by American forces as guardians of the peace. In each of these operations so indispensable to our peace-keeping mission, airpower was a vital part.

However, neither airpower nor other military strength is sufficient. It is essential to the effectiveness of our armed forces that we have well-trained and highly motivated leaders. Shortly you will take your place in the ranks of those who provide the leadership for the United States Air Force. As is customary, a few of you will become officers in other services. However, it is the task of each of you to provide the quality of leadership necessary to insure that our armed forces are second to none.

Within the hour the Air Force Academy will become your alma mater. During your coming military career you will be assigned to the four corners of the earth. Some of you will travel into space. I suspect there will be those in the Class of '74 who will step on the distant planets.

However, I would like to leave several guideposts with you: One is Duty, another is Dedication, and the last is Discipline. In a complex world they are rather basic.

Duty is a simple but very demanding word. If you are given a task, you must be steadfast enough to see it through to completion. So, whether you are asked to staff a paper, provide support to some unit, or fly an important mission, understand the order and execute it to the very best of your ability.

Dedication is generally thought of as an obligation to a cause. Traditionally, the cause of the Armed Forces of our country is to protect our freedom and to safeguard the institutions of this Republic. This is best expressed by the oath which you will take as a commissioned officer: "To support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." To that pledge, you must individually and collectively dedicate yourselves.

The need for Discipline is best characterized in a speech by a former POW, Admiral Jim Stockdale, which appeared in the Congressional Record. Admiral Stockdale, a Navy pilot who was released early last year after seven-and-a-half years of confinement in North Vietnam, applauded the merits of plebe year at the

(more)

Naval Academy and hoped that none would ever dilute the discipline associated with any military program.

To Jim Stockdale and other POW's, self-discipline was vital to self-respect, which in turn was essential to their survival. It is that same discipline which has made your Honor Code so important to you. The understanding of honor -- and integrity -- must be a vital part of your lives, as must Duty, Dedication, and Discipline.

I would like to make two observations in closing. The first relates to you in a personal way. Your thoughts are probably racing ahead to the next few hours, days, and months as you prepare for your first assignment, further schooling, flight training, and for many, marriage. But as you leave the Academy, remember you have been superbly trained. Before you stands an unbounded highway of opportunity. The only limits are your personal ambition and desires. People care not whether you were first or last in your class. All of you begin now as equals. Air Force history, as far as you are concerned, begins today.

The second relates to your country. You should understand the attitude of the world toward the United States and take pride in being an American. In the difficult days of October 1973 surrounding the Middle East War, to whom did the Egyptians, Syrians, and Israelis look for guidance and wisdom in this turbulent time? Did they ask Mr. Brezhnev of Russia to intercede on their behalf? Did they ask the late President Pompidou of France, or Prime Minister Heath or Wilson of England to provide a solution to the conflict? No, they asked President Nixon of the United States, because they knew he could get the job done. And when the delicate negotiations were suggested, who was asked to represent the views of both the Arab nations and Israel? Not Mr. Gromyko of the Soviet Union and not Foreign Minister Gaubert of France or Foreign Minister Callaghan of England. No, they asked for Secretary Kissinger, because they respect him and the things that America stands for.

Finally, I would say to you that in the days and years ahead you will find your ultimate strength is not in the armaments you may control, nor the planes that you may fly. Rather it will be in the knowledge you acquire. For you the learning process has just begun. Your degree from the Academy is but a foundation of knowledge upon which you must build, step by step, very much in the manner described by Longfellow when he wrote: "The heights by great men reached and kept were not obtained by sudden flight. But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night."

Congratulations and God Speed!

#