

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

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General Lennox, Mr. Secretary,
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
Governor Pataki, Academy staff and
faculty, distinguished guests, families, and
graduates: Thank you for your welcome. I
am especially honored to visit this great
institution in your bicentennial year.

In every corner of America, the words
"West Point" command immediate respect. //

This place, where the Hudson River bends,
is more than a fine institution of learning. //

The United States Military Academy is the
guardian of values that have shaped the
soldiers who have shaped the history of the
world.

A few of you have followed in the path of
the perfect West Point graduate, Robert E.
Lee, who never received a single demerit in
four years; some of you followed in the path
of the imperfect graduate, Ulysses S. Grant,
who had his fair share of demerits, and said
the happiest event of his life was "the day I
left West Point." / *During my college years*
~~When I went to college, I~~
guess you'd have to say I was a Grant man.

You walk in the tradition of Eisenhower,
MacArthur, Patton, and Bradley – the
commanders who saved a civilization – and
of second lieutenants who did the same, by
fighting and dying on distant battlefields.

*walk
in the
hell*

Graduates of this Academy have ~~many~~ ^{NEARLY} brought creativity and courage to every field of endeavor / West Point produced the chief engineer of the Panama Canal ... the mind behind the Manhattan Project ... and the first American to walk in space.

This fine institution gave us the man
they say invented baseball, and other
young men who over the years perfected
the game of football. / General George C.
Marshall, a VMI graduate, is said to have
given this order: ||| "I want an officer for a
secret and dangerous mission. / I want a
West Point football player."

As you leave here today, I know there is
one thing you will never miss about this
place: Being a plebe. | But even a plebe at
West Point is made to feel he or she has
some standing in the world.

I am told that plebes, when asked whom
they outrank, are required to answer: "Sir,
the Superintendent's dog, the
Commandant's cat ... and all the Admirals
in the whole damn Navy." | I don't think I'm
going to share that with the Secretary of the
Navy.

West Point is guided by tradition, and in
honor of the "Golden Children of the
Corps," I will observe one of the traditions
you cherish most. As Commander-in-Chief,
I hereby grant amnesty to all cadets who
are on restriction for minor conduct
offenses. And I leave it to General Lennox
to define exactly what minor means.

(Pause)

Every West Point class is commissioned
ARMED FORCES
to the ~~Army~~. Some West Point classes are
also commissioned by history, to take part
in a great new calling for their country.

Speaking here to the class of 1942 – six
months after Pearl Harbor – General
Marshall said: “We are determined that
before the sun sets on this terrible struggle,
our flag will be recognized throughout the
world as a symbol of freedom on one hand,
and of overwhelming power on the other.”

Officers graduating that year helped to fulfill
that mission, defeating Japan and
Germany, and reconstructing those nations
as allies.

West Point graduates of the 1940s saw the
rise of a deadly new challenge – the
challenge of imperial communism – and
opposed it from Korea, to Berlin, to
Vietnam, in the Cold War from beginning to
end. And as the sun set on their struggle,
many of those West Point officers lived to
see a world transformed.

(Drause)

(S/au/g)

History has also issued its call to your
generation. | In your last year, America was
attacked by a ruthless and resourceful
enemy. | You graduate from this Academy in
a time of war, taking your place in an
American military that is honorable and
powerful. || Our war on terror is only begun. ||
but in Afghanistan it is well begun. || I am
proud of the men and women who have
fought on my orders.

America is profoundly grateful for all who
serve the cause of freedom – and for all
who have given their lives in its defense. /

x { This Nation respects and trusts our military,
x { and we are confident of your victories to
x { come.

This war will take many turns we cannot
predict. Yet I am certain of this: Wherever

X we carry it, the American flag will stand not
R only for power but for freedom. Our

Nation's cause has always been larger than
our Nation's defense. We fight, as we
always fight, for a just peace – a peace that
favors human liberty.

We will defend the peace against threats
from terrorists and tyrants. | We will
preserve the peace by building good
relations among the great powers. | And we
will extend the peace by encouraging free
and open societies on every continent.

Building this just peace is America's
opportunity, and America's duty / From this
x (day forward, it is your challenge as well –
x and we will meet this challenge together.
x

You will wear the uniform of a great and
unique country. | America has no empire to
extend or utopia to establish. | We wish for
others only what we wish for ourselves:
safety from violence ... the rewards of
liberty ... and the hope of a better life.

In defending the peace, we face a threat
with no precedent. Enemies in the past
needed great armies and great industrial
capabilities to endanger the American
people and our friends. The attacks of
September 11th required a few hundred
thousand dollars in the hands of a few
dozen evil and deluded men.

All of the chaos and suffering they caused
came at much less than the cost of a single
tank. The dangers have not passed. This
government and the American people are
on watch, because we know the terrorists
have more money, more men, and more
plans.

(Pause)

The gravest danger to freedom lies at
the perilous crossroads of radicalism and
technology. With the spread of chemical,
biological, and nuclear weapons, along with
ballistic missile technology, even weak
states and small groups could gain a
catastrophic power to strike great nations.

Our enemies have declared this very
intention, and have been caught seeking
these terrible weapons. They want the
capability to blackmail us, or to harm our
friends, or to strike our people – and we will
X (oppose them with all our power.

For much of the last century, America's
defense relied on the Cold War doctrines of
deterrence and containment. In some
cases those strategies still apply, but new
threats also require new thinking.

Deterrence – the promise of massive
retaliation against nations – means nothing
against shadowy terrorist networks with no
nation or citizens to defend.

Containment is not possible when
unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass
destruction can deliver those weapons on
missiles, or secretly provide them to
terrorist allies.

We cannot defend America and our friends
by hoping for the best. / We cannot put our
faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly
sign non-proliferation treaties, and then
systemically break them. / If we wait for
threats to fully materialize, we will have
waited too long.

Homeland defense and missile defense
are part of stronger security, and essential
priorities for America. Yet the war on terror
X (will not be won on the defensive.

We must take the battle to the enemy,
disrupt his plans, and confront the worst
threats before they emerge. / In the new
world we have entered, the only path to
safety is the path of action. / And this Nation
will act.

Our security will require the best
intelligence, to reveal threats hidden in
caves and growing in laboratories. Our
security will require modernizing domestic
agencies such as the FBI, so they are
prepared to act, and act quickly, against
danger.

Our security will require transforming the
military you will lead – a military that must
be ready to strike at a moment's notice in
any dark corner of the world. And our
security will require all Americans to be
forward-looking and resolute – to be ready
for preemptive action when necessary to
defend our liberty and our lives.

The work ahead is difficult. | The choices
we will face are complex. | We must uncover
terror cells in sixty or more countries, using
every tool of finance, intelligence, and law
enforcement. | Along with our friends and
allies, we must oppose proliferation and
confront regimes that sponsor terror, as
each case requires.

Some nations need military training to fight
terror, and we will provide it. / Other nations
oppose terror, but tolerate the hatred that
leads to terror – and that must change / We
will send diplomats where they are needed,
and we will send you, our soldiers, where
you are needed.

All nations that decide for aggression
and terror will pay a price. We will not
leave the safety of America and the peace
of the planet at the mercy of a few mad
terrorists and tyrants. We will lift this dark
threat from our country and from the world.

Because the war on terror will require
resolve and patience, it will also require firm
moral purpose. / In this way our struggle is
similar to the Cold War. / Now, as then, our
enemies are totalitarians, holding a creed of
power with no place for human dignity. /
Now, as then, they seek to impose a joyless
conformity, to control every life and all of
life.

America confronted imperial communism in

many different ways – diplomatic,

economic, and military. Yet moral clarity

was essential to our victory in the Cold War.

When leaders like John F. Kennedy and

Ronald Reagan refused to gloss over the

brutality of tyrants, they gave hope to

prisoners, and dissidents, and exiles, and

rallied free nations to a great cause.

Some worry that it is somehow
undiplomatic or impolite to speak the
language of right and wrong. || I disagree. ||
Different circumstances require different
methods, but not different moralities. | Moral
truth is the same in every culture, in every
time, and in every place. | Targeting
innocent civilians for murder is always and
everywhere wrong.

Brutality against women is always and
everywhere wrong. There can be no
neutrality between justice and cruelty,
between the innocent and the guilty. We
are in a conflict between good and evil, and
America will call evil by its name. By
confronting evil and lawless regimes, we do
not create a problem, we reveal a problem
– and we will lead the world in opposing it.

(Pause)

As we defend the peace, we also have
an historic opportunity to preserve the
peace. | We have our best chance since the
rise of the nation-state in the 17th century to
build a world where the great powers
compete in peace instead of prepare for
war.

The history of the last century in particular was dominated by a series of destructive national rivalries that left battlefields and graveyards across the earth. (Germany fought France, and the Axis fought the Allies, and then the East fought the West, in proxy wars and tense standoffs, against a backdrop of nuclear Armageddon.

Competition between great nations is
inevitable, but armed conflict, in our world,
is not. | More and more, civilized nations find
ourselves on the same side – united by
common dangers of terrorist violence and
chaos.

America has – and intends to keep –
military strengths beyond challenge, making
the destabilizing arms races of other eras
pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and
other pursuits of peace.

Today the great powers are also
increasingly united by common values,
instead of divided by conflicting ideologies.

The United States, Japan and our Pacific friends, and now all of Europe, share a deep commitment to human freedom, embodied in strong alliances such as NATO. | And the tide of liberty is rising in many other nations. | Generations of West Point officers planned and practiced for battles with Soviet Russia.

I have just returned from a new Russia,
now a country reaching toward democracy,
and our partner in the war against terror. //

Even in China, leaders are discovering that
economic freedom is the only lasting source
of national wealth. | In time, they will find
that social and political freedom is the only
true source of national greatness.

When the great powers share common values, we are better able to confront serious regional conflicts together – better able to cooperate in preventing the spread of violence or economic chaos. In the past, great power rivals took sides in difficult regional problems, making divisions deeper and more complicated.

Today, from the Middle East to South Asia,
we are gathering broad international
coalitions to increase the pressure for
peace. | We must build strong, great power
relationships when times are good, to help
manage crisis when times are bad. |

*
*
*
America needs partners to preserve the
peace, and we will work with every nation
that shares this noble goal.

Finally, America stands for more than
the absence of war We have a great
opportunity to extend a just peace, by
replacing poverty, repression, and
resentment around the world with the hope
of a better day.

Through most of history, poverty was
persistent, inescapable, and almost
universal. In the last few decades, we have
seen nations from Chile to South Korea
build modern economies and freer
societies, lifting millions out of despair and
want. There is no mystery to this
achievement.

The twentieth century ended with a single
surviving model of human progress, based
on non-negotiable demands of human
dignity – the rule of law ... limits on the
power of the state ... respect for women ...
private property ... free speech ... equal
justice ... and religious tolerance.

America cannot impose this vision – yet
we can support and reward governments
that make the right choices for their own
people | In our development aid, in our
diplomatic efforts, in our international
broadcasting, and in our educational
assistance, the United States will promote
moderation, tolerance, and human rights. |
And we will defend the peace that makes all
progress possible.

When it comes to the common rights
and needs of men and women, there is no
clash of civilizations. | The requirements of
freedom apply in full to Africa, and Latin
America, and the entire Islamic world.

The peoples of Islamic nations want and
deserve the same freedoms and
opportunities as people in every nation.

X (And their governments should listen to their
* hopes.) A truly strong nation will permit
legal avenues of dissent for all groups that
pursue their aspirations without violence.

An advancing nation will pursue economic
reform, to unleash the great entrepreneurial
energy of its people. / A thriving nation will
respect the rights of women, because no
society can prosper while denying
opportunity to half its citizens.

Mothers, fathers, and children across
the Islamic world, and all the world, share
the same fears and aspirations. / In poverty,
they struggle / In tyranny, they suffer / And
X (as we saw in Afghanistan, in liberation they
X (celebrate.

America has a greater objective than
controlling threats and containing
resentment. We will work for a just and
peaceful world beyond the war on terror.

The bicentennial class of West Point
now enters this drama | With all in the
United States Army, you will stand between
your fellow citizens and grave danger.

You will help establish a peace that allows
millions around the world to live in liberty
and grow in prosperity. / You will face times
of calm, and times of crisis. / And every test
will find you prepared – because you are
the men and women of West Point / You
leave here marked by the character of this
academy, carrying with you the highest
ideals of our Nation.

Toward the end of his life, Dwight Eisenhower recalled the first day he stood on the plain at West Point. "The feeling came over me," he said, "that the expression 'The United States of America' would now and henceforth mean something different than it had ever before. From here on, it would be the Nation I would be serving, not myself."

Today, your last day at West Point, you
begin a life of service, in a career unlike any
other. \ You have answered a calling to
hardship and purpose, to risk and honor. / At
the end of every day you will know that you
have faithfully done your duty. / May you
always bring to that duty the high standards
of this great American institution.

May you always be worthy of the long gray
line that stretches two centuries behind you. |

On behalf of the Nation, I congratulate each
one of you for the commission you have
earned and the credit you bring to the
United States of America.

Thank you.