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West Point Speech 5/31/97

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK
MAY 31, 1997

Acknowledgments: General Shalikashvili; General Christman; Parents of the Cadets; Others Tk

To the cadets of 1997, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. You arrived fresh from high school; you survived Camp Buckner; and by the "March Back," you showed your were destined for leadership and excellence. In the classroom, you wrote a record of achievement worthy of this great academy. On the playing field, your Black Knights achieved what no West Point team before could: a 10 victory season. You clipped Air Force's wings and, for the first time in nine years, won the CINCs trophy outright -- and I was delighted to meet the team at the White House three months ago.

A few traditionalists among you also upheld the spirit of independence that has always dwelt at West Point. In 1796, when President Adams's War Department ordered the first classes "fortification," the troops here thought they already knew all that was necessary. So they burned the classroom to the ground, postponing the start of instruction by five years. Today, though the cadets' spirits remain high, the infractions are smaller. As Commander-in-Chief, I hereby exercise my prerogative to grant amnesty for minor offenses to the Corps of Cadets.

Men and women of the class of '97, today you join the Long Gray Line that stretches across two centuries of unstinting devotion to America and the freedom that is our greatest gift.
From the defense of Fort Erie in the War of 1812 to the fury of Antietam...from the trenches of the Argonne...to Anzio and Okinawa...Heartbreak Ridge, the Mekong Delta and the fiery desert of the Gulf War, the officers of West Point served and sacrificed for our nation. In the four years, since I last spoke here, your graduates have carried forward that legacy of service. They helped give the people of Haiti their best chance ever at democracy. They saved hundreds of thousands of lives from genocide and famine in Rwanda. They helped end the bloodshed in Bosnia, and gave that shattered nation breathing room to build peace.

Throughout our history, whenever duty called, the men and women of West Point have answered. You have never failed us. I speak for all Americans when I say: I know you never will.

I have come to West Point with a new call to duty to you and to the American people as we set ourselves to the tasks of the 21st century. This week in Europe we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan -- and the resolve of a visionary generation to strengthen democracy, nourish prosperity and prevent war's return. Then, President Truman lifted the eyes of America to the horizon and told our people, “The United States has a tremendous responsibility to act according to the measure of our power for good in the world. We have learned that we must earn the peace we seek just as we earned victory in war, not by wishful thinking but by realistic effort.”
The great national effort of the Marshall Plan began our peacetime engagement in Europe. In the words of Winston Churchill, it was the most “unsordid act in history.” But the Marshall Plan was more: it was perhaps the wisest act of self-interest any nation has ever committed. Because it led to the creation of NATO. And it set the foundation for an Atlantic community of democracies that embraced our values, spread prosperity and secured our victory in the Cold War.

But as we look back over half a century of success, our true purpose must be to commit ourselves to the wise acts of self-interest that will secure another 50 years of peace and prosperity. Inspired by those who rebuilt the world, we must lift our eyes to a farther horizon. We must create the institutions and understandings that will allow America to flourish in a new century -- so that nations define their greatness from the power to conquer and coerce to the ability to develop the full potential of their people, improve their quality of life and cooperate together against the new threats of the 21st century.

This is a moment of remarkable possibility. At home, our economy is strong and the envy world. Abroad, the power of our armed forces and our example is unrivaled. More than half of the world’s people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time. Nation after nation has turned to free markets, allowing their citizens to build better lives than ever before.

But as you who chose this place of duty, honor and country know, the battle is not over. The hard-won gains of democracy and open markets must be defended and strengthened every day. We must confront the challenges of a new century and a radically changed world. Communism
may be dead or discredited, but the forces of extreme nationalism, racial, religious and ethnic bloodletting still plague our planet. The new threats of drug trafficking, international crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and environmental decay find strength in the very freedom and progress we cherish.

Our nation stands at the pinnacle of its power, influence and success — and therefore the pinnacle of its responsibility for ourselves, our children and the good of a waiting world. This is what I mean when I have said that in these times, America is the indispensable nation.

Faced with the promise and the peril of our era, we cannot be idle. We must act now because it is right — not sit back and let history run its course. As I told the American people in my State of the Union Address, the enemy of our time is inaction.

That is why, in that speech, I set out a plan of action to keep America strong, prosperous and secure as we enter the 21st century. It has six key strategic objectives: Building a Europe that is undivided, democratic and at peace for the first time in its history. Creating a strong and stable community of nations that links the United States and Asia. Embracing our inescapable role as the world's leading force for peace. Providing jobs and opportunity through a more open and competitive trading system. Confronting new security threats that defy borders and unilateral solutions. Making sure that we can meet all these challenges with the right tools, from a fully funded diplomacy to the world's strongest military. We know that preserving our strength of our armed forces is essential to achieving our goals -- that it is the core of our power and the muscle
behind our diplomacy. And we know that maintaining American leadership means that our military must remain the best-trained, best-equipped, best-prepared fighting force on earth. [do we need more on the six?]

This week in Europe, we took an extraordinary stride toward achieving our first priority.

Creating a continent that is undivided, democratic and peaceful requires a new partnership with Russia. I am proud that in Paris, we laid the cornerstone of this relationship -- and narrowed a chasm that divided Russia and the West throughout this century. [call it "multi"

The agreement we signed will create a sustained, cooperative relationship between NATO and Russia. The Founding Act opens the door to a future in which NATO and Russia work together to advance interests we share -- as we are in Bosnia -- and discuss constructively the disagreements that arise. It joins Russia with NATO in a practical partnership that will make the United States, Europe and Russia stronger and more secure.

The Founding Act does not alter NATO's security commitments in any way. It proves that the relationship between NATO and Russia is not a zero-sum game. It shows that the 21st century need not be plagued by the calculations of advantage between nations that doomed millions of people in this century.

Our agreement in Paris changed the face of Europe for the century to come. But it is only part of the larger effort that we began three and a half ago in Brussels, when I said that we must bring
Europe together in security around alliances, economically around open markets, politically around democracy.

Many organizations and many nations have risen to this challenge. One, above all, is essential: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the keystone of transatlantic security and the most successful alliance in history. Now, we are setting NATO on a new course with new missions, new members and new partners. In 38 days, I will meet with other NATO leaders in Madrid to invite the first of Europe’s new democracies to begin the process of joining the Alliance. Afterward, we will ask the Senate for ratification of these new security arrangements. With their consent, and that of our allies, we can expect the new members to take their place in the Alliance by 1999 -- the 50th anniversary of NATO’s creation and the tenth year after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Let us be clear: This is a step of the greatest consequence. NATO enlargement will cost our nation hundreds of millions of dollars for many years. More important, it requires that we extend to new members the most solemn commitments we make to other countries. We will pledge ourselves -- as do all Alliance partners -- to treat an attack against one as an attack against all.

I am convinced that this course serves our deepest interests. I have spoken about this many times, but above all, I wanted to come here to explain this to you, who must be the defenders of our future. Because it is your skill, devotion and professionalism that must back up NATO’s security guarantees -- and your lives that will be on the front line.
NATO must grow for three reasons: It will make us stronger. It will prevent war’s return. It will secure the important gains democracy has made in our time.

Adding new members to NATO will make the Alliance more powerful, more cohesive and better able to address Europe’s security challenges in this new age. The nations from Central Europe we are considering for membership share our values and our aspirations. There are those who say these states are not ready and will not stand shoulder to shoulder with us. They are wrong. The people of these nations have fought by our side already. Many stood with us in the Gulf War. All joined us in NATO’s mission in Bosnia, without doubt or delay. Their weapons and training may not match our standards yet. But with their spirit and commitment, they will strengthen us.

They are ready to bear the price of defending freedom because they know the price of losing freedom.

Let me tell you a story from World War II: In 1944, some weeks after D-Day, American and allied troops in France encircled several of Hitler’s panzer divisions. Some of the fiercest fighting of the war came as our forces tried to close a gap and prevent those tanks from escaping. The soldiers who got the job done were Poles, survivors of the invasion of their land who joined forces with us. As they tried to link up with our 90th Infantry, the Polish 1st armored division held fast through wave upon wave of enemy counter attack. When they ran out of tank shells, they charged -- with nothing but their rifles and their courage.
After the Battle of the Falaise Gap, 325 Polish soldiers were buried near where they fell. By these graves in the heart of Europe, Allied soldiers raised a sign of tribute. It read in English: "A Polish Battlefield" -- and it reminds us that we may never forget the blood and sacrifice of others for our freedom.

The second reason we must enlarge NATO is to prevent war from returning to Europe and drawing our nation again into conflict. When he signed the NATO Treaty in 1949, President Truman said that if NATO had existed in 1914 or 1939, it would have prevented the hostilities that led to conflict. Our experience of engagement in Europe during the Cold War showed he was right. By extending NATO's reach into Central Europe, where weakness and upheaval ignited two world wars in a generation, we enlarge the circle of stability. We reduce the chance that we will be called to fight another war across the Atlantic. And we fulfill our obligation to see that no fresh fields of crosses and stars are laid in Britain, Italy or France.

Some say NATO is no longer needed because there is no powerful threat to our security now. I say there is no powerful threat now because NATO is there -- and enlargement will help ensure that none arises. After this long and bloody century, we dare not be complacent about peace in Europe.

Third, we must enlarge NATO to secure important gains for democracy, peace and integration. NATO can do for Europe's east what it did for Europe's west. It will give new democracies the chance to deepen their reforms and strengthen themselves from inside instead of piling up excess...
weapons to defend against imagined threats from outside. It will bring an entire region closer
together and provide a climate for prosperity to grow. As it did with France and Germany, it will
help reconcile ancient enemies. In fact, it is already doing so: Candidates for NATO membership
have settled more than half a dozen border and ethnic disputes that could have led to future
Bosnias. That is good for Europe -- and good for America.

I look forward to the Summit in Madrid and to welcoming new allies to NATO in two years. But
a single round of enlargement will not create a permanent European peace -- especially if it
replaces one division of Europe with another. That is why the first countries admitted to the
Alliance will not be the last -- and why we will continue to reach out to those who are not invited
in July so no new gray zone of insecurity appears in Europe's midst.

In this century, we have learned through hard experience that Europe's fate and America's future
are joined -- that when Europe is stable, prosperous and at peace, America is more secure. At
this moment -- between 50 years of unparalleled achievement and a century of shining promise --
we must go on turning that lesson to our advantage, for ourselves and the generations to come.

Fifty-five years, in the early days of the World War II, General George Marshall, the man we
honored this week, spoke at another commencement. To cadets who stood here, he said very plainly: "We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle, our flag will be recognized as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of
overwhelming power on the other." From all that followed -- and General Marshall's own record
as architect of our victory in arms and our security thereafter -- we know he sought that power so America could be resolute in defense of liberty and tenacious in preserving peace.

... a Cold War

Today, because of the determination of one generation to fight one war and to deter another... and because the American people have lived up to their responsibility to lead for the last half century... our flag flies higher than ever. Now, it falls to you -- and to this nation -- to carry it into a new era. America must fulfill the obligation history has set for us. We must be the shapers of the peace for the new and better century about dawn.

As you go forward from this day, I ask you to remember those who walked before you on the Plain -- their professionalism, their dedication, their sacrifice. With their example before you, you will not lead America wrong.

No one is more prepared for the burden. No one is better equipped to complete the mission. Our nation looks to you with confidence and with hope.

God bless you. God bless America.

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American leadership... pitch perhaps should come here. Need to come back to us opportunity and responsibility at this moment in history.
FYI : Blinken benjamin

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

21-May-1997 01:28pm

TO: NAPLAN_S
FROM: Crowley, Philip, OSD/PA
CC: Bacon, Kenneth, OSD/PA
CC: Bernath, Cliff, OSD/PA

SUBJECT: "West Point"

Steve:

As we discussed on the phone, Elaine Donnelly and various critics are using Aberdeen (and eventually Kelly Flinn I suspect) to broaden the issue past sexual misconduct to the broader issues of mixed gender training, women in operational units and even the issue of integration of women in the military overall. They are having some success when Elaine Sciolino of the NYT twice calls integration of women in the military as an "experiment" and then Rep Bartlett announces that he'll introduce legislation mandating single sex basic training (even though Aberdeen was advanced training and would not have been prevented under the new law).

The folks here at DoD who monitor the issue are concerned because the defense leadership has not responded forcefully regarding the broader issue where critics may be viewed as "blaming the victims." Some of this is certainly explained by the delicacy of the legal process, where anything you say can be used to defense lawyers to argue undue command influence. But we may be guilty of missing the larger issue, which we can all knock out of the park, so to speak.

We are encouraging our speechwriters here to include a message supporting women in the military is Secretary Cohen's speech next week at the Air Force Academy graduation. POTUS is doing West Point on May 31. I would suggest consideration of elevating the women's issue past Aberdeen, Flinn et al. and reinforcing the indispensible role women play in the military today.

Critics say women affect readiness...they're right, but not negatively. Because, without women in ever larger numbers today, playing broader roles everywhere our troops are around the world, the volunteer force wouldn't work.

So, I could envision POTUS remaining graduates that we do hold military leaders to a higher standard. This is absolutely appropriate given the unique demands of military service and the requirement for good order and discipline. The American people send their best sons and daughters to serve. They are a national treasure. As military leaders, it's our responsibility to take care of them, look after their quality of life, train them properly, help them grow and advance. Military leaders will be held accountable if we fail to do this, as we have seen at Aberdeen. Army is sending the right signal to the force. Abuse of power will not be tolerated.
Our new strategy and defense program outlined in the QDR demands that we take advantage of the skill and initiative of every single soldier, airman, sailor and Marine -- regardless of gender. Each should have the same opportunity to succeed. Each should be held to the same standard if they fail. This is the smart thing to do -- it is the right thing to do.

Some would take advantage of today's headlines of scandal to walk back from the gains which this Administration has provided to women in uniform. We've never made progress by going backwards. We can't do it. We won't do it.

Women are fully integrated into the force. They are serving where they should be -- along the IEBL in Bosnia; on ships in the Med; off the coast of Zaire; deployed in the Gulf, etc. They are fully integrated in the force.

The American people fully support this progress. This is not a social experiment. This is the way we do business. We're going to have more women in the military. We have to continue to work through problems and obstacles which occur. Our strategy demands it.

Women came to the military academies 20 years ago. Cadets long ago moved past the issue of who belongs to the more important element of making it work. This is a continuing process in society. This is a continuing process in the military. No different. The military has led society in other areas, such as racial integration. Much already accomplished in terms of equal pay, equal opportunity, etc. Must continue to march forward...

Something like that would elevate the issue past today's courtroom drama, send military women the right signal and set a high standard of leadership for the cadets to aspire to. A good sub-theme for the President, should you wish to discuss this with your communications colleagues.

Thanks.

PJ
5/22/97 1:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK
MAY 31, 1997

Acknowledgments: General Shalikashvili; General Christman; Parents of the Class of '97; Others

It is a great privilege for me to join in this celebration of your accomplishment. Today, you carry forward a tradition handed down from the early history of our nation. You fulfill the wishes of George Washington, who urged the creation of this academy to provide the military leadership to safeguard our liberties.

To the cadets of 1997, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. You survived Beast Barracks. You endured countless PT tests. [ck] Your Black Knights achieved what no West Point team before could: a 10 victory season [ck]. For the first time in nine years, you won the CINC's trophy outright---and I was delighted to meet your team at the White House tk months ago.

A few traditionalists among you also upheld the spirit of independence that has always dwelt at West Point. In 1796, when President Adams' War Department ordered the first classes in "fortification," the troops here thought they already knew all that was necessary. So they burned the classroom to the ground, postponing the start of instruction by five years. Today, though the cadets' spirits remain high, the infractions are small. As Commander in Chief, I hereby exercise my prerogative to grant amnesty to the Corps of Cadets for all.
Men and women of the class of ‘97, today you join the Long Gray Line that stretches across two centuries of unstinting devotion to America and the freedom that is our greatest gift.

From the defense of Fort Erie in the War of 1812 to the relentless charges of Antietam, the officers of West Point served and sacrificed for our young nation. They broke from the trenches into the poisonous gas of Flanders..., clawed through the fire on beaches from Anzio to Okinawa..., repelled the tide of bayonets on Heartbreak Ridge and in Hue [or other Vietnam]... roared across a desert of flame in the Gulf War.

In the four years, since I last addressed the cadets of West Point, graduates of this academy have carried forward that legacy of service. They helped give the people of Haiti their best chance ever at democracy. They saved hundreds of thousands of lives from genocide and famine in Rwanda. They helped end the bloodshed in Bosnia, and gave that shattered nation breathing room to build peace.

Throughout our history, whenever duty called, the Long Gray Line answered. It has never failed us. I speak for all Americans when I say: I know it never will.

Fifty years ago, one of West Point’s greatest sons spoke at Commencement. At the dawn of a new era in America’s relationship with the world, as the Iron Curtain fell on Europe and the first shocks of the Cold War buffeted our nation, General Eisenhower spoke of the mission of the West Point graduate: “Through your solemn oath to support and defend our Constitution, you
become one with the living and dead who have given the best within them that this nation, free
and secure, might become for all men a champion of right and a leader in the ways of peace."

The class of '47 and all who led our forces in the postwar era heard that message, and they gave
the very best they had within. General Eisenhower himself came out of retirement to be the first
Supreme Commander of NATO and, as President, lead our nation through the depths of the East-
West conflict. General Lucius Clay helped Germany to its feet, mounted the airlift that saved
Berlin and is buried here at West Point Cemetery. General Andrew Goodpaster served as Supreme NATO Commander and superintendent of this academy. Brent Scowcroft and
Alexander Haig -- who both stood in your shoes 50 years ago -- served as National Security
Advisor and Security of State. [General George Joulwan, helped the cause of peace in Bosnia
and General John Shalikashvili, became one of the greatest leaders our Joint Chiefs have ever
known. Both are retiring this year, and I them for their extraordinary service to our nation-]

Over a half century, these and other officers manned the ramparts for freedom and America's
leadership in the world. They established defenses that helped our allies in Europe and Asia
recover from war, build strong democracies, and thriving economies. They deterred war when
war seemed inevitable. They passed on to us a legacy of immense security and prosperity.

Today, we see all around us the benefits of their dedication and the fruits of a generation devoted
to securing freedom. The Cold War has receded into memory. A new Europe is emerging.
Russia is taking its place as a free and democratic nation. A majority of the world's people live
under governments of their own choosing for the first time. Nation after nation has turned to free markets, allowing their citizens to build better, more meaningful lives than ever before.

America is winning the battle for a 21st century of peace and freedom, security and prosperity. But as you who chose this place of duty, honor and country know, the battle is not won. General Eisenhower's words still call us to action from across the decades: America must continue to lead in a new century and a radically changed world. In Europe, Asia and elsewhere, America must remain a champion of right and the most powerful force for the ways of peace.

Our obligation to lead is greater than ever -- because America is greater than ever.

At home, we are strong -- and our economy is the envy of the world. Abroad, we are unrivaled. America is at peace -- and we have never been better prepared to keep the peace. It has been said that the United States today is as powerful militarily as we were economically after World War II -- when the great economies of Europe and Asia lay in ruins and our GNP equaled the rest of the world combined. In all of human history, there has never been a moment like this, when one nation's might so far exceeds all others.

For America, this peak is not the end of our journey but a threshold to an age of remarkable possibility. In the coming century, more people will have the chance to live out their dreams than at any time in history. And we will have greater opportunities to increase our prosperity and deepen our security than ever before.
We will only reap the benefits of this new era if we, like those who came before us, go out to meet the tasks of our time. Because America is unrivaled, but we are not unchallenged. The new dangers of instability, disintegration and resurgent nationalism threaten our well-being. To defeat these forces, we must be decisive -- and we must act boldly.

To that end, I have set six key strategic objectives for America's prosperity, security, and democratic values in the 21st century.

- First, a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in its history.
- Second, strong and stable relations between the United States and Asia.
- Third, our willing continuation of America's leadership as the world's greatest force for peace.
- Fourth, the creation of more jobs and opportunity for our people through a more open and competitive trading system that also helps others all around the world.
- Fifth, increasing cooperation in confronting new security threats that defy borders and unilateral solutions.
- And, sixth, the provision of the tools necessary to meet these challenges, from a strong, fully funded and comprehensive diplomacy to maintaining the world's strongest, most modern and most adaptable military. We know that preserving our strength is essential to achieving all our goals -- that it is at the core of our power.
No priority is greater than our engagement and leadership in Europe. America has embraced the vision of a Europe of free nations, bound by the common values of democracy, since Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill first met aboard ships in the North Atlantic -- and resolved to liberate a continent from the stranglehold of fascism. Americans died for this goal from North Africa to the Battle of the Bulge -- in greater numbers than in any war in this century. — [ck]

Earlier this week, on Memorial Day, we paid homage to those who died for freedom in Europe. This week, in the Netherlands we also marked the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, the effort of visionary generation to ensure that those deaths were not in vain and another generation would not be summoned to fight on European soil.

America came to the Marshall Plan through a foresight no nation before had ever achieved. The generation of Truman, Marshall and Eisenhower lifted its eyes to the horizon and acted to help nations threatened by hunger, not guns. They recognized in the hopelessness of others danger to ourselves. They saw in despair the seed of a hatred that would destroy all we had sacrificed for. Our leaders understood that we could not allow that to happen to Europe or to us.

Winston Churchill called the Marshall Plan the most "unsordid act in history." But it was more: it was perhaps the wisest act of self-interest any nation has ever committed.

The Marshall Plan began our peacetime engagement in Europe. It led to the creation of NATO, the emergence of a strong Atlantic community of democracies and a half century in which the
guns stayed silent in Europe. And because the Long Gray Line held from tkwhere to the Fulda Gap -- America triumphed in the Cold War, and no fresh fields of white crosses and stars were laid in France, Italy or Britain.

Today, with that example before us, I challenge the American people to lift their eyes to a further horizon. General Marshall’s vision embraced all of Europe. But the reality of his time did not, as Stalin barred half the continent from freedom and recovery. We know that in our time, as in General Marshall’s, America cannot be secure unless Europe is at peace. Let us complete their task of building the secure, peaceful Europe. The watchtowers may be empty, but the scars of division have not been erased. Communism collapsed in Europe, but as we saw in Bosnia, the forces of hatred and intolerance are alive and waiting to fill the vacuum it left.

Our fathers fought one world war in Europe for freedom. Through four long decades, they deterred another. Now it falls to us to be the shapers of the peace.

Three years ago in Brussels, I said that we must join with Europe to finish this mission begun more than 50 years ago. Many organizations and many nations have risen to this challenge. One, above all, is essential: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the keystone of transatlantic security and the most successful alliance in history.

Now, NATO is about to take a decisive step forward. In 38 days, I will meet with other NATO leaders in Madrid to invite one or more of Europe’s new democracies to begin the process of
joining the Alliance. After ratification by our Senate and our allies, we expect the new members to take their place in the Alliance by 1999 -- the 50th anniversary of NATO's creation and the tenth year after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Let us be clear: This is a step of the greatest consequence. NATO enlargement will cost our nation hundreds of millions of dollars for many years. More important, it requires that we extend to new members the most solemn commitments we make to other countries. We will pledge ourselves -- as do all Alliance partners -- to treat an attack against one as an attack against all.

I am convinced that this course serves our wisest self-interest. I have spoken about this many times, to members of both parties in Congress and to learned scholars of foreign policy. But above all, I wanted to explain this to you, the defenders of our future. Because it is your skill, devotion and professionalism that must back up NATO's security guarantees -- and your lives that will be on the line.

Adding new members to NATO will make the Alliance stronger, more cohesive and better able to address Europe's security challenges in this new age. The nations we are considering for membership share our values and our aspirations. Many stood with us in the Gulf War. All joined us in NATO's mission in Bosnia, without doubt or delay. Their weapons and training may not match our standards yet. But with their spirit and commitment, they will strengthen us greatly. They are ready to bear the price of defending freedom because they know so well what it means to be unfree.
There are those who say these states are not worthy and will not fight by our side. They are wrong. The people of these nations have fought for us already.

Let me tell you a story from World War II: In 1944, some weeks after D-Day, American and allied troops in France encircled several of Hitler's panzer divisions. Some of the fiercest fighting of the war came as our forces tried to close a gap and prevent those tanks from escaping. The soldiers who got the job done were Poles, survivors of the invasion of their land who joined forces with us. As they tried to link up with our 90th Infantry, the Polish 1st armored division held fast through wave upon wave of enemy counter attack. When they ran out of tank shells, they charged -- with nothing but their rifles and their courage.

After the Battle of the Falaise Gap, 325 Polish soldiers were buried near where they fell. By these graves in the heart of Europe, Allied soldiers raised a sign of tribute. It read in English: "A Polish Battlefield" -- and it reminds us that we may never forget the blood and sacrifice of others for our freedom.

The second reason we must enlarge NATO is to stop war from returning to Europe and drawing our nation again into conflict. When he signed the NATO Treaty in 1949, President Truman said that if NATO had existed -- with only its original 12 members -- it would have prevented hostilities in 1914 and 1939. Our experience of engagement through the Cold War showed he was right. By extending NATO's reach into Central Europe, where weakness and upheaval...
ignited two world wars in a generation, we enlarge the circle of stability. And we reduce the chance that you will be called to fight another war across the Atlantic.

Some say NATO is no longer needed because there is no powerful threat now. I say there is no powerful threat now because NATO is there -- and enlargement will help ensure that none arises.

After this long and bloody century, we dare not be complacent about peace in Europe. In the five years after 1989, more Europeans died in conflicts than in the 45 years before. We cannot just hope for peace in Europe; we must work for it.

Third, we must enlarge NATO to secure important gains for democracy, peace and integration. In the coming years, the Alliance can do for Europe's east what it did for Europe's west. It will give new democracies the chance to deepen their reforms and strengthen themselves from inside instead of piling up excess weapons to defend against imagined threats from outside. It will hasten integration for the entire region and provide a climate for prosperity to grow. As it did with France and Germany, it will help reconcile ancient adversaries. In fact, it already has: Candidates for NATO membership have signed more than half a dozen agreements to settle border and ethnic disputes that could have led to future Bosnias. That is good for Europe -- and good for America.

I look forward to the Summit in Madrid and to welcoming new allies to NATO in two years. But we must also recognize that a single round of enlargement will not create a permanent European peace -- especially if it replaces one division in Europe with another. That is why the first
countries admitted to the Alliance will not be the last -- and why we will continue to reach out to those who are not invited in July so no new gray zone of insecurity appears in Europe’s midst.

Creating an undivided, peaceful and democratic Europe also demands a new partnership with Russia. I am proud that, this week in Paris, we laid the cornerstone of this relationship -- and narrowed a chasm that divided Russia and the West throughout this century.

The agreement we signed will create a sustained, cooperative relationship between NATO and Russia. The Founding Act opens the door to a future in which NATO and Russia work together to advance interests we share -- as we are in Bosnia -- and discuss constructively the disagreements that arise. It joins Russia with NATO in a practical partnership that will make the United States, Europe and Russia stronger and more secure.

The Founding Act does not alter NATO’s security commitments in any way. It proves that the relationship between NATO and Russia is not a zero-sum game. It shows that the 21st century need not be plagued by the calculations of advantage between nations that doomed millions of people in this century.

Our agreement in Paris changed the landscape of Europe for the century to come. Together with NATO enlargement, it is a symbol of all we can achieve if we set our sights high and summon the energy to achieve our goals.
Cadets of the Class of '97: Half a century ago, President Truman set our nation's sights high charged us with the mission of safeguarding freedom in Europe. He told the American people, “The United States has a tremendous responsibility to act according to the measure of our power for good in the world.” Today, with our nation is at the pinnacle of our power, influence and success, we are also at the pinnacle of responsibility -- for ourselves, our children and the good of a waiting world. We must not be complacent in the face of the awesome tasks before us. We can only be defeated by inaction.

America must fulfill the obligation history has set for us. We must be the shapers of the peace for the new and better century about dawn.

Leadership in this cause falls heavily to you. As you go forward from this day, I ask you to remember those who walked before you on the Plain -- their professionalism, their dedication, their sacrifice. With their example before you, you will not steer wrong.

No one is more prepared for the burden. No one is better equipped to complete the mission. Our nation looks to you with confidence and with hope.

God bless you. God bless America.

###
To the cadets of 1997, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. You arrived fresh from high school students; you survived Camp Buckner; and by the “March Back,” you showed your were destined for leadership and excellence. In the classroom, you wrote a record of achievement worthy of this great academy. On the playing field, your Black Knights achieved what no West Point team before could: a 10 victory season. You clipped Air Force’s wings and, for the first time in nine years, won the CINCs trophy outright -- and I was delighted to meet the team at the White House three months ago.

A few traditionalists among you also upheld the spirit of independence that has always dwelt at West Point. In 1796, when President Adams’s War Department ordered the first classes in “fortification,” the troops here thought they already knew all that was necessary. So they burned the classroom to the ground, postponing the start of instruction by five years. Today, though the cadets’ spirits remain high, the infractions are smaller. As Commander-in-Chief, I hereby exercise my prerogative to grant amnesty for minor offenses to the Corps of Cadets.

Men and women of the class of ’97, today you join the Long Gray Line that stretches across two centuries of unstinting devotion to America and the freedom that is our greatest gift.
From the defense of Fort Erie in the War of 1812 to the fury of Antietam... from the trenches of the Argonne [ck]... to Anzio and Okinawa... Heartbreak Ridge, the Mekong Delta and the fiery desert of the Gulf War, the officers of West Point served and sacrificed for our nation. In the four years, since I last spoke here [ck], your graduates have carried forward that legacy of service. They helped give the people of Haiti their best chance ever at democracy. They saved hundreds of thousands of lives from genocide and famine in Rwanda. They helped end the bloodshed in Bosnia, and gave that shattered nation breathing room to build peace.

Throughout our history, whenever duty called, the men and women of West Point answered. You have never failed us. I speak for all Americans when I say: I know you never will.

I have come to West Point for a new call to duty to you and the American people. I have just returned from Europe, where we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan -- and the resolve of a visionary generation to strengthen democracy, nourish prosperity and prevent war's return. Then, President Truman lifted the eyes of our nation to the horizon and told the American people, “The United States has a tremendous responsibility to act according to the measure of our power for good in the world. We have learned that we must earn the peace we seek just as we earned victory in war, not by wishful thinking but by realistic effort.”

The Marshall Plan began our peacetime engagement in Europe. It led to the creation NATO, the growth of a strong Atlantic community of democracies and our victory in the Cold War.
Today, with the Promised Land in sight, we are at the pinnacle of our power, influence and success. We are also at the pinnacle of responsibility. So, too, are our children and the good of a waiting world. And with this responsibility comes the promise of achievement. America, as we have built the New World, has the power of our armed forces and the example of our example is unrivaled.

But as you who chose the place of duty, honor and country know, the battle is not won. As you look back over the past 50 years, you can see that true security and prosperity for our nation has turned to free markets, allowing their citizens to build better lives than ever before. At home, our economy is strong and the envy world.

And yet, the world's people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time. Nation after nation has turned to free markets, allowing their citizens to build better lives than ever before. At home, our economy is strong and the envy world.

The Marshall Plan was not just a moment of remarkable possibility; it was perhaps the wisest act of self-interest any nation has ever committed. It was the promise to build the New World, to commit ourselves to acts of wise self-interest for the next 50 years -- to make the world safe for America. It was the promise to build the New World, to commit ourselves to acts of wise self-interest for the next 50 years -- to make the world safe for America.

The challenges of a new century and a radically changed world confront the Marshall Plan. And we must lift our eyes to a farther horizon -- and confront the challenges of a new century and a radically changed world.

Because of the dedication of the Marshall generation and those who followed, more than half of the world's people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time. Nation after nation has turned to free markets, allowing their citizens to build better lives than ever before. At home, our economy is strong and the envy world. And the power of our armed forces and the example of our example is unrivaled.

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In the face of the awesome tasks before us, we cannot be idle. We must act now because it is right -- not wait to be spurred by another war. As I have told the American people before, the enemy of our time is inaction.

In my State of the Union Address I set out a plan of action to defend against the perils and fulfill all the promise of this new era. It has six key strategic objectives: Building a Europe that is undivided, democratic and at peace for the first time in its history; creating a strong and stable community of nations that links the United States and Asia; embracing our inescapable role as the world's leading force for peace; providing jobs and opportunity through a more open and competitive trading system; confronting new security threats that defy borders and unilateral solutions; making sure that we can all these challenges with the right tools, from the fully funded diplomacy to the world's strongest military. We know that preserving our strength of our armed forces is essential to achieving all our goals -- that it is at the core of our power, the muscle behind our diplomacy. And we know that maintaining American leadership means that our military must remain the best-trained, best-equipped, best-prepared fighting force on earth. [do we need more on the six?]

The first priority is the one I want to speak to you about today. Through hard experience, we have learned in this century that Europe's fate and America's future are joined. When Europe is stable, prosperous and at peace, America is more secure.
Three years ago in Brussels, I said that we must join with Europe to finish this mission begun more than 50 years ago. General Marshall’s vision embraced all of Europe. But the reality of his time did not, as Stalin barred half the continent from freedom and recovery. Now, we have a second chance to build a Europe that is undivided, democratic and at peace — and we are seizing it.

Many organizations and many nations have risen to this challenge. One, above all, is essential: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the keystone of transatlantic security and the most successful alliance in history. Now, we are setting NATO on a new course with new missions, new members and new partners. In 38 days, I will meet with other NATO leaders in Madrid to invite the first of Europe’s new democracies to begin the process of joining the Alliance. After ratification by our Senate and our allies, we expect the new members to take their place in the Alliance by 1999 -- the 50th anniversary of NATO’s creation and the tenth year after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Let us be clear: This is a step of the greatest consequence. NATO enlargement will cost our nation hundreds of millions of dollars for many years. More important, it requires that we extend to new members the most solemn commitments we make to other countries. We will pledge ourselves -- as do all Alliance partners -- to treat an attack against one as an attack against all.

I am convinced that this course serves our wisest self-interest. I have spoken about this many times, but above all, I wanted to explain this to you, the defenders of our future. Because it is
your skill, devotion and professionalism that must back up NATO's security guarantees -- and your lives that will be on the line.

NATO must grow for three reasons: It will make us stronger. It will prevent war's return. It will secure the important gains of democracy of our time.

Adding new members to NATO will make the Alliance more powerful, more cohesive and better able to address Europe's security challenges in this new age. The nations we are considering for membership share our values and our aspirations. Many stood with us in the Gulf War. All joined us in NATO's mission in Bosnia, without doubt or delay. Their weapons and training may not match our standards yet. But with their spirit and commitment, they will strengthen us. They are ready to bear the price of defending freedom because they know the price of losing freedom.

There are those who say these states are not worthy and will not fight with us. They are wrong. The people of these nations have fought by our side already.

Let me tell you a story from World War II: In 1944, some weeks after D-Day, American and allied troops in France encircled several of Hitler's panzer divisions. Some of the fiercest fighting of the war came as our forces tried to close a gap and prevent those tanks from escaping. The soldiers who got the job done were Poles, survivors of the invasion of their land who joined forces with us. As they tried to link up with our 90th Infantry, the Polish 1st armored division
held fast through wave upon wave of enemy counter attack. When they ran out of tank shells, they charged -- with nothing but their rifles and their courage.

After the Battle of the Falaise Gap, 325 Polish soldiers were buried near where they fell. By these graves in the heart of Europe, Allied soldiers raised a sign of tribute. It read in English: “A Polish Battlefield” -- and it reminds us that we may never forget the blood and sacrifice of others for our freedom.

The second reason we must enlarge NATO is to stop war from returning to Europe and drawing our nation again into conflict. When he signed the NATO Treaty in 1949, President Truman said that if NATO had existed in 1914 or 1939, it would have prevented the hostilities that led to conflict. Our experience of engagement through the Cold War showed he was right. By extending NATO’s reach into Central Europe, where weakness and upheaval ignited two world wars in a generation, we enlarge the circle of stability. And we reduce the chance that you will be called to fight another war across the Atlantic.

Some say NATO is no longer needed because there is no powerful threat now. I say there is no powerful threat now because NATO is there -- and enlargement will help ensure that none arises.

After this long and bloody century, we dare not be complacent about peace in Europe.

Third, we must enlarge NATO to secure important gains for democracy, peace and integration. In the coming years, the Alliance can do for Europe’s east what it did for Europe’s west. It will
give new democracies the chance to deepen their reforms and strengthen themselves from inside
instead of piling up excess weapons to defend against imagined threats from outside. It will
integration for the entire region and provide a climate for prosperity to grow. As it did with
France and Germany, it will help reconcile ancient enemies. In fact, it is already doing so:
Candidates for NATO membership have signed more than half a dozen agreements to settled
border and ethnic disputes that could have led to future Bosnias. That is good for Europe -- and
good for America.

I look forward to the Summit in Madrid and to welcoming new allies to NATO in two years. But
we must also recognize that a single round of enlargement will not create a permanent European
peace -- especially if it replaces one division of Europe with another. That is why the first
countries admitted to the Alliance will not be the last -- and why we will continue to reach out to
those who are not invited in July so no new gray zone of insecurity appears in Europe's midst.

Creating an undivided, peaceful and democratic Europe also demands a new partnership with
Russia. I am proud that, this week in Paris, we laid the cornerstone of this relationship -- and
narrowed a chasm that divided Russia and the West throughout this century.

The agreement we signed will create a sustained, cooperative relationship between NATO and
Russia. The Founding Act opens the door to a future in which NATO and Russia work together
to advance interests we share -- as we are in Bosnia -- and discuss constructively the
disagreements that arise. It joins Russia with NATO in a practical partnership that will make the United States, Europe and Russia stronger and more secure.

The Founding Act does not alter NATO's security commitments in any way. It proves that the relationship between NATO and Russia is not a zero-sum game. It shows that the 21st century need not be plagued by the calculations of advantage between nations that doomed millions of people in this century.

Our agreement in Paris changed the face of Europe for the century to come. Together with NATO enlargement, it is a symbol of all we can achieve if we set our sights high and summon the energy to achieve our goals.

Fifty five years in the early days of the war, General George Marshall spoke to the Cadets who stood where you are standing today. He said very plainly: “We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle, our flag will be recognized as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of overwhelming power on the other.” From all that followed -- and General Marshall’s own record as architect of our victory in arms and our security thereafter -- we know he sought that power so America could be resolute in defense of liberty and tenacious in preserving peace.

Today, our flag flies higher than ever. But it falls to you -- and to this nation -- to carry it into a new era. America must fulfill the obligation history has set for us. We must be the shapers of the peace for the new and better century about dawn.
Leadership in this cause falls heavily to you. As you go forward from this day, I ask you to remember those who walked before you on the Plain -- their professionalism, their dedication, their sacrifice. With their example before you, you will not lead America wrong.

No one is more prepared for the burden. No one is better equipped to complete the mission. Our nation looks to you with confidence and with hope.

God bless you. God bless America.

###

OUTTAKES

As we recalled the heroic work that brought our nation a half century of unparalleled success, we laid a cornerstone in the foundation for another 50 years of peace and security. [With our NATO allies and Russia, we created a extraordinary new partnership for security -- and changed the landscape of a war-scarred continent.]

Now, between the memory of that heroic time and the dawn of a century of shining promise, I have come to West Point with a new call to the American people: To maintain our leadership in the world security and freedom -- and to create an undivided, peaceful and democratic Europe for the first time in all of history. I challenge our nation to help write a future better than the past for
a continent where our young died for freedom...to ensure our own safety...and prepare America for the challenges of the 21st century.

Generations of West Point graduates have advanced this leadership -- as dedicated in peace as in war. After leading our wartime forces in Europe, General Eisenhower -- the Academy's greatest son in this century -- came out of retirement to be the first Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. General Lucius Clay -- buried here at West Point -- helped Germany to its feet and ran the airlift that saved Berlin. Generals Brent Scowcroft and Alexander Haig -- who stood in your shoes 50 years ago -- kept our nation on course as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State. General George Joulwan maintains this tradition to our day as Supreme Allied Commander and a remarkable force for peace in Bosnia. He is retiring this year after a distinguished career -- and I thank him for his extraordinary service to our nation.

Today, we see all around us the benefits of this dedication and the fruits of an entire generation devoted to securing freedom:

Now, America is strong -- and our economy is the envy of the world.

For America, this peak is not the end of our journey but a threshold to an age of remarkable possibility. In the coming century, more people will have the chance to live out their dreams than
at any time in history. And we will have greater opportunities to increase our prosperity and deepen our security than ever before.

Fifty years ago, America's leaders understood this well. Exhausted by war, they found the strength to rally our nation to build peace. They were determined that the sacrifice of almost 200,000 [ck] America lives between North Africa and the Elbe would not be in vain -- and another generation would not be summoned to fight on European soil.

America came to the Marshall Plan through a foresight no nation before had ever achieved. The generation of Truman, Marshall and Vandenberg lifted its eyes to the horizon and acted to help nations threatened by hunger, not guns. They saw in the despair of others the seed of a hatred that would destroy all we had sacrificed for. They understood that we could not allow that to happen to Europe or to us.

Now, inspired by their achievement, we must lift our eyes to a farther horizon. Our challenge is to create the institutions and understandings to carry us through the next 50 years. We must build the structures in which freedom and prosperity can flourish -- so nations can redefine their greatness from the power to conquer and coerce to the development of their citizens' potential. Improve their quality of life ... and cooperate against the new threats of the 21st century.
Our fathers and grandfathers fought one world war in Europe for freedom. Through four long decades, they deterred another. Now it falls to us to be the shapers of the peace.

The Marshall Plan began our peacetime engagement in Europe. It led to the creation of NATO, the growth of a strong Atlantic community of democracies joined by common values and shared prosperity. Because our forces remained vigilant for 50 years, America triumphed in the Cold War. And no fresh fields of crosses and stars were laid in Britain, Italy or France after communism’s collapse in Europe, the watchtowers may be empty, but the scars of division remain. As we saw in Bosnia, the forces of hatred and intolerance are alive and waiting to fill the vacuum it left.
To: Sandy Berger  
    Jim Steinberg  

From: Daniel Benjamin  

Attached is a draft of the address at West Point. Please call me with comments and changes at 6-9377.
Acknowledgments: General Shalikashvili; General Christman; Parents of the Cadets; Others Tk

To the cadets of 1997, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. You arrived fresh from high school; you survived Camp Buckner; and by the "March Back," you showed your were destined for leadership and excellence. In the classroom, you wrote a record of achievement worthy of this great academy. On the playing field, your Black Knights achieved what no West Point team before could: a 10 victory season. You clipped Air Force's wings and, for the first time in nine years, won the CINC's trophy outright -- and I was delighted to meet the team at the White House three months ago.

A few traditionalists among you also upheld the spirit of independence that has always dwelt at West Point. In 1796, when President Adams's War Department ordered the first class's "fortification," the troops here thought they already knew all that was necessary. So they burned the classroom to the ground, postponing the start of instruction by five years. Today, though the cadets' spirits remain high, the infractions are smaller. As Commander-in-Chief, I hereby exercise my prerogative to grant amnesty for minor offenses to the Corps of Cadets.

Men and women of the class of '97, today you join the Long Gray Line that stretches across two centuries of unstinting devotion to America and the freedom that is our greatest gift.
From the defense of Fort Erie in the War of 1812 to the fury of Antietam...from the trenches of the Argonne...to Anzio and Okinawa...Heartbreak Ridge, the Mekong Delta and the fiery desert of the Gulf War, the officers of West Point served and sacrificed for our nation. In the four years, since I last spoke here, your graduates have carried forward that legacy of service. They helped give the people of Haiti their best chance ever at democracy. They saved hundreds of thousands of lives from genocide and famine in Rwanda. They helped end the bloodshed in Bosnia, and gave that shattered nation breathing room to build peace. Throughout our history, whenever duty called, the men and women of West Point have answered. You have never failed us. I speak for all Americans when I say: I know you never will.

I have come to West Point with a new call to duty to you and to the American people as we set ourselves to the tasks of the 21st century. This week in Europe we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan -- and the resolve of a visionary generation to strengthen democracy, nourish prosperity and prevent war's return. Then, President Truman lifted the eyes of America to the horizon and told our people, “The United States has a tremendous responsibility to act according to the measure of our power for good in the world. We have learned that we must earn the peace we seek just as we earned victory in war, not by wishful thinking but by realistic effort.”
The great national effort of the Marshall Plan began our peacetime engagement in Europe. In the words of Winston Churchill, it was the most “unsordid act in history.” But the Marshall Plan was more: it was perhaps the wisest act of self-interest any nation has ever committed. Because it led to the creation of NATO and it set the foundation for an Atlantic community of democracies that embraced our values, spread prosperity and secured our victory in the Cold War.

But as we look back over half a century of success, our true purpose must be to commit ourselves to the wise acts of self-interest that will secure another 50 years of peace and prosperity. Inspired by those who rebuilt the world, we must lift our eyes to a farther horizon. We must create the institutions and understandings that will allow America to flourish in a new century -- so that nations redefine their greatness from the power to conquer and coerce to the ability to develop the full potential of their people, improve their quality of life and cooperate together against the new threats of the 21st century.

This is a moment of remarkable possibility. At home, our economy is strong and the envy world. Abroad, the power of our armed forces and our example is unrivaled. More than half of the world’s people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time. Nation after nation has turned to free markets, allowing their citizens to build better lives than ever before.

But as you who chose this place of duty, honor and country know, the battle is not over. The hard-won gains of democracy and open markets must be defended and strengthened every day. We must confront the challenges of a new century and a radically changed world. Communism
may be dead or discredited, but the forces of extreme nationalism, racial, religious and ethnic bloodletting still plague our planet. The new threats of drug trafficking, international crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and environmental decay find strength in the very freedom and progress we cherish.

Our nation stands at the pinnacle of its power, influence and success -- and therefore the pinnacle of its responsibility for ourselves, our children and the good of the entire world. This is what I mean when I have said that in these times, America is the indispensable nation.

Faced with the promise and the peril of our era, we cannot be idle. We must act now because it is right -- not sit back and let history run its course. As I told the American people in my State of the Union Address, the enemy of our time is inaction.

That is why, in that speech, I set out a plan of action to keep America strong, prosperous and secure as we enter the 21st century. It has six key strategic objectives: Building a Europe that is undivided, democratic and at peace for the first time in its history. Creating a strong and stable community of nations that links the United States and Asia. Embracing our inescapable role as the world's leading force for peace. Providing jobs and opportunity through a more open and competitive trading system. Confronting new security threats that defy borders and unilateral solutions. Making sure that we can meet all these challenges with the right tools, from a fully funded diplomacy to the world's strongest military. We know that preserving our strength of our armed forces is essential to achieving our goals -- that it is the core of our power and the muscle
behind our diplomacy. And we know that maintaining American leadership means that our military must remain the best-trained, best-equipped, best-prepared fighting force on earth. [do we need more on the six?] 

This week in Europe, we took an extraordinary stride toward achieving our first priority. Creating a continent that is undivided, democratic and peaceful requires a new partnership with Russia. I am proud that in Paris, we laid the cornerstone of this relationship -- and narrowed a chasm that divided Russia and the West throughout this century. 

The agreement we signed will create a sustained, cooperative relationship between NATO and Russia. The Founding Act opens the door to a future in which NATO and Russia work together to advance interests we share -- as we are in Bosnia -- and discuss constructively the disagreements that arise. It joins Russia with NATO in a practical partnership that will make the United States, Europe and Russia stronger and more secure. 

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Our agreement in Paris changed the face of Europe for the century to come. But it is only part of the larger effort that we began three and a half ago in Brussels, when I said that we must bring again, quoting himself
Europe together in security around alliances, economically around open markets, politically around democracy.

Many organizations and many nations have risen to this challenge. One, above all, is essential: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the keystone of transatlantic security and the most successful alliance in history. Now, we are setting NATO on a new course with new missions, new members and new partners. In 38 days, I will meet with other NATO leaders in Madrid to invite the first of Europe’s new democracies to begin the process of joining the Alliance. Afterward, we will ask the Senate for ratification of these new security arrangements. With their consent, and that of our allies, we can expect the new members to take their place in the Alliance by 1999 -- the 50th anniversary of NATO’s creation and the tenth year after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

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I am convinced that this course serves our deepest interests. I have spoken about this many times, but above all, I wanted to come here to explain this to you, who must be the defenders of our future. Because it is your skill, devotion and professionalism that must back up NATO’s security guarantees -- and your lives that will be on the front line.
NATO must grow for three reasons: It will make us stronger. It will prevent war's return. It will secure the important gains democracy has made in our time.

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Let me tell you a story from World War II: In 1944, some weeks after D-Day, American and allied troops in France encircled several of Hitler's panzer divisions. Some of the fiercest fighting of the war came as our forces tried to close a gap and prevent those tanks from escaping. The soldiers who got the job done were Poles, survivors of the invasion of their land who joined forces with us. As they tried to link up with our 90th Infantry, the Polish 1st armored division held fast through wave upon wave of enemy counter attack. When they ran out of tank shells, they charged -- with nothing but their rifles and their courage.
After the Battle of the Falaise Gap, 325 Polish soldiers were buried near where they fell. By these graves in the heart of Europe, Allied soldiers raised a sign of tribute. It read in English: "A Polish Battlefield" -- and it reminds us that we may never forget the blood and sacrifice of others for our freedom.

The second reason we must enlarge NATO is to prevent war from returning to Europe and drawing our nation again into conflict. When he signed the NATO Treaty in 1949, President Truman said that if NATO had existed in 1914 or 1939, it would have prevented the hostilities that led to conflict. Our experience of engagement in Europe during the Cold War showed he was right. By extending NATO's reach into Central Europe, where weakness and upheaval ignited two world wars in a generation, we enlarge the circle of stability. We reduce the chance that we will be called to fight another war across the Atlantic. And we fulfill our obligation to see that no fresh fields of crosses and stars are laid in Britain, Italy or France.

Some say NATO is no longer needed because there is no powerful threat to our security now. I say there is no powerful threat now because NATO is there -- and enlargement will help ensure that none arises. After this long and bloody century, we dare not be complacent about peace in Europe.

Third, we must enlarge NATO to secure important gains for democracy, peace and integration. NATO can do for Europe's east what it did for Europe's west. It will give new democracies the chance to deepen their reforms and strengthen themselves from inside instead of piling up excess
weapons to defend against imagined threats from outside. It will bring an entire region closer together and provide a climate for prosperity to grow. As it did with France and Germany, it will help reconcile ancient enemies. In fact, it is already doing so: Candidates for NATO membership have settled more than half a dozen border and ethnic disputes that could have led to future Bosnias. That is good for Europe -- and good for America.

I look forward to the Summit in Madrid and to welcoming new allies to NATO in two years. But a single round of enlargement will not create a permanent European peace -- especially if it replaces one division of Europe with another. That is why the first countries admitted to the Alliance will not be the last -- and why we will continue to reach out to those who are not invited in July so no new gray zone of insecurity appears in Europe’s midst.

In this century, we have learned through hard experience that Europe’s fate and America’s future are joined -- that when Europe is stable, prosperous and at peace, America is more secure. At this moment -- between 50 years of unparalleled achievement and a century of shining promise -- we must go on turning that lesson to our advantage, for ourselves and the generations to come.

Fifty-five years, in the early days of the World War II, General George Marshall, the man we honored this week, spoke at another commencement. To cadets who stood where you are standing now, he said very plainly: “We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle, our flag will be recognized as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of overwhelming power on the other.” From all that followed -- and General Marshall’s own record
as architect of our victory in arms and our security thereafter -- we know he sought that power so America could be resolute in defense of liberty and tenacious in preserving peace.

Today, because of the determination of one generation to fight one war and to deter another... and because the American people have lived up to their responsibility to lead for the last half century... our flag flies higher than ever. Now, it falls to you -- and to this nation -- to carry it into a new era. America must fulfill the obligation history has set for us. We must be the shapers of the peace for the new and better century about dawn.

As you go forward from this day, I ask you to remember those who walked before you on the Plain -- their professionalism, their dedication, their sacrifice. With their example before you, you will not lead America wrong.

No one is more prepared for the burden. No one is better equipped to complete the mission. Our nation looks to you with confidence and with hope.

God bless you. God bless America.

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Congrats on a great trip. West Point looks pretty good. The arguments are sound. It will be a big boost for this issue. While I’m hesitant to weigh in with last minute suggestions (I recall how much I hated that), I nevertheless would urge three changes:

- It lacks a memorable sound bite paragraph. The natural place is the end of the second full paragraph on p. 7. But that last sentence goes on forever, is hard to follow, and impossible to quote. An alternative:

  “The bottom line is clear. Expanding NATO will expand our own security and our hopes for the 21st century. We must not fail history’s challenge. This generation did not topple the Berlin Wall only to shrink behind a veil of indifference. Full American security demands a strategy for the full of Europe, and now NATO can help make Europe undivided, democratic, and peaceful.”

- Generally, the speech is a little bloodless. Small example: rather than strike a dramatic moment by saying “I wanted to explain this case to you [pointing out at the cadets], whose lives would be on the line”, he says I wanted to make the case to “the cadets here,” as if he were talking to someone else. The speech also partly lacks passion because it fails to take on the specific arguments of critics (“some say it will still damage Russia’s reforms...”, or “some say these states are not important to our security or ready to be our allies...”); one or two of those would give it more bite. Above all, it lacks a human face that would give it drama and make it memorable. That was the virtue of the Falaise Gap story, which also would speak very powerfully to a military audience. I would urge that you think about bringing back in that story, or some such. It only adds two paragraphs, and those could be saved by tightening up the review of the world at the end.

- The speech is good now in bluntly stating the cost and the Article V risk. He’ll get more gut points, however, if he goes the final step and notes that nuke guarantees are implied here (Strobe has been making this point to very good effect). The clear place would be at the top of page 7; after the first sentence, add: “We have always made the pledge credible through the deployment of our troops and the deterrent of our nuclear weapons. In the years ahead, that pledge would mean that you may be asked to put your lives.....” If he’s willing to do that, he’ll strip critics of the argument that we’re trying to slip this past the public without telling them the full extent of the risks.

Good luck. Call if I can be of any help.