

START

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Cadet First Captain Nielsen. Jon, from St. Paul, Nebraska, representing the great state of Nebraska very well.

General Hagenbeck, thank you for the hospitality that you've shown to Barbara and myself. I would say to the Corps there were competing prayers to Odin; Odin is fickle. It was an honor to receive the Review on the Plain. Thank you, Sir.

And thank you for inviting some of my West Point Class and spouses to share in this event with the Corps. They stood with the Corps on the first weekend after 9/11/2001; and they are here again on its fifth anniversary.

To my Classmates on our 40th Reunion, I stand in awe of your service. You in the Corps will have the same emotion in years to come as you see the valor in battle and in life of your classmates that surround you today.

To the Air Force officers and spouses here at West Point, I salute you. It is a high honor to serve with you. I welcome you warmly to this Hall where I spent so much time as a Cadet.

I can only imagine the astonishment of my Tactical Officers from long ago that my career would extend to this point, four decades after that first Monday in July of 1962. The astonishment would be registered because I did spend a fair number of hours under arms walking tours in Central Area. I have always contended that this would be because my interpretation of *Regulations, United States Corps of Cadets* was more, shall we say, fluid than the Tactical Department's.

But my time wearing a path in Central Area puts in bright light my early views on living within a Rule Set. That having been said, once a Rule Set is understood, there is a place for challenging silos of thought, for piercing barriers that blind us to opportunity.

Thinking outside the box is not always an encouraged vector for a future in the military ranks. But, it is actually a recognizable part of our history of military leadership. It has to do with Habits of Thought as warriors.

From Washington at the Delaware, Jackson along the Shenandoah, Patton in France, Arnold and LeMay marshalling the Air Corps, MacArthur in the Pacific and at Inchon, American leaders keep transforming warfare.

In Europe the Champion of Maneuver was Patton. In the Pacific it was LeMay, who on March 9, 1945, sent waves of B-29's at 5,000 feet, stripped of all defensive systems and guns and superloaded with bombs, foiling Japan's defenses and, together with MacArthur, beginning the offensive that ultimately brought about VJ Day.

In Vietnam's Ia Drang Valley, Air Assault emerged, to visit overwhelming lethality on our enemies. Over Bashur in Iraq we inserted almost 1,000 soldiers in the biggest single pass night drop since D-Day. Battlefield Airmen jumped with the 173d Airborne Brigade. The assets focused on the drop zone were in some cases from oceans away: an amazing example of expeditionary lift and the Global Reach it demands.

We are seeing right now an historic evolution in maneuver warfare: to the Interdependent Fight, where long-duration mass on the ground can be exchanged for rapid massing of resources of awareness, of detection, and of instant communications to deliver concentrated and precision strike.

In your careers you will draw real time from five battle domains as you close, fight and kill. You will watch and you will strike from the Ground, from the Sea, from Air, from Space, and from Cyberspace.

Interdependence arises from the literal interconnections across all of these domains, constantly, in the hands of unit-level warriors of each and every Service simultaneously. Interdependence goes beyond Joint. It is an evolutionary step upward.

You will deny the enemy a massed target, and annihilate the enemy wherever they mass, in any domain. In short, you will get your opponent to offer to you a high value target before you offer one to them.

This Interdependent Fight calls for exquisite situation awareness. We thought in the past in terms of 360-Degree Awareness. But I submit that the American Warrior has evolved. He's evolved to what I call Spherical Situation Awareness. This is a new term. It calls for a new Habit of Thought. It is the habit of taking a comprehensive, spherical view, at once vertical and horizontal, real-time and predictive, penetrating, yet defended; also in the cyber realm; eliminating as much as possible obstacles of terrain, weather, foliage, darkness, jamming and any defenses erected in any of these domains, all the means of surprise that provide cover and resources to the enemy, even buried objects and buried targets.

Most importantly, Spherical Situation Awareness delivers to the net the tools of precision fire, including fires measured to avoid innocent casualties, and to get instant feedback to all that are on the command net. The kill cycle can thus be cut to minutes and possibly seconds, from the detect to the assessment.

Fires can be brought closer to you. The aim is to deny refuge to the enemy who tries to hug you to avoid close air support.

The early tools in this evolution are in service in Iraq and Afghanistan but are yet to be fully exploited. This may well be your task as junior officers. They were demonstrated this summer at Camp Buckner here at West Point, at the Air Force Academy in Jack's Valley and at Warrior Forge for ROTC at Fort Lewis, Washington. So some of you in fact experienced real-time constant vertical observation. The tools are being made widely available. Marines, Navy, Coast Guard and allies such as the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada are in various stages of adopting them. These same tools will serve

Homeland Security -- and in natural disasters they will serve First Responders, Police and Fire Fighters.

I'd like now to illustrate this Interdependence with a video. As you watch this video, consider technologies that you know, and use your imagination to extend what you see. Look for ways to achieve more agility, lethality, speed. For this is the challenge that I bring to you this evening. Show the video.

Show the Video [Pause while Video is showing. Video Ends]

These images are ripped straight from the current fight, against a determined foe. From these images, here are specific examples of what I mean by the Interdependent Fight:

-- I mean that Air, Space, Cyber and Sea power achieve dominance necessary to prevent air attacks on our Ground forces and on our logistic lines.

-- I mean that Army and Marine groundfighters pass intelligence to Air Force controllers, who call loitering air power for strikes using anything from 20 millimeter shells to 2000 pound precision bombs. Ask Abu Musab al-Zarqawi about that, and compliment the ground commander who thought spherically to work the rest of the mission.

-- I mean that we pass intelligence real time between air assets and surface assets. Today most of my fighter aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles can track the foe and pass streaming video or infrared

pointers directly to groundfighters visible on their night vision goggles—this is an extraordinary breakthrough.

This changes the Habit of Thought that you must have, for example as you bed down a unit and lay out your perimeter and fields of fire, the change is to include all assets for situation awareness and firepower that's available to complement organic power.

This is no panacea. The thinking enemy already finds ways to avoid massing, dodge our sensors and inflict casualties. A sober reminder is the recent notification of the passage of First Lt. Emily Perez, a former Brigade Cadet Sergeant Major who was killed in action in Iraq just this past week – Class of '05. And this is not Land Power versus Sea Power versus Air Power: we must fight Interdependently because we in fact are Interdependent. Only in combination we will root out and kill each enemy.

Seers as diverse as Omar Bradley, Winston Churchill and H.G. Wells saw the import of the air domain. I would paraphrase, only adding Space and Cyberspace, for their insights are true in the two newest domains as well.

Bradley said, "Airpower has become predominant, both as a deterrent to war, and — in the eventuality of war — as the devastating force to destroy an enemy's potential and fatally undermine his will to wage war." I would amend Bradley by asserting not predominance but instead Interdependence is what is really going to matter among our great Services.

His words foresaw our National Strategy doctrines of deterrence and overwhelming response.

And in 1933 Churchill said, "Not to have an adequate air force in the present state of the world is to compromise the foundations of national freedom and independence."

And Wells wrote, "Once the command of the air is obtained ... the war then becomes a conflict between a seeing host and one that is blind."

These truths are redoubled in Space and in Cyberspace.

This Long War of the new century will take all five Services, to include the Coast Guard. We guard the Homeland and keep the fight in the enemy's back yard. We employ whatever technologies we can to save lives on the battlefield.

But let me caution you. This is life and death, and it will cut you deeply. My classmate Tommy Hayes just about carried me through Russian, a subject that I passed but never mastered. I mean after-Taps sessions until one a.m. Tommy was a Star Man and in battle clearly would have leveraged all assets available.

But what is available today was not available to Tommy. So, on April 17, 1968, in Vietnam as he laid out his platoon's op plan for an aerial insertion he could not know that the enemy was larger than anticipated; and so we lost Tommy in a daylight fight. Our whole class still bears that wound.

And we bear the loss of men like Buck Thompson, the class legend, who was killed by friendly fire in Vietnam in the days of grease-pencil and radio targeting. We reduce these errors with the tools you have just seen, but terrible incidents fresh from the battlefield tell us that we have a ways to go.

The Old Truths apply. The Interdependent Fight and Spherical Situation Awareness are new thoughts. But they are built on the Principles of War of old. They carry hard lessons. They form Habits of Thought as warriors.

I charge you here to examine that Habit of Thought that will sustain you. Leverage Every Asset. Think Five Domains. Think in a Spherical Sense. Dominate. Take no interest in "fair" fights. If you are ever in a "fair" fight, someone failed in planning.

Though as a Service Secretary my duty is in organizing, training and equipping our Country's warriors, our fighting power is brought to the battle and magnified by the brave men and women who use it. I see not only the splendid talent brought through all of our Academies and Officer Training institutions; but as well the leaven that is brought by the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps.

Kipling is forever right: the Non-Commissioned Officer is the backbone of our force. And today from all Commanders in all of America's current battles, the dominant message is: In the inventiveness of our warrior we find victory.

Finally, I want to say just a little bit about what drives me. I am currently honored to be the Secretary of the greatest Air Force in the world. For 53 years not one American soldier has died as a result of enemy aircraft fire. I aim to extend this hard-earned dominance for another 53 years and more, and use Cyber and Space Power to do it.

Though I am the first West Point Graduate to serve as Secretary of the Air Force, there have been nine West Pointers among the Air Force Chiefs of Staff. We have a shared heritage. My father graduated in the Class of 1940 and became a founding member of the Air Force. He is buried here in a place of honor at West Point; and my older brother is Class of 1963 from the Air Force Academy. He is buried there in a place of honor, shot down over Vietnam in the year I graduated.

All this drives me to be clear about my pride in my service to our country. I held this in focus when I was asked to come back into service. It was a joint decision, made with my wife and life-partner Barbara.

To the Corps, and to the Midshipmen and Cadets here from each of our Academies, as well as from other nations: it is my honor to address this assembly of future military and national leaders.

That may seem that you're listening to a tall order, especially to you who just entered last summer, but recall that each of you made a distinct choice to enter the service of your nation during a time of war. That noble decision will stand before you, etched in memory for a lifetime. It will light your path as you find your individual futures, and as you face new choices about how to best to serve your country.

In contrast, for my classmates and myself, the storm clouds and signs of war were gathering. We had an ebullient President and things looked good. They were just gathering in our first summer and began to cloud later in our cadet career. We were cadets one century after America's costliest war, and we faced America's longest war.

I and now you have chosen the Profession of Arms. It exacts character beyond the norm. The engines of our profession are lethal, and their use calls for the highest standards of integrity and courage.

Duty, Honor, and Country bond us, unifying us with warriors of the past. Words matter, like Courage and Valor, and Integrity, Service and Excellence. They establish the foundation, and formed for me the bedrock of strength throughout my career.

But what of you who are the Corps today?

History that is written in the decades to come will celebrate your triumphs and honor the steadfastness and courage in your ranks. Your innovation in bringing the Interdependent Fight from text to battlefield will write that history.

Thank you for your service, your devotion, and the sacrifices you and your families have and will make.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great Nation.

Thank you. Beat Navy!

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