

the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, which I hereby determine are suffering major disasters. The wheat will be used to provide urgent humanitarian relief to the peoples in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia who are suffering widespread hunger and malnutrition.

This action is taken because wheat needed for relief in these regions cannot be programmed for such purpose in a timely manner under the normal means of obtaining commodities for food assistance due to cir-

cumstances of unanticipated and exceptional need.

You are authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

GEORGE BUSH

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 3:46 p.m., June 20, 1991]

Note: The memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 1.

Remarks at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony in West Point, New York

June 1, 1991

Thank you all very much for that warm welcome back to West Point. Thank you all very, very much. Thank you, General Palmer—Dave Palmer—for that introduction. May I salute our Secretary of the Army, Secretary Stone; our Chief, General Vuono. And might I say at the beginning that this country owes a great vote of thanks to both these general officers who have served their country with sacrifice and distinction. Please express yourselves by showing your appreciation to Carl Vuono and Dave Palmer, two great soldiers.

And may I single out at the outset several other special guests who, along with Secretary Stone and General Vuono, came up with me on Air Force One: Congressman Sonny Montgomery, of Mississippi, a great supporter of a strong military. You guys better cheer, he's a major general also. [Laughter] And then, Congressman Ham Fish, who represents this West Point sister so well in Congress. And also may I single out my trusted national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft—the class of '47 at this Academy. Also Congressman Ben Gilman, who represents, as I understand it, the next congressional district over—also a great friend of the Point.

And last, but certainly not least, let me single out a friend of our country, Ambassador Bandar, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States. And look, don't

hold it against him that he's a fighter pilot. [Laughter] From day one of Desert Shield, all through Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia and the United States stood shoulder-to-shoulder versus aggression. And together we did what was just and right.

Now to the business at hand. A special greeting to the families and to the friends and, most important, to the cadets of the class of 1991. It is an honor—and I mean that, for both Barbara and me today—it is an honor to be here at this symbol of "duty, honor, country," and to know what Douglas MacArthur meant when he said, "In the evening of my memory, I always come back to West Point." Barbara and I are proud to become honorary members of this Long Grey Line.

You know, it's really something to look out over this outstanding military audience. Now I know how Bob Hope feels. [Laughter] Also, let me say it was good of you to invite a Navy man to speak at West Point. I left the goat outside, but I'm glad to be here. [Laughter]

Before my remarks to this graduating class let me just make an announcement that is of interest to all here—to all around the world. The United States and the Soviet Union not many hours ago resolved our differences on the CFE treaty, clearing the way for an important step towards a superpower summit. And I congratulate our Sec-

retary of State, the Foreign Secretary of the Soviet Union Bessmertnykh, and all involved. This is important to world peace, and I'm glad to make this announcement right here at West Point.

You know, we meet this morning not as members of opposing teams but as one people called Americans, Americans who know that like the memorial at Pearl Harbor or the chapel at the Air Force Academy, its silhouette reaching toward the sky, this ground right here at West Point reflects our deepest values and principles.

Look around you—the majestic cadet chapel, the four statues in the mess hall, on grounds hallowed by generations of military heroes. Their lessons live as oral history, passed from one decade to another. Militarily and culturally, morally and spiritually, West Point has always been a metaphor for the American character.

The American character inspired generations of immigrants to push back the wilderness, establish settlements, and secure independence. One generation preserved the Union. Another fought “the war to end all wars.” The generation of your parents and grandparents showed that the Iron Curtain could not hold back America’s values, America’s hopes, America’s example.

Today, I want to talk of the American character and how it makes ours a great nation. This character has many elements, the foremost of which is our devotion to freedom. The love of liberty drives our national heartbeat. Might I add that that beat is regular, not fibrillating. A central tenet of this devotion, freedom of religion, creates a special place for values, for morals and faiths and causes larger than ourselves.

Next, our character bursts with self-reliance and creativity, two qualities that propel us from the drawing boards of today to the launching pads of tomorrow. Indeed, to this day, the only footprints on the moon are American footprints; the only flag, the Stars and Stripes.

Finally, we define our character through the service we render to others, by assuming responsibility for the welfare of our homes, our families, and communities. We must serve those for whom the American dream still seems an impossible dream.

You at West Point have established an

example for the rest of the Nation. Here people measure each other in terms of merit, heart, and will, not creed or sex or color or national origin. Look to your left and look to your right, and what do you see? People divided by race and religion? No. You see your friends and your future. Our Armed Forces have shown what Americans can do when they see themselves not as white and black and red or brown but as one people united in common purpose, pulling for each other, helping each other, relying upon each other—and in the process, getting the job done.

More than three decades ago, the civil rights movement reshaped a nation by appealing to this American character. It invited people to join hands in common cause against evil, to build a society upon common decency and respect. Martin Luther King dreamed of an America in which one day our children would—and to quote—“not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” In the Army, just as here at West Point, that “one day” has arrived.

As Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in *Brown versus the Board of Education*, “The road to progress for the victims of past discrimination is equal and excellent education.” In the years since the Army became a volunteer force it has featured equal and excellent education. As a result, we have the best educated military in our history. The percentage of minority enlisted personnel has nearly doubled, as has the number of minority noncommissioned officers. The number of minority officers has almost tripled.

And you may recall that at the beginning of the Gulf war—think back now—you may recall that at the beginning of the Gulf war some complained that we have too many minorities in the military. My disagreement could not be more clear. The military is, yes, the greatest equal opportunity employer around. And as our distinguished Chairman, Colin Powell, said at the time, we have nothing to be ashamed of.

And at West Point, certainly, you have plenty to be proud of. Your class boasts the 1,000th black graduate of this institution, a great leader, as anybody who’s been around

this place knows, a great athlete. The 1,000th female graduate, also an all-around leader, a good soldier. And then the first graduate—your class—the first graduate from among the Hmong people of Laos. Yet the Army and West Point don't recruit minorities. They recruit soldiers, the finest sons and daughters any country could ever have.

And so, our country's task, America's task, is to achieve nationally what we celebrate today at West Point. We must think of ourselves not as colors or numbers but as Americans, as bearers of sacred values. To reach that end, we must destroy the racial mistrust that threatens our national well-being as much as violence or drugs or poverty. We've all seen images of racial violence, vivid pictures of fire and destruction, flashing lights and nightsticks. But we've also experienced little episodes of mistrust, little ugly examples—people slipping across the street to avoid someone of a different color, pressing themselves wearily into the back of an elevator. The practice of distrusting strangers because of their race or nationality, the habit of using patronizing or demeaning stereotypes.

Let's not kid ourselves. Regrettably, racism and bigotry still exist in this great country of ours. But let there be no doubt, this President and this administration will strike at discrimination wherever it exists. Because, you see, prejudice and hate have no place in this country, period. The real question that's facing us is not whether to fight these evils but how.

Black and white, the great civil rights leaders of the fifties and sixties deplored intolerance, demanded equality of opportunity and equality under the law. Government's responsibility is to enhance, not redistribute, opportunity to ensure that all people get a fair chance to achieve their dreams. And today, some talk not of opportunity but of redistributing rights. They'd pit one group against another, encourage people to think of others as competitors, not colleagues. That's not the way to achieve justice and equality here in America. We need to adopt a more unifying, moral, and noble approach.

I learned long ago that if you want something done, give someone a reason for doing

it. Don't put them on the defensive; don't browbeat them. Appeal to the better angels of their nature. As I see it, this is the concept behind affirmative action. To me, true affirmative action expresses a duty of citizenship: good faith efforts to provide opportunity for individuals based on merit, to reach out and create truly equal opportunity for those who have been left behind, those who have been excluded.

Some think affirmative action should involve a Rubik's Cube of workplace guarantees. And I believe that it should inspire people of all races to nurture affirmative values, affirmative views of themselves, affirmative lives. And that's why our administration is committed to a comprehensive attack on the problems facing disadvantaged Americans.

We've called for a revolution in education with our America 2000 strategy. We've tried to reform the public housing system, turn it into an ownership system with a program we properly call HOPE, H-O-P-E. And we've proposed enterprise zones to plant seeds of growth amid the ruins of crumbling cities and dusty rural areas. And we've offered tough anticrime legislation because no American is free if imprisoned by the fear of crime. And we have advocated community opportunity areas to shift power from the heavy hand of the state to the hands that run the home, raise the family. God bless the strength of the American family. We've got to do more to help strengthen it.

These policies give power back to the people, and they move us toward achieving the goal of equal opportunity. They do not—cannot—ensure equal success.

In that spirit, consider our civil rights package. Our administration's S. 1991 civil rights bill would forbid consideration of factors such as race and sex in employment practices. It will ensure that Congress lives by the same rules it prescribes for others. And it will not force employers to choose between using quotas or the risk of costly litigation.

I know there's another so-called civil rights bill out there, but it's a quota bill, regardless of how its authors dress it up. You can't put a sign on a pig and say it's a

horse. It invites people to litigate, not cooperate. And this is no way in our country to promote harmony.

And so, let us cast off now the politics of division. Let's build a society in which people respect each other, work with—not against—each other, and strive to illuminate the American character.

Tomorrow, our able Secretary of HHS—Health and Human Services—my colleague in our Cabinet, Dr. Lou Sullivan, will address the high school in his hometown of Blakely, Georgia. What's unusual is that this distinguished doctor now, then was not permitted to attend that school when he was young. It would not admit black kids. He overcame the burdens of prejudice to become an eloquent advocate of good education and sound values. And Lou has forgiven, but he and we can never forget the terrible things that racism and prejudice can do to a land.

Here at West Point you have shown the essence of the American character, opportunity based on merit. And now, let us build a "we," not a "me," generation by carrying the ideals of this school to the Nation and the world.

You know, many of the service men and women who performed brilliantly during Operation Desert Shield and then subsequently Desert Storm have become what we call Points of Light at home. They've returned to their own communities and urged young people to follow their lead, to work hard, to stay in school, to stay away from drugs. And so, let's thank those who have taken this message back to the schools and communities across our land. And let's vow to do more.

And I'd like to encourage all of you, respected in your communities now, to become Points of Light. Visit a school or a recreation center or a place of worship, and share some of your lives and your experi-

ences. I ask communities to invite these wonderful men and women to speak at the schools and other forums. You in this class of 1991 can show that the story of the Good Samaritan is more than just an object lesson, for, you see, it's part of the American character.

Douglas MacArthur, a son of West Point, once said, "The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war." America's magnificent military has helped secure the peace abroad. Our challenge now is to heal the wounds and the scars at home and help the extended hand spur harmony and brotherhood, not faction and suspicion.

And so, let us honor the true grandeur of America, the dignity of the individual. You here at West Point, you all lead the way.

May God bless the class of 1991 as you go on with your service to the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in Michie Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Dave R. Palmer, Superintendent of the Academy; Michael P.W. Stone, Secretary of the Army; Gen. Carl E. Vuono, Army Chief of Staff; Representatives G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery, Hamilton Fish, Jr., and Benjamin A. Gilman; Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Ambassador from Saudi Arabia; entertainer Bob Hope; Secretary of State James A. Baker III; Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh of the Soviet Union; Gen. Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan. Following his remarks, the President traveled to Camp David, MD, for the weekend.

Exchange With Reporters on Soviet-United States Relations

June 1, 1991

The President. Well, good news on CFE. We're very pleased, of course. The agree-

ment was achieved under the original limits, which is good—[inaudible]—under