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# News:

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE  
AT THE U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY COMMENCEMENT  
MAY 21, 1986  
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

WHAT A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU, ADMIRAL GRACEY, AND SO MANY FINE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD. IT HAS BEEN MY GREAT PRIVILEGE TO WORK WITH ADMIRAL GRACEY THESE PAST THREE YEARS. I WILL GREATLY MISS THE ADMIRAL AND MRS. GRACEY, TALENTED AND DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANTS. I WISH THEM GODSPEED AS THEY SOON PURSUE THE NEXT PHASE OF BRILLIANT CAREERS.

TODAY, I AM INFORMED, YOU HAVE GIVEN ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE HISTORY -- AS THE FIRST WOMAN TO DELIVER A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS AT THE FIRST SERVICE ACADEMY TO ADMIT WOMEN. FOR THAT, I AM PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER KIND OF HISTORY BEING MADE THESE DAYS, THE HISTORY THAT'S MIXED UP WITH THE HEADLINES WHICH COMPRISE OUR DAILY DIET OF NEWS. AND HERE, THE MEN AND THE WOMEN OF THE COAST GUARD ARE PROMINENT INDEED. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

DATeline, SOUTHERN ATLANTIC, MONDAY, MAY 19TH, 1986; EIGHT CREW MEMBERS ARE SPOTTED ON A LIFE RAFT, FIVE DAYS AFTER HURRICANE FORCE WINDS CAPSIZED THE 90 FOOT SCHOONER, PRIDE OF BALTIMORE IN A STORMY PASSAGE 240 MILES NORTH OF PUERTO RICO. THERE WAS TRAGEDY IN THE SHIP'S WAKE -- FOUR MISSING CREW MEMBERS CLAIMED BY AN ANGRY SEA NEAR THE END OF A FIFTEEN MONTH GOODWILL VOYAGE TO EUROPEAN PORTS --A JOURNEY ITSELF CUT SHORT BECAUSE OF TENSION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND TERRORISM THROUGHOUT THE REGION. YET THERE WAS TRIUMPH AS WELL -- IN HELPING RESCUE FELLOW MARINERS WHO WERE PICKED UP BY THE NORWEGIAN TANKER, TORO. AND THERE WAS HEROISM, NOT ONLY IN THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE, BUT IN THE SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS, A SEARCH LAUNCHED BY COAST GUARD AIRCRAFT AND COAST GUARD CUTTERS.

FOUR MONTHS BEFORE THE PRIDE OF BALTIMORE FOUNDERED, ANOTHER DISTRESS CALL REACHED THE COAST GUARD FROM ANOTHER STORM-TOSSED CORNER OF THE ATLANTIC. AND YET ANOTHER EMERGENCY TASK FORCE OF 150 COAST GUARD PERSONNEL SET OFF IN CUTTERS, HELICOPTERS, BOATS AND PLANES TO RESCUE 70 PANICKY HAITIANS FLEEING THEIR IMPOVERISHED HOMELAND IN A FRAGILE SAILBOAT THAT WAS REPORTED TO BE SINKING JUST 20 MILES EAST OF MIAMI.

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SUCH IS THE MISSION OF THE COAST GUARD; SUCH IS THE LIFE ON WHICH YOU SET SAIL THIS DAY. ON THIS COMMENCEMENT DAY, THIS MIXED JUMBLE OF BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS, OF BEAMING PARENTS AND POPPING FLASHBULBS, I AM REMINDED OF THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF THE 107TH PSALM..."THEY THAT DO BUSINESS IN GREAT WATERS: THESE SEE THE WORKS OF THE LORD, AND HIS WONDERS IN THE DEEP."

FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE REPUBLIC, THE COAST GUARD HAS SAVED LIVES WHILE EXPERIENCING FOR ITSELF THE "WONDERS OF THE DEEP." YOU HAVE ENFORCED OUR LAWS AND RAISED OUR STANDARDS IN GREAT WATERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. AND NOW YOU, AS THE LATEST GENERATION TO GRADUATE FROM THIS ACADEMY, UNDERTAKE YOUR OWN ADVENTURES, YOUR OWN CAREERS OF SERVICE. NOT ALL OF YOU WILL MAKE IT INTO THE HEADLINES. AND YET ALL OF YOU WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAKING OF HISTORY. FOR WHEN THE OTHER SERVICES ARE AT PEACE, YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES WAGE ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST THE FORCES OF CARELESSNESS AND CRIME. WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE PRIDE OF BALTIMORE EARLIER THIS WEEK IS BUT THE MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLE OF COAST GUARD LIFE-SAVING. IT IS BY NO MEANS THE ONLY ONE.

FOR TODAY, THE WATERS AROUND OUR SHORES ARE TEEMING WITH LETHAL DANGERS, MOST OF THEM MAN-MADE. THEY STEM FROM INDIVIDUAL GREED AND CRIMINAL APPETITE. AND THE MOST SAVAGE WAVE OF ALL - ONE WHICH THREATENS TO TOPPLE THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE - IS THE GATHERING CREST OF ILLICIT DRUGS. AGAINST SUCH A FORCE, SOCIETY HAS CHOSEN TO EMPLOY MANY WEAPONS. BUT NONE OF THEM COMPARE IN DEDICATION OR RESOURCEFULNESS TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE COAST GUARD.

LAST YEAR ALONE, THE COAST GUARD SEIZED 184 VESSELS ENGAGED IN THE DEADLY DRUG TRADE. IT CONFISCATED DRUGS WITH AN ESTIMATED STREET WORTH OF 2.5 BILLION DOLLARS. BUT THESE SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS COLD NUMBERS ON A COMPUTER PRINTOUT. FOR EVERY DRUG SMUGGLER PUT OUT OF COMMISSION MEANS THAT MUCH LESS POISON COURSE THROUGH THE VEINS OF AMERICANS. MANY OF THEM NO OLDER THAN YOU, MANY WITH EQUAL POTENTIAL TO REALIZE THEIR DREAMS WERE IT NOT FOR THE NIGHTMARE OF DRUGS AND THE SOCIAL CANCER THEY REPRESENT. IN COMBATING THE NAUTICAL PUSHERS WHO WOULD MAKE A PROFIT OFF THE RUINED LIVES OF OUR COUNTRYMEN, YOU UPHOLD NOT ONLY THE STATUTORY LAW, BUT THE LAWS OF MORALITY AND THE CODE OF HONOR.

AS YOU ENTER CHASE HALL, YOU ENCOUNTER A MOTTO INSCRIBED IN THE FLOOR. "HE WHO LIVES HERE REVERES HONOR, HONORS DUTY." IT HAS BEEN THAT WAY FOR NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS NOW, EVER SINCE AN EARLY CONGRESS ESTABLISHED "THE REVENUE MARINE" TO ENFORCE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MARITIME LAW. WHILE YOUR MISSION HAS REMAINED CONSTANT, THE DEMANDS MADE UPON YOU HAVE GROWN WITH A MOBILE REPUBLIC. THANKS TO THE COAST GUARD'S SEARCH AND RESCUE SKILLS, AIDED BY THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY AND ITS VOLUNTEER TRADITION, OVER SIX THOUSAND LIVES ARE SAVED EACH YEAR. ALL OF WHICH MAKES YOU VIRTUALLY UNIQUE: A MILITARY FORCE WHICH BATTLES TO PRESERVE LIFE, AND WHICH MEASURES ITS SUCCESS BY THE ABSENCE OF CASUALTIES.

NOR IS THE SCOPE OF YOUR WORK LIMITED TO DOMESTIC WATERS. FOR UNITED STATES COAST GUARDSMEN AND WOMEN ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH MARITIME SAFETY IN ALL



THE SEVEN SEAS - IN 110 COUNTRIES WITH OVER 25,000 SHIPS REGISTERED AS MEMBERS OF OUR AUTOMATED MUTUAL ASSISTANCE RESCUE SYSTEM - AMONG FOREIGN NATIONALS WHO EACH YEAR ENROLL IN VARIOUS COAST GUARD SAFETY TRAINING COURSES - AND ON 10 CARIBBEAN ISLANDS WHERE LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE DISCOVERING WAYS TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN SEARCH AND RESCUE TECHNIQUES THANKS TO THE HELPFUL INSTRUCTION SUPPLIED BY THE COAST GUARD.

ADMIRAL GRACEY HAS CALLED THE COAST GUARD, "A FINE JEWEL, UNEQUALED BY ANY COUNTRY BUT ENVIED BY MANY." I WOULD GO FURTHER STILL. FOR ME, THE COAST GUARD IS THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF SAFETY AT SEA. IF I, AS SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, HAVE A SINGLE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE, IT IS TO KEEP TRAVELERS OUT OF HARM'S WAY ON LAND, SEA, OR IN THE AIR. IT IS AN IMMENSE TASK, ONE WHICH COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE REALIZED WITHOUT THE HELP AND SUPPORT OF THE COAST GUARD. WHETHER IT'S YOUR INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SEARCH AND RESCUE SCHOOL, YOUR INNOVATIVE BOAT CREW TRAINING PROGRAM, OR YOUR ALCOHOL EDUCATION EFFORTS AMONG THE 40 MILLION OR MORE RECREATIONAL BOAT OPERATORS, OVER AND OVER AGAIN, COAST GUARD MEMBERS HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES TO BE GUARDIANS OF COMMERCE, INSURERS OF LIVES, AND A FRIEND TO ALL IN NEED ON OUR SEAS AND WATERWAYS.

NO LESS IMPORTANT, YOU ARE INTEGRAL PLAYERS IN THE DRAMA OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. WE LIVE ON A WATERY PLANET, AND ONE OF THE FEW PREDICTIONS WHICH CAN BE SAFELY MADE ABOUT THE YEARS AHEAD IS THAT WE WILL TURN TO THE SEAS FOR MORE OF OUR FOOD SUPPLY, MORE OF OUR COMMERCE, MORE OF OUR CULTURE. BENEATH THE SURFACE WATERS LIES THE LAST AND LARGEST UNTAPPED FRONTIER. IT IS A PRICELESS RESOURCE FOR THIS AND EACH SUCCEEDING GENERATION, AND IT IS YOU, THE COAST GUARD, WHO BATTLE COMMERCIAL GREED AND ENVIRONMENTAL CARELESSNESS, TO PROTECT THIS TREASURE.

BUT EVEN THIS HARDLY BEGINS TO EXHAUST THE TRUE EXTENT OF YOUR MISSION. FOR THE COAST GUARD RANKS IN THE WORLD'S TOP TWELVE NAVAL FORCES. YOU COMMAND MORE THAN 2,000 SHIPS AND BOATS, ALL FAITHFUL TO THE MOTTO, "SEMPER PARATUS". IN KEEPING YOUR COUNTRYMEN OUT OF HARM'S WAY, YOU ACCEPT FOR YOURSELVES RISKS AS IMMEDIATE AS TODAY'S HEADLINES. FOR THIS COUNTRY WILL NOT SOON FORGET THAT, IN THE WAKE OF OUR BOMBING RAID ON COLONEL KHADDIFI'S LIBYA, IT WAS A COAST GUARD STATION ON THE TINY ISLAND OF LAMPEDUSA WHICH FELT THE WRATH OF KHADDIFI'S MILITARY RESPONSE.

AND HEREIN LIES A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, AND PERHAPS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF THE YEARS AHEAD.

AS ONE OF THE FIVE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES, WE HELP KEEP OUR COUNTRY STRONG. AS ACCIDENT-PREVENTERS AND RESCUERS, WE KEEP IT SAFE. AS PROTECTORS OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND FACILITATORS OF THE FLOW OF TRADE, WE HELP IT TO BE ECONOMICALLY SOUND. AS LAW ENFORCERS WE MAKE IT TOUGH ON THE DRUG SMUGGLERS. IN OTHER WORDS, WE HELP TO KEEP AMERICA SECURE...IN THE BROADEST SENSE OF THE TERM.

THE COMMITMENT TO A STRONG DEFENSE IS ROOTED IN OUR COUNTRY'S ETHIC. IT GOES AS FAR BACK AS THE DAYS OF COLONIAL AMERICA; IT PREDATES EVEN THE



FOUNDING OF THE COAST GUARD. DURING A DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT IN 1789, AT OUR CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, ONE DELEGATE GOT TO HIS FEET AND MOVED THAT "THE STANDING ARMY BE RESTRICTED TO 5,000 AT ANY ONE TIME." THIS PROMPTED GEORGE WASHINGTON, AS PRESIDING OFFICER, TO SUGGEST AN AMENDMENT OF HIS OWN -- TO PROVIDE THAT NO FOREIGN ENEMY SHALL INVADE THE UNITED STATES WITH MORE THAN 3,000 TROOPS AT ANY TIME.

THE WORLD HAS TURNED OVER MANY TIMES SINCE THEN, AND OTHER PRESIDENTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR OWN IDEAS TO STRENGTHENING AMERICA. PRESIDENT REAGAN IS NO EXCEPTION. BECAUSE OF HIS LEADERSHIP IN CHANGING OUR NATIONAL ATTITUDES ABOUT THOSE WHO SERVE, RECOGNITION OF MILITARY SERVICE FOR WHAT IT IS -- THE PROTECTION OF OUR FREEDOM --AND APPRECIATION FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PERFORM THOSE JOBS, HAVE GROWN RAPIDLY. OUR ENLISTMENT AND REENLISTMENT RATES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CANNOT BE EXAGGERATED. FOR HISTORY HAS PROVED AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT THE TENACITY AND CHARACTER OF A NATION IS REFLECTED IN THOSE WHO WEAR ITS UNIFORM AND CARRY ITS ARMS. HERE IN THE COAST GUARD, MEN AND WOMEN HAVE TRADITIONALLY MADE A LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT TO SERVICE, AS IS REFLECTED BY HIGH REENLISTMENT RATES. AND I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMEND THE COAST GUARD FOR ITS SPECIAL COMMITMENT TO WOMEN. FOR IN THIS SERVICE -- AS IN NONE OTHER -- WOMEN HAVE ACCESS TO KEY JOBS, AND ARE ELIGIBLE FOR UNRESTRICTED ASSIGNMENTS. WOMEN ARE SERVING AND HAVE SERVED AS COMMANDING OFFICERS, AFLOAT AND ASHORE -- INCLUDING ISOLATED DUTY; AS PILOTS; ON ICEBREAKERS -- GOING TO SEA AS LONG AS SIX MONTHS AT A TIME; AND ON COMBATANT VESSELS. THAT IS A RECORD -- AND A COMMITMENT -- IN WHICH WE CAN ALL TAKE GREAT PRIDE.

IN THE COAST GUARD, THE COUNTRY HAS A READY, HIGHLY-SKILLED, PROFESSIONAL FORCE TO JOIN THE OTHER ARMED FORCES IF AMERICA MUST BE DEFENDED. NONE OTHER THAN THOSE OF US ASSEMBLED TODAY KNOWS BETTER WHAT YOU DO ... HOW YOU DO IT ... WHAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO AMERICA ... WHERE THE COAST GUARD FITS IN NATIONAL DEFENSE ... HOW YOUR PEACETIME AND WARTIME ROLES MESH

... WHO REALLY BENEFITS FROM YOUR SERVICES ... AND WHAT YOU BRING TO THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA. WE ALSO KNOW WHAT YOUR VERY EXISTENCE CONVEYS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD ABOUT THE UNITED STATES ... WHAT YOUR MULTI-MISSION CHARACTER REALLY MEANS ... HOW YOU PROVIDE A MAJOR RETURN ON THE PUBLIC INVESTMENT -- AND HOW BIG THAT RETURN IS.

INDEED, TODAY'S COAST GUARD IS A FINELY TUNED, HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE MACHINE WHICH HAS DEVELOPED INTO WHAT IT IS OVER LITERALLY CENTURIES OF PRAGMATIC ADJUSTMENT. IT IS NOT A COLLECTION OF SPECIALISTS OR SINGLE FUNCTION UNITS UNDER ONE BANNER. EACH UNIT IS CAPABLE OF PERFORMING ANY OF A WIDE VARIETY OF MISSIONS AT ANY GIVEN TIME. THAT'S WHAT WE CALL "MULTI-MISSION." IT IS THE COAST GUARD'S BASIC PHILOSOPHY, AND IT IS WHAT ENABLES US TO DO SO MUCH. IT IS ALSO WHAT ENABLES US TO SHIFT OUR PRIMARY FOCUS AS AMERICA'S PRIORITIES SHIFT ... AND TO TAKE ON UNEXPECTED CONTINGENCIES WITH SKILL AND APLOMB. IT BLENDS OUR THREE PRIMARY MISSIONS OF MARITIME SAFETY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND DEFENSE READINESS INTO A WELL-BALANCED FLEXIBLE ENTITY.



AN EXAMPLE OF DEALING WITH THE UNEXPECTED -- NOT ONE WE WOULD HAVE CHOSEN -- WAS EVIDENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE CHALLENGER TRAGEDY. ON SCENE AT THE TIME -- AS THE COAST GUARD IS FOR ALL SPACE LAUNCHES -- YOUR UNITS IMMEDIATELY CLOSED OFF THE AIR SPACE AND THE SURFACE AREA TO KEEP INTRUDERS OUT; AND YOU STARTED RECOVERY OPERATIONS AS SOON AS DEBRIS STOPPED FALLING. YOU USED YOUR HIGHLY DEVELOPED WIND AND DRIFT COMPUTER PROGRAMS TO DETERMINE WHERE TO SEARCH, AND YOU COORDINATED THE COAST GUARD, NAVY, AIR FORCE, NASA AND NOAA SEARCH UNITS, BOTH AIR AND SURFACE. USING THE AIRBORNE SENSORS THAT WE DEVELOPED TO DETECT OIL SPILLS AND TINY TARGETS AT SEA, YOU LOCATED SHUTTLE PIECES ON THE SURFACE; USING YOUR COASTAL SHELF SONAR, YOU LOCATED OBJECTS ON THE BOTTOM. IT WASN'T PLANNED. BUT YOU DID IT BECAUSE YOU'RE AS GOOD AS YOU ARE. AND BECAUSE OF ALL THE THINGS YOU DO DAILY YOU WERE ABLE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION.

IT IS THIS STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE TO WHICH YOU ARE PLEDGED --THIS TRADITION OF CARING COMMITMENT WHICH ACCOMPANIES YOU FROM THE CLASSROOMS AND SAILING SHIPS OF NEW LONDON. SOON YOU WILL FIND YOURSELVES IN NEW PLACES, SOME OF THEM DISTANT, SOME OF THEM CHALLENGING IN THEIR STRANGENESS. YOU WILL TAKE A PLACE IN A TRADITION OF MARITIME SERVICE THAT PRECEDES THE CLIPPER SHIPS AND WHALING VESSELS THAT USED TO TIE UP ALONG THE CONNECTICUT COAST, AND WHICH STILL HUG THE HARBORSIDE AT OLD MYSTIC SEAPORT. YOU WILL EXPERIENCE THE ROMANCE OF THE SEA AS FEW OTHERS EVER WILL. AND IN DOING SO, YOU WILL DISCOVER FOR YOURSELVES THE VALIDITY OF SOME WORDS THE AUTHOR, JOSEPH CONRAD, PUT DOWN ON PAPER NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

"THE TRUE PEACE OF GOD," HE WROTE, "BEGINS AT ANY SPOT A THOUSAND MILES FROM THE NEAREST LAND." THERE ARE DAYS IN WASHINGTON WHEN I FIND MYSELF IN HEARTY AGREEMENT WITH CONRAD'S WISDOM. AND YET I COULD NO MORE ABANDON THE CHALLENGE OF PREPARING AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FOR A FUTURE MORE DEMANDING THAN ANY WE HAVE KNOWN -- ANY MORE THAN YOU COULD LOSE YOUR SPECIAL APPRECIATION FOR SALT AIR AND THAT UNIQUE PEACE SO WELL DEFINED BY CONRAD.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE ARE ALL EMBARKED ON VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY. THE MOMENT WE ABANDON THE UNCHARTED SEAS FOR THE SAFE HARBOR OF MEDIOCRITY, WE SURRENDER OUR ZEST FOR LIVING. WE ROB LIFE ITSELF OF ITS WONDER AND ITS ENDLESS CAPACITY TO AMAZE AND INSTRUCT. YOU HAVE BEEN SUPERBLY TRAINED TO SAVOR THE JOYS OF THE VOYAGE. BUT ALONG THE WAY, YOU WILL CONFRONT MANY CHALLENGES.

PRESIDENT REAGAN, WHEN HE WAS GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA, RECALLS HOW HE FIRST LEARNED TO DEAL WITH ENORMOUS CHALLENGE AND STRESS AS A NEWLY-ELECTED GOVERNOR. "EACH MORNING BEGAN," HE SAYS, "WITH SOMEONE STANDING BEFORE MY DESK DESCRIBING YET ANOTHER DISASTER. THE FEELING OF STRESS BECAME UNBEARABLE. I HAD THE URGE TO LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER FOR SOMEONE I COULD PASS THE PROBLEM TO. ONE DAY IT CAME TO ME THAT I WAS LOOKING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. I LOOKED UP INSTEAD OF BACK. I'M STILL LOOKING UP. I COULDN'T FACE ANOTHER DAY IN THIS OFFICE IF I DIDN'T KNOW I COULD ASK GOD'S HELP AND IT WOULD BE GIVEN." LET US NEVER FORGET THE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE.



THE SEA HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. AT TIMES WE HAVE VIEWED IT AS OUR WINDOW ON THE WORLD. AT OTHER TIMES WE HAVE CHOSEN TO HIDE BEHIND IT, CONVERTING IT INTO A VAST MOAT ACROSS WHICH NO FOREIGN OBJECT COULD PASS. IN OUR OWN TIME, WE HAVE DISCOVERED, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THAT THE SEAS ARE CORRIDORS OF TRANSIT, NOT WALLS OF PROTECTION. THAT IS ONLY ONE OF MANY EMERGING REALITIES WITH WHICH YOU WILL HAVE TO DEAL.

BUT IF, AS NATURALIST RACHEL CARSON ONCE MAINTAINED, THE SEA IS "THE BEGINNING AND THE END," THEN THE CENTRAL DILEMMA OF COMMENCEMENT DAY CAN BE RESOLVED. FOR YOU WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO SERVE YOUR COUNTRY ALONG ITS SHORELINES AND RIVERBANKS, IT IS IRRELEVANT TO ASK WHETHER THIS DAY REPRESENTS A STARTING LINE OR A FINISHLINE. THERE IS NO LINE -- ONLY THE TIMELESS LAPPING OF THE WAVES, THE ETERNAL RHYTHM OF THE TIDES, AND THE CEASELESS MOTIVATIONS OF THOSE WHO, LIKE YOURSELVES, WOULD SEEK TO PERFECT AMERICA. MAY GOD GO WITH YOU EVERY MILE OF THE JOURNEY AHEAD, THROUGH HEADLINES AND HEROES ALIKE. YOUR COUNTRY DESERVES WHAT YOUR CONSCIENCE DEMANDS. I KNOW YOU WILL DISAPPOINT NEITHER.

THANK YOU, AND GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.

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