

REMARKS BY

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WILSON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 23, 1975

PRESIDENT PARRY, TRUSTEES, FACULTY, GRADUATES AND GUESTS:

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME HAVE A PART IN THIS SIGNIFICANT AND HAPPY OCCASION. THIS IS ANOTHER GREAT DAY AND ANOTHER MILESTONE IN THE LIFE OF EACH OF YOU WE ARE HONORING TODAY AND ALSO IN THE LIFE OF WILSON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE.

IT IS A DAY THAT YOU WHO ARE GRADUATING WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER, NOT SO MUCH FOR THE CEREMONY, NOT SO MUCH FOR THE TEARS AND LAUGHTER AND CERTAINLY NOT FOR ANYTHING THAT I MIGHT SAY -- BUT YOU WILL REMEMBER THIS DAY FOR WHAT IT REPRESENTS - A TURNING POINT IN YOUR LIVES.

WHEN I STARTED TO PREPARE THESE REMARKS, I FOUND IT A DIFFICULT TASK. CERTAINLY THE OLD CLICHES ABOUT A WORLD WAITING WITH OPEN ARMS FOR THE SKILLS YOU HAVE ATTAINED OR THE KNOWLEDGE YOU HAVE ACQUIRED CAN BE CHALLENGED THIS YEAR.

THAT WORLD YOU ENTER AS YOU LEAVE THIS CAMPUS IS NOT IN THE BEST OF CONDITION.

PEOPLE ARE OUT OF WORK.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE NOT GOOD, TO PUT IT MILDLY.

OUR FUTURE SUPPLY OF ENERGY IS UNCERTAIN.

AND WE HAVE JUST GONE THROUGH A HUMILIATING EXPERIENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WHICH HAS DONE NOTHING TO ENHANCE OUR STATURE AMONG THE WORLD POWERS.

I REJOICE THAT WE STOOD FIRM IN THE MATTER OF OUR MERCHANT SHIP WHICH THE CAMBODIANS SEIZED IN AN ACT OF PIRACY. THIS ACTION BY THE PRESIDENT, WHICH I AM CONVINCED WAS SUPPORTED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, SERVED NOTICE THAT WE WILL PROTECT OUR PEOPLE AND OUR INTERESTS ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE.

NOW I DIDN'T COME HERE TODAY AS A GLOOMY PROPHET, BUT I, TOO KNOW THE FRUSTRATIONS THAT SEEM TO ABOUND THESE DAYS.

IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE, WHERE THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA SENT ME TO SPEAK FOR THEM, I HAVE BEEN ON THE LOSING SIDE IN MANY VOTES ALREADY, ALTHOUGH I HAVE SERVED THERE LESS THAN SIX MONTHS.

LAST YEAR, WHEN I CAMPAIGNED IN WILSON AND THE STATE'S OTHER 99 COUNTIES, I TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT I FAVORED THE ELIMINATION OF WASTE IN FEDERAL SPENDING AND A RETURN, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, TO A BALANCED FEDERAL BUDGET.

SO IN MY FIRST VOTE ON A TAX BILL, I WAS FACED WITH A PROPOSAL THAT WOULD CAUSE THE LARGEST DEFICIT IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY IN ANY SINGLE YEAR -- OVER \$65 BILLION DOLLARS.

AND IN THE END, I WAS FORCED TO VOTE FOR THE DEFICIT BECAUSE IT WAS ABSOLUTELY THE BEST BILL WE COULD GET AND I WAS AFRAID IF IT WERE SENT BACK FOR FURTHER STUDY THAT THE DEBT WOULD BE EVEN MORE.

OH, I TRIED TO CUT IT.

AMENDMENTS WERE INTRODUCED TO REDUCE ITS SIZE AND I VOTED FOR EACH ONE OF THOSE -- AND ALL WERE DEFEATED.

SO I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE ACTIONS WE HAVE TAKEN WILL HELP BRING US OUT OF THE ECONOMIC JUNGLE WE ARE IN AND THAT THE REBATES AND THE TAX REDUCTIONS WILL DO WHAT THEY ARE INTENDED TO DO.

THIS IS JUST ONE OF THE FRUSTRATIONS THAT A PUBLIC SERVANT IN THE CONGRESS EXPERIENCES AS HE SINCERELY TRIES TO BRING SOUND JUDGMENT TO THE PUBLIC'S BUSINESS.

I COULD LIST OTHERS.

LAST YEAR I TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT I FELT CONSUMERS SHOULD HAVE SOME AGENCY IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD LOOK AFTER THEIR WELFARE.

WHEN I WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL, WE SET UP IN THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT A CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCY THAT FOUND GENERAL FAVOR BECAUSE IT PROVED TO BE EFFECTIVE.

WE TRACKED DOWN AND WENT AFTER UNSAVORY BUSINESS PRACTICES AND FLY-BY-NIGHT OPERATORS WHO WERE, IN THE CURRENT VERNACULAR, RIPPING OFF THE PUBLIC.

BUT I WAS FRUSTRATED AGAIN BY A PORTION OF THE SENATE BILL THAT WAS INTRODUCED TO CREATE THE FEDERAL AGENCY.

ORGANIZED LABOR, WHICH HAD VOCALLY SUPPORTED THE CONSUMER ADVOCACY CONCERT, WAS EXEMPT FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT WHEN IT CAME TO THE SENATE.

I DON'T FEEL ANYONE GROUP SHOULD BE EXEMPT AND I SAID SO. ORGANIZED LABOR, WHEN ITS DEMANDS ARE JUST, HAS NOTHING TO FEAR FROM SUCH AN AGENCY ANYMORE THAN AN HONEST BUEINESSMAN.

SO UNLESS WE CAN GET THAT SECTION REMOVED FROM THE BILL AND PLACE EVERYBODY UNDER THE SAME UNBRELLA, I MAY BE FORCED TO OPPOSE A MEASURE THAT I PLEDGED TO SUPPORT.

THIS IS JUST ANOTHER FRUSTRATION IN TODAY'S CLIMATE.

I POINT OUT THESE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES BECAUSE THEY ARE TYPICAL, I THINK, OF THE BARRIERS ONE RUNS INTO TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING IN 1975.

AND THE DIFFICULTIES IN REACHING GOOD SOLUTIONS HAVE HAD AN AFFECT ON THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDE.

MANY PEOPLE TODAY ARE CONFUSED, APPREHENSIVE AND SUSPICIOUS OF WHAT IS TRANSPIRING IN THE NATION AND IN THE WORLD.

THEIR FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT WAVERS, PARTLY, I SUSPECT, AS THE RESULT OF WATERGATE AND ITS AFTERMATH.

THIS SUSPICION, THIS UNEASE IS REFLECTED IN THE HUNDREDS OF LETTERS THAT MY OFFICE RECEIVES EACH WEEK.

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE VIETNAMES REFUGEE SITUATION WHICH STARTED WITH THE FALL OF THAT COUNTRY TO THE COMMUNISTS.

NO SOONER HAD THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THAT WE WOULD RECEIVE THESE PEOPLE THAN THE MAIL STARTED TO POUR INTO MY OFFICE AND TO THAT OF EVERY OTHER MEMBER OF CONGRESS.

AT FIRST, THE MAIL WAS OVERWHELMINGLY AGAINST LETTING ANY OF THESE PEOPLE INTO THIS COUNTRY AND THE MOST FREQUENT REASONS GIVEN WERE THE PRESENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE; THAT THEY WOULD ALL END UP ON WELFARE AND SOME, I AM SORRY TO SAY, WERE JUST PLAIN RACIST.

IT MADE ONE WONDER WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO A COUNTRY THAT LESS THAN 20 YEARS AGO WELCOMED REFUGEES FROM COMMUNIST HUNGARY AND LATER MADE NO OUTCRY WHEN OVER 600,000 CUBANS WHO FLED THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT WERE LANDED IN FLORIDA.

IT MADE ONE WONDER WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO A COUNTRY THAT HAS A STATUE OF LIBERTY IN NEW YORK HARBOR ON WHICH IS INSCRIBED THOSE WORDS THAT SAY, "GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES YEARNING TO BE FREE."

I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT AFTER THIS FIRST OUTBURST OF INDIGNATION, PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS AND THAT THE SITUATION REVERSED ITSELF AND MOST OF THE LETTERS NOW BEING RECEIVED ADVOCATE CHARITY.

YET, EVEN AS I MENTION UNCERTAINTIES YOU WILL FIND AS YOU LEAVE WILSON TECH, I WOULD ADVISE YOU TO GO FORTH WITH CONFIDENCE.

THE POTENTIAL REWARDS, I BELIEVE, ARE GREATER TODAY THAN THEY EVER HAVE BEEN.

YOU WHO ARE GRADUATING HERE TODAY MADE A WISE INVESTMENT DECISION SOME TWO YEARS AGO.

SMART BUSINESSMEN DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS HAVE SUFFERED REVERSES IN THEIR INVESTMENTS IN STOCKS AND BONDS. MANY WHO INVESTED IN THE HOUSING MARKET HAVE SEEN THEIR ASSETS DWINDLE AND HAVE ENDED IN THE BANKRUPTCY COURTS.

OTHER TYPE INVESTMENTS HAVE GONE SOUR, AS GREAT CORPORATIONS SUCH AS THE PENN CENTRAL RAILROAD AND THE LOCKHEED CORPORATION HAVE SOUGHT GOVERNMENT HELP TO KEEP OPERATING.

BUT YOU HAVE DONE BETTER THAN THIS.

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN INVESTING IN YOURSELVES AND BY DOING SO YOU HAVE FAR STRENGTHENED YOUR POSITION AND ENHANCED YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE MARKET.

AND I, FOR ONE, AM AN OPTIMIST.

THIS RECESSION WILL GO AWAY AND WE SHALL RETURN TO A NORMAL, HEALTHY ECONOMIC CLIMATE. ALREADY THERE ARE FAINT SIGNS ON THE HORIZON THAT CONDITIONS WILL GET BETTER. THE STOCK MARKET,

USUALLY THE PRECURSOR OF CHANGING TIMES RATHER THAN THE FOLLOWER, HAS GAINED STRENGTH IN RECENT WEEKS.

WE WILL SOLVE OUR ENERGY PROBLEMS, ALTHOUGH THE PROFLIGATE USE OF GASOLINE THAT MARKED THE LAST DECADE MAY NEVER RETURN. WE MAY HAVE TO TURN TO SMALLER CARS, OR CERTAINLY TO CARS THAT CONSUME LESS FUEL.

WE WILL SURELY HAVE TO SHIFT FROM PETROLEUM TO COAL AND NUCLEAR ENERGY IN SOME CASES, MOST NOTABLY IN UTILITIES AND PERHAPS IN SOME LARGE INDUSTRIES.

SOLAR ENERGY IS A VERY REAL POSSIBILITY AND ONE DAY WE WILL RECYCLE OUR GARBAGE AND DERIVE ENERGY FROM IT.

IN SPITE OF OUR REVERSES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, THIS IS STILL THE GREATEST NATION IN THE FREE WORLD AND AS LONG AS WE REMAIN MILITARILY STRONG WE SHALL CONTINUE TO BE THE LEADER OF THAT WORLD. WE HAVE LEARNED, I THINK, THAT WE ARE NOT OMNIPOTENT, BUT OUR STRENGTH IS KNOWN AND RESPECTED BY FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE. AND PERHAPS AT NO TIME IN THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY IS THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S ADMONITION TO "SPEAK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG STICK" MORE APPROPRIATE.

MORE THAN THE PROBLEMS WITH THE ECONOMY AND WITH ENERGY, WHICH I AM SURE WE WILL FIND ANSWERS FOR, I WORRY ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF OUR PEOPLE.

I SAID LAST YEAR DURING ALMOST EVERY CAMPAIGN SPEECH THAT I MADE, THAT RESTORING THE CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT WAS THIS COUNTRY'S MAJOR PROBLEM.

AND I FEEL THAT WE IN GOVERNMENT MUST WORK AS HARD AS WE CAN AND BE AS FRANK AND AS OPEN AS WE CAN TO RESTORE THE PEOPLE'S FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE CANNOT EXIST FOREVER.

I WOULD ASK YOU GRADUATES TO HELP WITH AN EFFORT THAT IS SO VITAL TO THE NATION'S VERY EXISTENCE, BY YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS. AMERICA NEEDS YOUR HELP IN THIS SITUATION.

THE GENERATION THAT HAS GONE UP THE HILL AHEAD OF YOU HAS MADE PROGRESS AND HAS LEFT YOU A PLANET THAT IS BETTER IN MANY WAYS THAN THEY FOUND IT.

LIFE EXPECTANCY IS LONGER. YOU WILL HAVE MORE TIME TO SPEND IN ACCOMPLISHING WHATEVER GOALS YOU HAVE SET OR WILL SET.

MANY DREAD DISEASES THAT WERE FATAL TO MY GENERATION WILL NOT TAKE YOUR LIVES. YOU WON'T GET POLIO, FOR ONE THING, AND PERHAPS AT SOME FUTURE GRADUATION HERE ONE OF YOU WILL SPEAK AND POINT OUT TO A CLASS 20 YEARS FROM NOW THAT THEY NEEDN'T FEAR CANCER ANY LONGER.

WE HAVE GONE INTO SPACE AND PUT MEN ON THE MOON AND WE KNOW FAR MORE THAN OUR PARENTS KNEW ABOUT THE OTHER PLANETS. AND I AM SURE THAT YOUR GENERATION WILL FIND USES FOR THE OCEANS THAT WILL BRING UNTOLD BENEFITS.

WITH ALL OF THE DIFFICULTIES YOU WILL ENCOUNTER AND WITH ALL OF THE ROADBLOCKS THAT LIE AHEAD, THE FACT IS THAT YOU ARE ENTERING A WORLD THAT OFFERS MORE OPPORTUNITY THAN ANY OTHER PERIOD I CAN THINK OF.

I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TODAY.



YOU ARE BETTER EDUCATED, IN BETTER HEALTH AND I BELIEVE ARE MORE AWARE OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS THAN ANY PREVIOUS GROUP OF COLLEGE GRADUATES.

I WOULD CHALLENGE YOU TO USE THESE TOOLS OF KNOWLEDGE AND HEALTH TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM UNDER WHICH WE GOVERN AND LIVE.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO OUR ANCESTORS CHALLENGED A SYSTEM THAT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM AND CHANGED IT. THIS YEAR OUR NATION CELEBRATES THE VICTORY OF THOSE BRAVE MEN WHO DARED TO RESENT TYRANNY.

WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES SINCE THEN IN THE FIELDS OF TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIONS.

IN SPITE OF THESE ADVANCES, THERE IS WIDESPREAD UNHAPPINESS WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PUBLIC'S BUSINESS IS CONDUCTED.

THIS IS A SITUATION WHICH NEEDS YOUR HELP--NOT BY BURNING AND LOOTING, WHICH WERE FASHIONABLE FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO BUT DID NOT WORK BECAUSE THAT IS NOT THE WAY TO MAKE THINGS BETTER.

INDEED, IF VIOLENCE TAKES OVER, THEN THE PRIVILEGE OF DISSENT MAY BE ONE OF THE FIRST CASUALTIES, BECAUSE AN ANGRY PERSON BENT ON VIOLENCE WON'T STOP TO DEBATE OR ARGUE. HE IS PAST THE POINT OF DISCUSSION OR TOLERANCE.

BUT YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO ATTACK THE SYSTEM WITH FRESH IDEAS OR A BETTER WAY OF DOING THINGS, AND THIS I HOPE YOU WILL DO.

CONCERN YOURSELF WITH PUBLIC MATTERS, AND IF YOU FEEL THAT SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE SAID, DON'T WAIT FOR OTHERS TO JOIN YOU. AS HENRY THOREAU SAID, "A MAN WHO GOES ALONE CAN START TODAY."

AND DON'T BE BOUND OR CIRCUMSCRIBED BY WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST.

AS PRESIDENT LINCOLN OBSERVED, "GENIUS DISDAINS A BEATEN  
PATH. IT SEEKS REGIONS HITHERTO UNEXPLORED."

AND NOW MAY GOOD FORTUNE GO WITH YOU AS YOU LEAVE THIS  
CAMPUS.

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