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MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1943. NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY
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ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE JOSEPH C. GREW, SPECIAL
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE, AT UNION
COLLEGE, SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK, ON APRIL 26, 1943,
AT 10:00 A.M.

Today I cannot help reflecting on the symbolism of an American college commencement. Nothing in our nation could better typify the values of the ways of peace to which we give our allegiance in time of war. Our Japanese enemies have managed to vest every ritual of life with a terrible significance drawn from archaic and militarist beliefs; and our German enemies have cast aside the world-famous German university system in favor of a crude process of authoritative indoctrination. Here, today, we Americans preserve the link between our own peaceful past and our own future which we intend to have peaceful.

You who are herewith accepted in the world-wide confraternity of educated men have come to the commencement of your lives as independent men and well-equipped citizens. You have been given knowledge of the wisdom and experience which your forefathers stored up over the centuries; you in turn are obligated to transmit this knowledge -- further refined, further evaluated, further liberated from ignorance or superstition -- to the generations which are to succeed you. The value of education is that it makes men free; we in America still seek fulfillment of the words of John the Apostle, "The truth shall make you free"; and we know that even truth has small value if freedom is not preserved.

You differ from the peoples of the countries with which we are at war today, in that you recognize the basic character of your own tasks. You have not been educated to prove yourselves superior to your fellow-men. You have not been educated for the improvement of the American war machine. You have not been taught that education is merely a method of learning obedience. You have not been taught foolish myths -- neither in the Japanese form of ancient, terrible poetry which preaches neolithic ideals in beautiful words, nor in the German form of dogmatic, opinionated, or cynical corruptions of science. You have not been imprisoned by false knowledge: You have been made free by contact with Truth.

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At this hour, you--with your tradition of freedom--stand upon the threshold of an immense struggle with the forces of anti-freedom. You want to be free men; your enemies reject freedom as a foolish ideal. You look at the world as you yourselves see it; they look at the world as they are taught to think and made to believe. You feel that no man on earth knows much more of the fundamentals of truth than you do, that no one has a better sense of justice than do you yourselves, and that--most certainly of all--no man living has the right to tell you what you should want for yourselves. This is a difficult and exacting position, but it is the only fit position for free men to take.

Let me tell you something about the enemies whom you face. I choose to talk about the Japanese simply because I have come to know Japan well in the years which led up to this war, and during the first months of the war itself. My acquaintance with Germany dates back to the time of the last war, when it was my unpleasant task to assist in closing the American Embassy to the German Empire--the last American Embassy to the German Empire--and subsequently the American Embassy to the Austro-Hungarian Empire--the last Embassy which we sent to that Empire. Now I have returned after closing the American Embassy in Tokyo; our Japanese enemies may reflect on these coincidences, and take them as an ill omen if they wish!

I spent ten years in Japan before the final clash of nations occurred. Those years were difficult; Shakespeare portrays the job which faced your representative in Tokyo when he writes,

I speak of peace, while covert enmity
Under the smile of safety wounds the world.

The Japan which I came to know in those years was far different from the picturesque country described by John Luther Long or Lafcadio Hearn. The wild countryside had been criss-crossed by an imposing network of hydroelectric projects and power lines. The ferocious -- but to Westerners, somewhat absurd -- two-sworded warriors had been put in drab, ill-fitting modern dress, and were coldly, formidably efficient. The government, once redolent of the quaint, the odd, and the delightful, in so far as Westerners caught superficial glances of it, had, under strong influence of Prussian example, become a constitutional monarchy with the scales heavily weighted in favor of militarism.

Here and there, the natural and -- I hope -- enduring beauty of Japan shone through. Even in time of war, I cannot help remembering the breath-taking symmetry of Fujiyama; the startling, simple beauty of an old temple nestled in cherry blossoms; the compelling suggestiveness of a magnificent medieval battlement looming over a modern city. The skies over Japan and the many seas about Japan are often splendid, and the Japanese people are keenly aware of the natural beauty which surrounds them. The islands and the people will remain. When the dark clouds of war have been dissipated, and when the violence of nations no longer obstructs the free movement of civilized men, I hope that our people may be able to visit Japan again -- visit Japan peacefully, and for the comradely appreciation of the many good things of Japan.

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At this time, however, the good things of Japan are sadly outweighed by the bad. The work of our armed force must redress that balance. The Japanese people themselves have become the slaves of their own army, gendarmerie, and police. Long accustomed to despotic rule, the ordinary Japanese has never been prepared by education or tradition to defend his rights against his own government, and when his own government became his exploiter, he did not have a tradition of rebellion and freedom which might have taught him to stand up for his rights. It is a tragic commentary on Japanese civilization that -- with all their refinement and ancient culture -- The Japanese people have been morally and physically unprepared to defend themselves against tyranny from within. The only hope Japan can have of freedom is the hope held out by the armed forces of the United Nations; were we to fail today, the Japanese people will remain in unrelieved and hopeless bondage.

We know, in this country, what persons of Japanese race, retaining part -- the good part -- of Japan's wonderful culture, can perform. The Americans of Japanese origin are an invaluable element in our population; I welcome their presence, and regret the bitter necessity of imposing on a trustworthy and loyal majority of nisei the restraints which are made needful by the bad behavior and evil repute of a minority. There are among Americans of Japanese race as fine people -- individually -- as you can find anywhere, and many of them are peculiarly anxious to repay America for freedom by making especially arduous efforts in the prosecution of the war. I welcome the policies of our government which are designed to relieve the nisei of discriminatory restrictions as rapidly and fairly as possible, and I applaud the action of the Army in setting up facilities whereby these Americans will be able to show the world what they are able to do.

These Americans of Japanese origin are to Japan what you and I are to England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France and other European countries. They are Americans, but they are also "the cousins in the New World". I am proud of my trans-Atlantic cousins, and do not feel myself to be any the less American for that; and I would respect any American of Japanese descent who tried to contribute to our common, free American life those especially good qualities which he may have inherited from his trans-Pacific origin. We in America are in a real sense the apostles of the future; we show the rest of mankind what men of diverse races and cultures can accomplish with a common good will. We Americans, of all races and creeds, fight the evils of despotic and selfish militarism. There can be no compromise between ourselves and the arrogant exclusiveness of self-styled men-Gods of Japan -- no more than between ourselves and the self-styled Aryans of Germany. In our war -- against caste and privilege, wherever they may exist or occur -- the contribution of Americans who are of Japanese descent is of real value: first, because they are living proof of our non-racial free unity; secondly, because they make a valuable and wholesome contribution to the sum total of our American civilization.

May the day come when the Japanese of Japan, under similar conditions of freedom and justice, find the real fulfillment of their national destiny -- the promise of peace, not war; of the enlightened cultivation of beauty, not the dreadful pursuit of international crime; of the role of hosts to visitors to Japan's loveliness, not the role of turbulent, bad-mannered, thievish and uninvited invaders of neighboring lands.

At present, it does not matter how good the Japanese people themselves are, or how good they may become, since they have no voice whatever in the determination of their own destinies. They have let themselves become the puppets of a potent, but senseless machine, which in turn is operated by cold-blooded militarists who are animated by boundless ambition and are inhibited by no sense of mercy whatever. The Japanese people will have a chance to be free when we have swept away the militarism which, while it harms the Japanese, has nevertheless succeeded in capturing and controlling all of Japan and in mobilizing every element--psychological, political, economic, and military--in that Empire for the prosecution of aggressive programs. We must liberate the Japanese by destroying that militarism which today runs riot throughout the trans-Pacific world. That militarism is strong, violent, and limitlessly capable of planning and performing evil.

Even before December 7, 1941, Japan was strong and Japan possessed a military machine of great power. And when I speak of that military machine I include all branches of the Japanese armed forces, the army, the navy and the air force. That military machine has been steadily strengthened and developed during many years, especially since Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, an act of unprovoked aggression which, in effect, commenced the current expansionist movement of Japan in total disregard of the rights and legitimate interests of any nation or of any people that might stand in the way of that movement. In 1937 came Japan's invasion of North China and Shanghai, which led to the past six years of Sino-Japanese warfare. The Japanese did not wish to clothe that infamous campaign with the name of war: they called it first the "China Incident", and later, when great Japanese armies were trying desperately but without success, year after year, to break the magnificent courage of the Chinese people and the fighting spirit of the ill-equipped but determined forces of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the Japanese people, even with their own unbalanced humor, could not fail to perceive the sardonic humor of the term "Incident", and they then, with tragi-comical deliberation, dubbed the campaigns the "China Affair". But "War" they never called it. So it is today.

The Japanese efforts in China were not enough to bring about the surrender of the Chinese National Government. Nevertheless, Japanese armed forces were using China as a training ground in preparation for the greater war, already carefully planned, for their eventual conquest and intended permanent control of all of so-called "greater East Asia including the South Seas" and for the imposition upon the peoples of those far-flung areas of what Japan is pleased to refer to as the "New Order" and the "Co-Prosperity Sphere". We know what that flowery slogan "Co-Prosperity" means: it denotes absolute overlordship--economic, financial, political--for Japan's own purely selfish interests, and the virtual enslavement of the peoples of those territories to do the bidding of their Japanese masters. This view is not a figment of the imagination: it is based on practical observation of what has occurred in other regions already subjected to Japan's domination. In every area that falls under Japan's domination, such a regime has been or will be imposed.

Throughout the years of the China war, Japan prepared for an expansion of the war into other, wider theatres. We have been seeing the outcome of that preparation. The Japanese military machine was steadily expanded and strengthened and

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trained to a knife-edge of war efficiency -- in landing on beaches, in jungle fighting, and in all the many different forms of warfare which it was later to encounter. The jealous personal disputes, endless red-tape and face-saving expedients which characterize the civil life of Japan in times of peace wholly disappear in war; the various branches of their armed forces cooperate in well-nigh perfect coordination; and their staff work, strategy and tactics are of a high degree of excellence. The precision and speed of their campaign in the Malay Peninsula and their rapid taking of Singapore are sufficient evidence of that. Furthermore, in war Japan is wholly totalitarian; her economy is planned and carried out to the last detail. No word of criticism of the Government or its acts is tolerated; the so-called "thought control" police take care of that. Labor unions are powerless. In war, Japan is a unit, thinks and acts as a unit, labors and fights as a unit.

With that background, and having in mind the strength and power of Japan even before Pearl Harbor, consider for a moment the scene as it has developed in the Far East. Consider the tremendous holdings of Japan today -- Korea, Manchuria, great areas in China Proper, Formosa, the Spratly Islands, Indochina, Thailand, Burma and the Andamans, the entire Malay Peninsula, Hong Kong and Singapore, the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies and, farther to the south and to the east, myriads of islands many of which are unsinkable aircraft carriers.

Those areas contain all -- mind you, all -- the raw materials essential to the development of national power; rubber, oil, tin, metals and foodstuffs -- everything that the most comprehensive economy can desire; and they contain furthermore millions of native inhabitants who, experience has proved beyond peradventure, will be enslaved as skilled and unskilled labor by Japan to process those raw materials for immediate and future use. Add to that the stores of scrap iron for the making of steel which have been accumulating these many years in the Japanese homeland, and the further stores acquired in the many conquered and occupied ports. There you have a recipe and the ingredients for national strength and power that defeat the imagination even approximately to assess.

To this recipe and these ingredients add one further element of grimly ominous purport. During all of my ten years in Japan I have read the books, the speeches, the newspaper and magazine articles of highly placed Japanese, of Generals and Admirals, of statesmen and diplomats and politicians. Sometimes thinly veiled, sometimes not even veiled, there has been apparent their overweening ambition eventually to invade and to conquer these United States. In their thinking, even the megalomania of Hitler is surpassed. Fantastic if you will, but to them it is not fantastic. It was not fantastic when the foremost Japanese Admiral publicly states in all seriousness that he intends that the peace after this war shall be dictated in the White House in Washington -- by Japan.

It might be one year or two years or five or ten years before that Japanese military machine would feel itself ready to undertake an all-out attack on this western hemisphere of ours; they themselves have spoken of a hundred-year war; but one thing is as certain as the law of gravity: if we should allow the Japanese to dig in permanently in the far-flung areas now occupied, if we should allow them to consolidate and to crystallize their ill-gotten gains, if we should

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allow them time to fortify those gains to the 'nth degree, as they assuredly are attempting to do, it would be only a question of time before they attempted the conquest of our American home territory.

What worries me in the attitude of our fellow-countrymen is first the utterly fallacious pre-war thinking which still widely persists, to the effect that the Japanese, being a race of little men, good copyists but poor inventors, are incapable of developing such power as could ever seriously threaten our shores, our cities and our homes, a habit of mind which is reinforced by the great distances which separate our homeland from the eastern and southwestern battle fronts today. Second, I am worried by the reaction of our people to the current successes of our heroic fighting men in the Solomons and New Guinea, for after each hard-won victory the spirits of our people soar. Moral stimulation is good but complacency is the most dangerous habit of mind we can develop, and that danger is serious and ever-present. For ten years I have watched the aggression of Japan against her neighbors, and her spoliation of American life and property, and I say to you, without hesitation or reserve, that our own country, our cities, our homes, are in dire peril from the overweening ambition and the potential power of that Japanese military machine--a power that renders Japan potentially the strongest nation in the world--potentially stronger than Great Britain or Germany or Russia or the United States--and that only when that military caste and its machine have been wholly crushed and destroyed on the field of battle, by land and air and sea, and been discredited in the eyes of its own people, and been rendered impotent either to fight further or further to reproduce itself in the future, shall we in our own land be free from that hideous danger.

Now add to the menace of this formidable enemy the equal danger of a Europe enslaved by Germany--a Germany hardened by the pitiless efficiency of dictatorship. We have seen the Germans rise from the defeat of 1918 to the crimes of 1939; we have seen the militarism of the Kaiser stamped out, only to be replaced by the even more ruthless and uncouth militarism of the Nazis. Our enemies in the East and in the West profited by attacking the non-aggressive powers one by one. The United Nations have been welded into their present indestructible unity only by the terrific pressure of nightmare adversity. We must not make the mistake--indeed, we can afford no mistakes at all--of attacking only the one enemy, only the Germans, while forgetting the Japanese, or of attacking only the Japanese while forgetting the Germans.

I am happy to be able to assure you that the leaders into whose hands you have entrusted the conduct of your government and the waging of your war are not of a kind to be taken in by underestimation of the enemy. They realize that each portion of our present war is itself an enterprise of enormous magnitude and danger; they know that the road to defeat has many wrong turnings, and the road to victory no turnings at all. We have faced rampant aggression because the aggressors dictated the strategy; metaphorically, they had inner lines of communication both in space and in time, since they dictated not only the application of aggressive military violence but the timing of that application as well.

By doing what we are doing--by fighting the war of freedom as a single war--by dictating the strategy of that war on all

seas and continents -- by taking the initiative with our own forces and keeping the initiative through the repetition of our own attacks, with time and space dictated by us and not by our enemies -- by uniting the immense human, material, and spiritual resources of the United Nations -- by giving, in every single one of these nations, and from every single one of the more than a thousand million individual citizens on our side, all that we possibly can give -- by working more than we have ever worked before -- by helping our allies in all parts of this war, whether it be the heroic Red Army and other European armies in their fight on the trans-Atlantic fronts or the Chinese and Australian peoples on the trans-Pacific fronts -- by cadencing our steps, and coordinating our efforts, in a supreme attempt to achieve perfect national and international teamwork -- by holding the torch of our own justice, justice between men and between nations, before the world, and letting our deeds blaze into darkness where even the most brilliant of words could only glitter -- by consecrating ourselves to the winning of the greatest of world wars so that, in the prudence of man and the mercy of Providence, this may be the last of world wars -- by showing the Japanese and Germans that we can out-work, out-save, out-fight, and in every way surpass them -- by doing these things and more, we can win this war in the way it should be won; completely, finally, and for all time.

The peace which we shall win must be commensurate with the cost we shall have paid. The Japanese and the Germans have performed wonders, working unquestioningly for their despotic masters. It is up to us -- and, I fear, it is up to the youth of our land in particular -- to perform even greater wonders, to justify the heritage of freedom which has been won for us by the sacrifice and labor of our forefathers. For thousands of years, men have labored and schemed, have fought and died, so that we -- their posterity -- should be free and should carry the message and the reality of freedom to all mankind. Education is a vital part of the unending, ever-renewed process of liberation. By your studies you have won the understanding of freedom and the right to freedom; now you win the greater and more hazardous privilege of going forth to work and fight in defense of freedom.

Never before have the societies of free men been so dangerously and deeply challenged as they are in our time, in this globe-circling, world-filling war. It is up to you, and to the young people like yourselves in the other United Nations, to show that never before have free men had such training, such weapons, such skill, such technical excellence, such naked courage, such all-round capacity with which to take their places in the ranks of embattled free men and to play their part toward the winning of an incomparable Victory such as is now in the making.

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