

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 30, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Columbus, Ohio)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE SUMMER COMMENCEMENT
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

ST. JOHN ARENA

10:11 A.M. EDT

President Enarson, President Flemming, Governor Gilligan, Senator Metzenbaum, Congressman Sam Devine, Congressman Chalmers Wylie, Mr. Mayor, honored graduates, members of your family, and friends, and guests:

It is a very great privilege and exceedingly high honor to participate in this wonderful graduation ceremony. And at the outset, may I congratulate each and every one of the graduates.

But if I might add, I think appropriate congratulations to the members of your family -- husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and others who have done so much to make it possible for you to be here on this wonderful occasion.

And I think it is appropriate also that we add a special tribute to the members of the faculty who have likewise contributed to this very wonderful occasion.

So much has happened in the few months since you were so very kind to ask me to participate on this occasion. I was then America's first instant Vice President -- and now, America's first instant President. The United States Marine Band is so confused they don't know whether to play "Hail to the Chief" or "You've Come a Long Way, Baby." (Applause)

Obviously, it is a very great honor for me to be at Ohio State University, sometimes known as the Land of the Free and the Home of Woody Hayes. I met Woody at the airport. We just had our picture taken together and when the picture appears in today's Dispatch, I am pretty sure what the caption will say: "Woody Hayes, and Friend."

As many of you know, I have had a great interest in football for a good many years. I played center for the University of Michigan and I still remember my senior year back in 1934. The Wolverines played Ohio in Columbus, and we lost 34 to nothing. And to make it even worse, we lost seven out of our eight ball games, but what really hurt was that my teammates, after the end of the season, voted me the most valuable player. (Laughter) I didn't know whether to smile or sue. (Laughter.) But I want you to know that I have a great feeling of kinship with this graduating class. I understand that you have all taken your final examinations this week. As your new President, I feel like I am just beginning mine. They are tough, both at home and abroad, but we will make it. Instead of dwelling on how my team lost here in Columbus in 1934, I would prefer to advance the clock to 1974 and talk about winning against the odds that confront today's graduates and all America.

MORE

(OVER)

The first of these problems is summed up by the editor of your campus newspaper. She reports that the one dominant question in the minds of this year's graduates is very simple: How can I get a job that makes sense as well as money?

Your professors tell you that education unlocks creative genius and imagination and that you must develop your human potential. And students have accepted this. But then Catch 22 enters the picture. You spend four years in school, graduate, go into the job market, and are told that the rules have changed. There is no longer a demand for your specialty -- another educational discipline is now required.

And so one or two more years of study inevitably follows and you again return to the job market. Yes, what you now offer is saleable except that competition is very tough. To succeed you must acquire further credentials so you go back to the university and ultimately emerge with a Masters or even a Ph.D.

And you know what happens next? You go out and look for a job and now they say you are over-qualified.

In one form or another, this is a Three Shell Game. Our society has been playing tricks with our greatest natural energy source. That is you. And this has got to be stopped.

Although this Administration will not make promises it cannot keep, I do want to pledge one thing to you here and now. I will do everything in my power to bring education and employers together in a new climate of credibility -- an atmosphere in which universities turn out scholars and employers turn them on.

Ever since President Abraham Lincoln initiated the concept of Land Grant colleges, set up to bring people and students closer to the land, the Federal Government has been interested in the practical application of education.

Take the example of Project Independence. Frankly, I am not satisfied with the progress we are making toward energy independence by 1980. However, this is a problem that I can appropriately discuss at a Labor Day weekend commencement. It concerns both the academic community and our great labor organizations.

I am not speaking of gasoline for a Labor Day trip to the lake or seashore. I am speaking of fuel and raw materials for our factories which are threatened by shortages and high costs. Skills and intellect must harmonize so that the wheels of industry not only hum but sing.

MORE

I propose a great new partnership of labor and educators. Why can't the Universities of America open their doors wide to working men and women, not only as students, but as teachers? Practical problem-solvers can contribute much to education, whether or not they hold degrees. The fact of the matter is that education is being strangled -- by degrees.

I want to see labor open its ranks to researchers and problem-solvers of the campuses whose research can give better tools and methods to the workman. I want to see a two-way street speeding the traffic of scientific developments, speeding the creation of new jobs, speeding the day of self-sufficiency in energy and speeding an era of increased production for America and the world.

What good is training if it is not applied to jobs? What good are factories if they are shut down? What good is business and industry without those who solve their problems, perform their jobs and spend their paychecks?

Next year, I will ask Congress to extend two laws which are expiring. One provides for higher education, the other for vocational education. Both are essential because we need new jobs and we need new skills, academically as well as vocationally.

Your Government will help you create a vocational environment responsive to our needs, but the Government cannot achieve personal fulfillment for each of you. You, in this case, are the essential ingredient. Your determination, your dedication, your will will make the significant difference.

For you, the time has come to test the theories of the academic world in the laboratory of life. As President, I invite students and graduates and faculties to contribute their energies and their genius in the solution of massive problems facing America. I invite your ideas and your initiatives in fighting inflation, in providing realistic education, in making sure our free enterprise system continues to give freedom as well as enterprise.

Show us how to increase productivity. Show us how to combine new lifestyles with old responsibilities. Show us how universities can work with industry and labor unions to devise a whole new community of learning across this great land. Show us how work-study programs can become a part of the ongoing educational process. Show us how new skills can improve technology while humanizing its use.

MORE

A French statesman once observed that war is much too important to be left to Generals. Our Nation's future is far too important to be left only to Presidents or other officials of the Federal Government.

I like the phrase of a former great President, Theodore Roosevelt: "The Government is us; we are the Government, you and I." Oh yes, your vote and your voice are essential, as essential as mine if each American is to take individual responsibility for our collective future.

As you move into that job that makes sense and money to you -- and you will find it -- you move from a position of strength. With the war over and the draft ended, your duty now to your country is to enlist in the campaigns currently being waged against our urgent domestic threats, especially inflation, which is Public Enemy No. 1.

Abroad, we are seeking new peaceful relationships, not only with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, but with all peoples -- industrial, under-developed nations, every nation, if we possibly can.

There will be continuity in our foreign policy and continued realism in our self-defense.

At home, the Government must help people in doing things they cannot achieve as individuals. Accordingly, I have asked the Secretaries of Commerce, Labor and HEW to report to me new ways to bring the world of work and the institutions of education closer together. For your Government as well as you, the time has come for a fusion of the realities of a work-a-day life with the teaching of academic institutions.

As a starter, the Department of Labor will shortly announce a pilot program to improve occupational information for graduates and others in making career choices. There will be grants for State and local initiatives to provide data on occupations available and to help channel the potential employees into positions which are not only personally satisfying but financially rewarding.

The States have always assumed the primary responsibility for public education. That tradition, in my judgment, is very sound and Ohio State University and my alma mater, the University of Michigan, are excellent examples. But there is now too much confusion about which level of Government is to play which role in post-secondary education.

I am directing the responsible agencies of the Federal Government to make a new evaluation of where we are, where we want to go, and where we can reasonably expect to be five years from now.

MORE

Discussions will be held with Governors, State legislators, academic leaders, Federal officials, and the consumers of education.

Our goal of quality education is on a collision course with the escalating demands for the public dollar. Everyone must have a clearer understanding and a clear agreement on who is responsible for the specific aspects of direction and the financing of a college education.

Often times our Federal Government tries to do too much and unfortunately achieves too little. There are, for example, approximately 380 separate Federal educational programs beyond the high school level, some duplicating others, administered by some 50 separate Executive agencies. The result inevitably is a bureaucracy that often provides garbled guidelines instead of taut lifelines to good and available jobs.

But let us look for a moment beyond the campus and beyond Washington.

In 1972, I was fortunate to visit the People's Republic of China. With four times the population of the United States, a nation growing at the rate of two New York Cities every 12 months, that vast nation is making very significant technological progress. From a personal observation as well as by records, you can see the Chinese productivity is gaining momentum, and the majority of the Chinese on the mainland today are young people, highly motivated, extremely well disciplined.

As fellow human beings, we celebrate the rising capacities of the Chinese nation, a people with a firm belief in their own destiny.

However, as Americans, motivated by free competition, we see a distant challenge. And I believe all Americans welcome that challenge.

We must compete internationally not only to maintain the balance of trade in our standard of living but to offer to the world's impoverished examples and opportunities for a better life. We should do that for humane and for perhaps even self interest.

MORE

Let this peaceful competition, however, animate the last quarter of the twentieth century. And I am confident that America's youth will make the difference. You are America's greatest untapped source of energy. But energy unused is energy wasted.

It is my judgment that we must make extraordinary efforts to apply our know-how, our capital, our technology, and our human resources to increase productivity at a faster rate. Unfortunately, inflation is creating a national state of public anxiety. Productivity, yours as well as mine, must improve if we are to have less of an inflationary economy. In the long-run, it is the only way that we can raise wages without inflationary price increases. It is essential in creating new jobs and increasing real wages. In a growing economy, every one, labor, management and the consumer, wins when productivity expands.

At this very moment of America's history, we have the knowledge and the material resources to do almost anything that any one of us, or all of us collectively, can imagine. We can explore the depth of the ocean. We can put a man on the moon. We can reach for the stars.

But great problems confront us here on earth. To face these problems, we need even more than technology, we need more than programs. We need a belief in ourselves. We need the will, the dedication, the discipline to take action.

Let us take a new look at ourselves as Americans. Let us draw from every resource available. Let us seek a real partnership between the academic community and the rest of our society. Let us aspire to excellence in every aspect of our national life.

Now, may I close with a word between friends? Sometimes deep feelings can get lost in words. I don't want that to happen here today. And so I would like to share with you something that I feel very deeply: The world is not a lonely place. There is light and life and love enough for all of us. And I ask you, and all Americans, to reach out to join hands with me -- and together we will seek it out.

Thank you very much.

END

(AT 10:32 A.M. EDT)