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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AUGUST 23, 1962

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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE FOY D. KOHLER,
APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.S.R.,
AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBUS, OHIO,
FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 1962, 8:30 A.M., E.D.T.

Ohio and the World

President Fawcett, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Graduates:

I am highly honored to have been invited to join in today's ceremony and to share with this graduating class the deep gratification of receiving a degree from the Ohio State University. In my rather special case, I am grateful to the University authorities for waiving the rules applying to most of my fellow-graduates, in particular the normal residence requirements. Much as I love my state and my University, it has been impossible for me to spend much time here in the years since I received my first degree, back in 1931. But I like to think I am otherwise not an unqualified interloper among my new classmates.

The flattering citation in your program, with its reference to travel and meetings, indicates that personal contact and communication between Governments at high levels still plays a role in the conduct of international affairs. I must reveal to you, though, that this is only a small part of the picture--just the top of the iceberg. Diplomacy is no longer a matter of dealing with a handful of leaders, of influencing a sovereign. It bears only a remote resemblance to the glamorous picture of personal intrigue emerging from old histories and romantic novels and exciting "who-done-its."

Modern diplomacy is rather a continuing and exhaustive study of whole societies and of their interrelationships. Embracing all the academic disciplines, today's diplomacy requires knowledge of the history, the culture, the political, economic, technological and social forces at work in the society in which the diplomat resides. It requires careful evaluation of the direction in which these forces will move within that society, and of the effect they will have on relations between that society and other societies--especially his own.

But all this study, all this analysis, all this evaluation, all this resulting knowledge of man and his environment is not an end in itself. The diplomat must seek the means to influence the movement of these social forces toward the goal of assuring for his fellow-citizen and for his fellow-man the enjoyment of his "unalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." If this purpose is to be achieved in today's shrinking world, the art of persuasive communication, as diplomacy has sometimes been described, cannot be limited to a few leaders or professionals. Communication must extend throughout the social complex and even to mass populations. This would not be an easy job in a static world. It is a most difficult and complicated one in a world characterized by

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rapid change. It is not a job which the diplomat can do by himself. He can at best only reflect and project the will and the power of his own people. To me my native state is the yearstick and the test of American life. I come back for renewal.

For more than a century and a half of our national life, we Americans were almost wholly preoccupied with the development of our own vast country, happily isolated from what we regarded as the irrational conduct of the rest of the world. The great mid-West was the specially sheltered center of the prevailing isolationist sentiment. World War I finally fetched us out of our shells, but we crawled back into them as soon as it was over. That event did shake us enough, however, to lead to the establishment, in 1924, of our first really professional Foreign Service. When I entered that Foreign Service seven years later, I was one of two successful candidates who claimed Ohio as home and the only one from Ohio State. We brought to 30 the number of Ohioans in a Foreign Service Officers' corps of about 750 members. Today Ohio contributes more than 300 members to the greatly expanded corps of nearly 3700 officers. The ratio of Ohioans in the Foreign Service has thus more than doubled and Ohio's percentage contribution to the Service now considerably exceeds its percentage of the country's population. Ohio State ranks 19th on the list of over 200 universities providing successful Foreign Service candidates over the past five years.

This increased participation of Ohioans -- and I may add of mid-Westerners in general -- in the professional handling of international affairs is happily a reflection of a more basic phenomenon. It is a measure of the readjustment of Americans to the drastic and dramatic changes which have taken place in our role in the world over these past 30 years, particularly during and since World War II. We now realize that our long-time preoccupation with our own development was only possible because we enjoyed the protection of Great Britain's rule of the waves. We have accepted our obligation to pick up the burden that Britain had to lay down. Rejecting the precedent of our action after World War I, we have taken the lead in setting up a global United Nations organization. Breaking with cherished tradition, we are today allied with some forty-two nations for our own security and the security of the Free World. We recognize that these are indivisible. Today we know that it is no longer possible for us to live to ourselves and for ourselves alone. We can take pride in the fact that it was a great Senator from our neighbor state, Arthur Vandenberg, who was a key figure in, and remains the symbol of, this epochal readjustment in our national attitudes.

I find that many fellow-Ohioans who have lived at home throughout this period are hardly conscious of the extent of the changes which have taken place in their own lives and attitudes. It is only when we look back, like a traveler on a mountain road, that we realize how far we have come and how high we have climbed. In the late 1930s, our Congress was preoccupied with "neutrality" legislation, in the fatuous hope we could insulate ourselves from approaching world conflict. Only ten years later the Senate ratified the Treaty establishing the North Atlantic Alliance, which enables us to do something effective about deterring conflict. This is indeed a fantastic distance to have traveled in so short a time. Today Ohio's increased participation in the Foreign Service is paralleled by other and abundant evidence of active acceptance of America's changed role in the world. I am reassured, when I come back home, to note such signs as the development of a profusion of popular organizations devoted

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to world affairs, the increased reporting and discussion of international news, the expansion of training facilities in world subjects in schools and universities, or the establishment of a "Graduate Institute for World Affairs" here at Ohio State. I am encouraged, if I may say so, by my invitation to talk to you today and to receive an honorary degree, certainly the first one ever awarded by Ohio State for activities in the field of foreign affairs.

But the pace is quickening. We are in the midst of a technical and technological revolution which has shrunk our planet physically to the point where man is already reaching out for the universe. The development of jet and rocket engines, the wonders of chemistry, the power of the atom, the miracles of electronics are changing and will continue to change the very nature of the physical environment in which we live. The development of the arts and sciences of communication has opened up vast areas and released the energies of vast populations previously living in isolation, ignorance and misery. We refer to their demands for a better life as the revolution of rising expectations. The world-wide availability of modern medical science has so reduced the toll of disease and lengthened the span of life as to produce almost literally an explosion of the earth's population. What we in the past comfortably referred to as a total of 2 billion people has now passed 3 billion and is predicted to double -- to 6 billion -- by the end of the century. The free nations of Europe, from which we sprang and with which we are closely allied, are engaged in an historic process of moving toward economic, political and social unification. All these factors will face us with the most serious problems and require of us the ability to make even greater readjustments than we have to date. They may well involve fundamental reform of the free world's trading and financial systems and will certainly affect our domestic economy.

We will have to cope with all of this in a world where free societies are challenged as never before by a relentlessly hostile political system. Its leaders claim that only that system, materialistic in concept, authoritarian in nature, is capable of solving the problems besetting mankind. They proclaim, as a matter of historical inevitability, that that system is destined to rule the world.

It is thus up to us -- up to every one of us -- to prove them wrong. We must show that we can solve the great problems ahead by methods consistent with the freedom and dignity of man. We must show that we can adjust to the changes which science is making in man's environment without damage to the political institutions which assure to us freedom with order and justice. We must show that our system satisfies not only the material, but the spiritual wants of man. We must show that it provides equality of opportunity and freedom of choice for all. The example of a strong, healthy, and adaptable society in our own country will be the fundamental factor in the contest in which we are engaged.

Change is not easy. Change always encounters resistance, particularly when the need seems to be thrust upon us from outside, as is the case in this era. There is a tendency to look for a scapegoat, and more often than not eyes turn toward the Foreign Service, which deals with these intruding concerns, along with the State Department and the White House. President Kennedy, speaking recently to members of our American Foreign Service Association, discussed the problem very frankly with us. "Change is what we need in a changing world," he said, "but when we embark on new policies, we drag along all the anchors of old opinions and old views . . . This is not an easy career, to be a Foreign Service

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Officer," he continued. "It is not an easy life. The Foreign Service and the White House are bound to be in the center of every great controversy involving the security of the United States, and there is nothing you can do about it . . . Those who cannot stand the heat," he concluded, "should get out of the kitchen."

We in the Foreign Service agree with the President that whatever the heat, the place to be is in the kitchen. Personally, I am not sure the heat will be so intense. When I look back down the slope, as I have with you today, and realize how far we have already come, I turn and look forward with confidence that the going will be even easier ahead. And as my wife and I leave for a new mission abroad, it will be with the feeling that our fellow-citizens back home are partners in that mission. Indeed yours is the greater part. You must keep America a shining example of a strong, wise and generous society, changing in its adaptation to a changing world environment, but changeless in its faith in the worth and the dignity of man. For our part it will be a high privilege and a pleasant duty to represent you abroad.

Thank you.

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