**Speech at West Point**

**President George W. Bush**

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…In your last year America was attacked by a ruthless and resourceful enemy. You graduate from this academy in a time of war, taking your place in an American military that is powerful and is honorable.

Our war on terror is only begun…This war will take may turns we cannot predict. Yet I'm certain of this: Wherever we carry it the American flag will stand not only for our power but for freedom.

Our nation's cause has always been larger than our nation's defense. We fight as we always fight, for a just peace. A peace that favors human liberty. We will defend the peace against threats from terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

Building this just peace is America's opportunity and America's duty. From this day forward it is your challenge as well. And we will meet this challenge together.

You wear the uniform of a great and unique country. America has no empire to extend or utopia to establish. We wish for others only what we wish for ourselves: safety from violence, the rewards of liberty and the hope for a better life.

In defending the peace we face a threat with no precedent. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger the American people and our nation.

The attacks of September the 11th required a few hundred thousand dollars in the hands of a few dozen evil and deluded men. All of the chaos and suffering they caused came at much less than the cost of a single tank.

The dangers have not passed. This government and the American people are on watch. We are ready. Because we know that terrorists have more money and more men and more plans.

The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology, when that occurs even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations.

Our enemies have declared this very intention and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us or to harm us or to harm our friends. And we will oppose them with all our power.

For much of the last century America's defense relied on the cold war doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking.

Deterrence, the promise of massive retaliation against nations, means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long.

Homeland defense and missile defense are part of a stronger security. They're essential priorities for America.

Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge.

In the world we have entered the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.

Our security will require the best intelligence to reveal threats hidden in caves and growing in laboratories. Our security will require modernizing domestic agencies, such as the F.B.I., so they are prepared to act and act quickly against danger. Our security will require transforming the military you will lead. A military that must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world. And our security will require all Americans to be forward looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.

The work ahead is difficult. The choices we will face are complex. We must uncover terrorist cells in 60 or more countries using every tool of finance, intelligence and law enforcement.

Along with our friends and allies we must oppose proliferation and confront regimes that sponsor terror as each case requires. Some nations need military training to fight terror and we will provide it. Other nations oppose terror but tolerate the hatred that leads to terror and that must change.

We will send diplomats where they are needed. And we will send you, our soldiers, where you're needed.

All nations that decide for aggression and terror will pay a price. We will not leave the safety of America and the peace of the planet at the mercy of a few mad terrorists and tyrants. We will lift this dark threat from our country and from the world.

Because the war on terror will require resolve and patience, it will also require firm moral purpose. In this way our struggle is similar to the cold war. Now, as then, our enemies are totalitarians, holding a creed of power with no place for human dignity. Now, as then, they seek to impose a joyless conformity, to control every life and all of life.

America confronted imperial communism in many different ways: diplomatic, economic and military. Yet moral clarity was essential to our victory in the cold war.

When leaders like John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan refused to gloss over the brutality of tyrants they gave hope to prisoners and dissidents and exiles and rallied free nations to a great cause.

Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods but not different moralities. Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time and in every place. Targeting innocent civilians for murder is always and everywhere wrong. Brutality against women is always and everywhere wrong.

There can be no neutrality between justice and cruelty, between the innocent and the guilty. We are in a conflict between good and evil. And America will call evil by its name.

By confronting evil and lawless regimes we do not create a problem, we reveal a problem. And we will lead the world in opposing it.

As we defend the peace we also have an historic opportunity to preserve the peace. We have our best chance since the rise of the nation state in the 17th century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war.

Today, from the Middle East to South Asia, we're gathering broad international coalitions to increase the pressure for peace. We must build strong and great power relations when times are good to help manage crises when times are bad.

America needs partners to preserve the peace. And we will work with every nation that shares this noble goal.

And finally, America stands for more than the absence of war. We have a great opportunity to extend a just peace by replacing poverty, repression and resentment around the world with hope of a better day.

The bicentennial class of West Point now enters this drama. With all in the United States Army you will stand between your fellow citizens and grave danger. You will help establish a peace that allows millions around the world to live in liberty and to grow in prosperity. You will face times of calm and times of crisis. And every test will find you prepared because you're the men and women of West Point.