

Mr. President, Mr. Chairman Todd, faculty, and members of Kalamazoo College, thank you for inviting me here today, again, for the third time. I have very pleasant memories of twenty years ago when I first came, I was awarded your high honor. At that time, I knew I did not deserve it, but I decided, as someone I admire said a short while ago that perhaps I might grow into it. Having seen the qualities of your honorary graduates today, I discovered that I have not yet grown into it but there is time. This graduation ceremony comprises the culmination of the sesquicentennial celebrations of the founding of Kalamazoo College, an institution which prides itself on excellence, an institution which started as a small church-related college with a small endowment, but is now prominent in the national field of higher education, with a multi-million dollar budget. One who's reputation is now international for its scholarship, its innovative four-year and foreign study programs. I congratulate you on behalf of all those who place excellence and who have come here from afar to imbibe from this mecca of wisdom. Through your high endeavor, Kalamazoo, which for generations was associated with one of the most popular songs in this century, now connotes instead, in the public mind both nationally and internationally, a college famed for its bold originality and its academic excellence. My warm felicitations are offered to the honorary graduates who have received the highest honor possible on this campus, and my congratulations to our honored graduates. At the end of four years of very hard work, going through with the Kalamazoo Plan, you as the graduating class have been tested through fire and have come through with distinction. Graduating in the sesquicentennial year gives an added flavor to your achievement. As future historians, we look back to these celebrations, this vintage year, the year of 1983, to see as a point of reference what manner of fruit the college has born. I know that they will not be disappointed, and all of us here today, faculty and visitors, give you our best wishes for your success.

I have a special word of praise also for parents, grandparents, and family who have given you emotional and financial support during these difficult times of inflation, recession, and unemployment, and generational gap difficulties. Today, for them also, is a proud day. I ask that family and parents stand up and be recognized. The family and parents. Obviously there are no generation gap difficulties on this campus. You, our graduates, will be among the one million from all over this country entering a world which has become interdependent. For whatever happens here will be reflected in Islamabad, Bonne, Paris, Tokyo, and Sierra Leone, and what takes place there will equally be echoed in Kalamazoo and the Midwest. It is this inter-relationship, this wider vision beyond the immediate horizon, that it is my privilege to speak briefly to you about this afternoon. In the decade of the 1960's, as principal of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, Africa, an institution which tries to parallel yours in age, outlook, and striving for excellence, who are fortunate in establishing a relationship with faculty and students of this college, and this is now spread over the continent and has mutually enriched the lives of students from both the United States and Africa. I know that this is true for other parts of the world in which your foreign study program has taken place, in Europe and other parts of the globe. This program, this foreign study program has received the dedicated attention of Dean Barret, Dean Richard Staffig, Dean Fugate, and others no longer here, (inaudible) a great educator, and Bill Pruitt director of the Peace Corps in Zaire, among others. I myself have gained personal and in full measure from the friendship of these men among others on the staff, and from President Hicks in the '60's. We have admired President Rainsford for the dynamic leadership he has given in this decade.

As an example of past and present members of staff, John Peterson, professor of History at (inaudible) Kalamazoo, have been able to put my own country Sierra Leone firmly on the academic map of world history by his publications and by his teaching. I congratulate your new president Dr. Breneman and his wife who have come into a great inheritance, which we know they will further enrich.

Kalamazoo students have been emissaries of friendship to thousands of other young people abroad and have been close to those who will be leaders later in their countries. Since for six months during their studies, they have worked and played together with them and have forged lasting acquaintanceships. Since the sixties, as must have been apparent to you from what President Rainsford read about my own career, we seem to wise to the talk very quickly because of a shortage of talent. So you will understand, those of you who went to Africa in the '60's and '70's that among your friends there are now cabinet members, bishops, professors, who have not yet produced a head of state but we shall, in time, and they will invite you to their installation, I have no doubt. I have met Kalamazoo students and alumni all over the world. On the grand canal in Venice, in crossing the Lungi airport, (inaudible) Sierra Leone, in a ship off Monrovia, Africa, in Bonne, Germany, at the universities of Cambridge and London in England, and recently on First Avenue, New York City doing the nuclear disarmament march before the second disarmament international conference last year at the United Nations. They at one time or another scattered over the five continents of the earth and its seven seas, spreading international peace and understanding. An act made possible over the years by the vision and drive of your college board of trustees and your dedicated faculty. During the past fifteen years I have been undeservedly fortunate in the political and diplomatic world as an ambassador in various countries. I have observed among other features of progress that the Midwest of the United States has steadily produced more foreign service officers than earlier when that field was dominated by the Eastern establishment of this country. U.S. diplomats from the Midwest carry with them an acceptance of human beings as they are and not as they would like them to be. They accept princes, presidents, peasants, and poets with the same graciousness, friendliness, equanimity, and directness. They are more understanding of the backwardness of rural areas of the Third World, and the importance of agriculture as practiced at home and as taught at the great land colleges and universities here. For example, the White House and senior members of the administration in Washington, we simply welcomed and honored the head of government of Beliz, an English-speaking commonwealth country in the sensitive region of central America. It was on the wave of good will which had been carefully fostered by the U.S. head of mission in that country, a Kalamazoo alumnus who graduated some fifteen years ago, from this campus, as you are doing this afternoon yourselves. The Midwestern states have been regarded in the past as isolationist, and indeed geographically they are so. Many members of the first group of Kalamazoo students who came to Sierra Leone in West Africa in 1964 told me that they had seen the ocean and a sea for the first time in their young lives when they left Kalamazoo College for Sierra Leone, crossing over New York and the Atlantic to Africa. But now the Midwest cannot be isolated, and you have been thrust into the international limelight. The earliest desire for world peace and the discussions towards this end, including considerations of a nuclear freeze are strong in Europe and very much also in the Midwest. And so it should be because, apart from obvious reasons of international peace and security, Omaha, Nebraska houses the strategic air command, and so is in the frontline of any nuclear confrontation. Nord, the listening post for any attempted nuclear attack on the United States is situated in the bowels of Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado. Thus the Midwest truly is in the forefront of any global nuclear war, and is liable to be called upon for instant retaliation against any hostile quarter. The World Health Organization in Geneva has calculated that in a nuclear war, not only America and the Soviet Union will be affected, but also half the population of the world will suffer from radiation effects and fall out. The East West confrontation reminds me of the well-known African proverb that when two elephants fight, it is the low grass underneath, trampled on in their struggle, which suffers most. We, in the Third World, are that grass. So we are also concerned with the disarmament and troubled by the continuing East West dispute. It has gone through cycles of the Cold War, (inaudible), and now mounting confrontation. In the sixties we remembered when Nikita Khrushchev, the head of the Soviet

Union came to the United Nations and made one of his impassioned speeches. He also carried away that he took off one of his shoes and banged the podium in front of him with it. And of course this echoed through all the ear phones and intercommunicating facilities, and there was an awful silence. Then suddenly Harold MacMillan, the British prime minister, said to the chairman, "Mr. Chairman, I demand consecutive interpretation of that Russian word." To me, thinking about this incident, I always hope that that will be the loudest noise we shall hear from the Soviet Union. A lot can be said for insisting on understanding in all areas of the world.

Let us now return to matters of peace and not of war. International trade now plays a major role in the Midwest, and U.S. government policy has to be adjusted accordingly to bring back employment and wealth to the United States. The grain trade from the agricultural sectors of this region are an important element in relations with the Soviet Union, and in food aid to the developing countries. It provides employment for thousands of U.S. farmers. In politics, it can be used towards U.S. (inaudible), if not cooperation. It should be actively pursued with mutuality of interests. Agricultural trade with Japan from the Midwest includes the important soy bean and (inaudible) that this is not lost to Brazil or other countries in South America by halting or impeding it in an effort to further protectionist measures against the Japanese auto industry. Yet some protection is needed for the re-employment of thousands of workers in auto industries of Detroit and other cities. When quality and stability are not affected and domestic content legislation does not cause large price increases some compromise can surely be reached. Then if it changes from mass production to high technology, but a transitional period is necessary when employment should obtain for the majority of workers. Financial aid, both multilateral and unilateral is necessary to Third World countries during this present period of difficulty. The inability of a Third World country to find six billion dollars to pay for U.S. exports has put two hundred thousand workers out of employment in most regions of the United States, including the Midwest. The concern of the young and liberal-minded and the forward-thinking of some industrial leaders have brought about an improvement in the outlook of great transnational corporations in Kalamazoo and the Midwest, causing them to guard against deleterious products, and urging them also to encourage intermediate processing and some transfer technology to the millions of people who comprise the markets in the world. It was enlightening and a pleasure for me as a physician, diplomat, and international civil servant to discuss some of these aspects with the members of your distinguished board informally yesterday. I have given you these few examples to show how central in many meanings of the word, Kalamazoo and the Midwest have now become, in every sense of the word, and more so perhaps in our global perceptions. For those of you now leaving these hallowed halls and this beautiful park with its trees for the last time, I say take with you into the world the skills you have gained and the humanity which parents, faculty, and far-sighted members of the media have infused into your thinking. Combine them with your youthful vigor and idealism, remembering that you share these qualities with young men and women of good will all over the world. These unique qualities which have made America great and powerful and can make it a shining example among all nations. Excellence for you, and I'm glad it is inscribed on your sesquicentennial banner, excellence for you must not be a distant idealistic concept. It should be your constant companion. Aim quietly and steadily at practicing it every day in your thoughts, words, and deeds. It will benefit you, it will benefit the rest of us. Make of excellence a contagious disease, infect others with it, and so affect them. The world has been your campus. The world can also be your garden where you can plant seeds of international peace and understanding. Do not fear or weaken if sometimes the soil seems hard and rocky, the harvest unrewarding, and darkness covers the land. You will succeed in time. You must, for joy surely cometh in the morning and a mighty fortress is our God. Goodbye and thank you.