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**Conference Theme
Ethical Leadership for a Global Perspective**

Speech

**Leadership traits needed in today's world of crisis and
violence**

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Thank you, Dr. Rodriguez, for that humbling introduction. As the commander of Fort Hood and the Third Armored Corps, I am excited to have the opportunity to talk to such a diverse group of educators and leaders.

A special welcome to ~~Representative (Connie) Scott~~, Mayor (Joe) Adame, BG (Orlando) Salinas and BG (Paul) Pena. Distinguished guests, faculty and students from Texas A&M and everyone that has travelled from all over the country to be here tonight, thank you for having me here. I'm honored to have the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on leadership with you tonight.

I find it comforting to know that there are educators, business leaders, military members, and civic leaders like all of you here tonight. Knowing the good that will come from intelligent discourse among educated and forward thinking individuals like you is extremely encouraging to me. I know that you are a pivotal collection of ideas, influence and creative problem solving that will continue to move our great nation into the future.

I'm confident that your drive will carry this nation forward to emerge stronger than ever before. This troubled world is in need of your energy, education, and leadership. It's from your ranks and those that you influence and educate that our future military and government leaders will emerge.

That said, Dr. Rodriguez has asked me to talk about my thoughts on the leadership traits needed in today's world of crisis and violence. My experiences as a brigade commander in Iraq in 2004, the Multi-National Forces Iraq Chief of Staff in 2006 and as the United States Army Recruitment Command Commander have given me a unique perspective on leadership in a time of war. In the last thirty-three years of military service, I have seen my share of crisis and violence. I have also had the tremendous opportunity to have the military provide me with an education that enables me to better understand the influences that shape those events.

To answer Dr. Rodriguez's request, my experience has shown that **education, visionary thought, and adaptive problem solving** are the top three desirable traits for our military leaders today. And in fact, we go to great lengths to make our military education system develop visionary and adaptive leaders utilizing the opportunities provided through our nation's civilian universities.

Edward Evert said, "Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army." I fully believe this. The Army is an instrument for our educated leaders to utilize- but responsibly. This can only be done by those that understand the impact of their actions or inactions within the complexity of the world. While the military can help enforce change, "Education is the most

powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
(Nelson Mandela).

Education allows us to understand and anticipate future challenges and potential conflicts as well as enable our ability to think outside the box and ask ‘why’.

As you all know, we cannot fully anticipate every possible outcome to a problem. However, as leaders, being educated in history, theory, and doctrine enables us to start to understand why nation states and individuals exhibit specific behaviors and thus facilitates some predictive analysis to occur.

United States Military Joint Command states that “Trends and Challenges for the Future Joint Force through 2030 will be determined by variables in the operational environment.”

These variables should not be foreign to any of you here tonight as they are derived from theorists and social scientists such as Robert Kaplan, Misagh Parsa, Marina Ottaway, and Jeffrey Herbst, just to name a few.

Tensions, created by human geography, governance and legitimacy, resources and economics, and the overall impacts of globalization will create ‘shocks’ in the trends and observed social behaviors and social interactions between nation states and social boundaries.

These shocks between nation states and human geography will shape the future areas of friction and represent the areas that I, as a military leader, will be expected to exert our nation’s leader’s policy to meet national ends.

Through the intelligent study and application of history, theory and doctrine, leaders can utilize educated visionary thought to anticipate future areas of tension and friction and use adaptive problem solving to be ready to either attempt to influence the undesired conflict to occur or make a contingency plan that has a better chance to quickly and decisively eliminate the issue.

While complex adaptive systems theory shows that no social system is entirely predictable, education leads to an understanding and appreciation of complex systems which makes it possible for educated leaders to anticipate problem areas based on historical behaviors.

The bottom line is that if a leader can anticipate change, then their organization will require less improvisation when unpredictable variables surprise them.

As a military leader, I have been educated in complex adaptive systems theory as well as been exposed to dynamic social theory and cultural training to attempt to not only anticipate how governments and social networks behave, but to understand why they behave that way. This understanding gives me a unique perspective when dealing with social systems and allows me appreciate that my actions or inaction may or may not have desired effects.

The military has identified that value of a diverse education and has taken great strides to give every military member access to both military specific and civilian based educational opportunities.

Those here this evening that have or are currently serving in the Army, should be familiar with many initiatives to encourage

continued educational opportunities to our Soldiers while they are serving. Tuition assistance, eArmy-U, and resident fellowships just to name a few.

To expound on this thought, I'll take a few minutes to highlight the educational requirements and opportunities for our enlisted and officers.

First, to come into the Army, our recruits must have a high school diploma or equivalent. They must also take a basic entry exam that tests their aptitude in several different areas to include, math, science, and basic problem solving. Once completing their initial basic training, our enlisted have several opportunities available to further their education throughout their service. For instance, our service members can use tuition assistance up to \$7,500 a year that can be applied to online classes or resident classes at a local college or university.

At Fort Hood we have satellite schools for Texas A&M, Central Texas College, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, and several others. These schools offer great flexibility to our military members and their families for night classes and on-line credits working towards associate, bachelor, and masters degrees.

These same opportunities are offered while deployed. Many military members in Iraq and Afghanistan are taking college classes online. They also have opportunities to take language and cultural classes while deployed- which benefits the whole team.

In comparison, our officers are offered the same opportunities for tuition assistance as our enlisted- but to be commissioned, they must first have a College degree. Additionally, our junior officers, Lieutenants and Captains, have

the opportunity to continue their education and receive partial college credit for the courses they take at their mandatory continued military courses.

The Maneuver Support Center of Excellence at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, for instance, offers masters degrees in environmental engineering, engineering management, and geology through the Missouri School of Mines at Rolla.

As our officers become more senior, they are expected to continue their education to be eligible for promotion. This creates leaders that are better rounded and more capable of thinking on their feet in complex and hostile environments.

To illustrate the value the Army places in continued and diverse educations, I'll highlight some of the civilian educational opportunities that our Army senior leaders have.

Former General, David Petraeus has a PHD from Princeton and completed a fellowship at Georgetown. General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has a Masters degree from Duke. General Raymond Odierno, the current Army Chief of Staff, has a Masters of Science in engineering and nuclear physics from North Carolina State. General Peter Chiarelli, the Army Vice Chief of Staff, has a Masters in Public Administration in International Relations and Economics from the University of Washington. And General Robert Cone, the former commander of III Corps and Fort Hood and the current TRADOC Commander has a Masters in Sociology from the University of Texas.

This diversity and the levels of education enables our combined leadership teams to better understand, assess and react in complex and volatile environments.

As a brigade commander in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, we were neck- deep in a complex adaptive system. Not only were we challenged with the complex government and tribal hierarchy, but by a learning and irrational threat.

The very nature of the insurgency in Iraq required my leaders to draw upon their education and experience to develop tactics and procedures that went after the insurgent networks. This required us all to have a fundamental understanding of insurgency- an understanding that we pulled from Mao in China, the French in Argentina and the United States in the Philippines. It also required free-thought and problem solving skills that can only be developed in a college environment.

Since many of my officers, the leaders in my organization, were commissioned from civilian universities as well as West Point, they brought unique and varied perspectives on the reasons why we were facing an insurgency and what motivated the actors in that very complex system. Their experiences and background allowed us to view the Iraq insurgency through different lenses and eventually led to some very creative solutions to identify patterns as well as disrupt the insurgency network.

The other benefit of having leaders with college educations was that I had thinkers who asked questions and sought answers. Education had taught them how to think and not what to think. These subtle variances are crucial for any leader- be a thinker and know how to find answers to questions.

Our military uses some of the most technologically advanced equipment in the world. Despite that advantage, it is the individual leader on the ground that can think on their feet and utilize all the tools at their disposal to be successful.

On the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, a junior leader- a Lieutenant or even a Squad leader is expected to accomplish multiple complex tasks. They must plan and lead tactical operations in complex geographic and human terrain.

They must also be able to effectively communicate and negotiate with local tribal and government leaders. The Army cannot teach these junior leaders everything they need to know, but with the aid of a college education, it can prepare these leaders with fundamental knowledge, understanding, and thinking skills to be successful.

A fundamental understanding and appreciation of the world we live in is required by leaders in order for them to have visionary thoughts and come up with unique solutions to complex problems. The military encourages this type of thought, but it requires a special type of person.

With less than one per cent of the US population serving in the Armed Forces, it is important for me, as an Army leader, to have educated and fully qualified recruits entering our service. As in most organizations, today's recruits are tomorrow's leaders.

Today's leaders, no matter what organization, must understand that simple fact and ensure that they are recruiting and retaining smart, visionary, and adaptive leaders. Any organization should strive to have leaders in their midst that

question the norm and view problems from a different perspective. This leads to creative and adaptive solutions.

Aristotle said, “it is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” Our world needs educated minds- leaders that ask questions and seek creative answers.

These fundamental skills will be the foundation on which future success and the strength of our military and our nation will be built on.

As I said at the beginning, I find it comforting to see you all here this evening. While many of you may choose to serve your Nation and the world in different ways than I do, the world and this nation need your spirit, your drive, and your education. Your futures are bright and we need your ideas and drive to continue to improve the world we live in for our children and their children.

God bless you, your families, our Military Families and those serving in harm’s way.

Phantom Warriors! Army Strong!