

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

By The Honorable Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

Following his election on November 4, 1980, President-elect Ronald Reagan nominated Mr. Haig to be his Secretary of State. He was subsequently confirmed by the Senate and was sworn in as the Secretary of State on January 21, 1981.

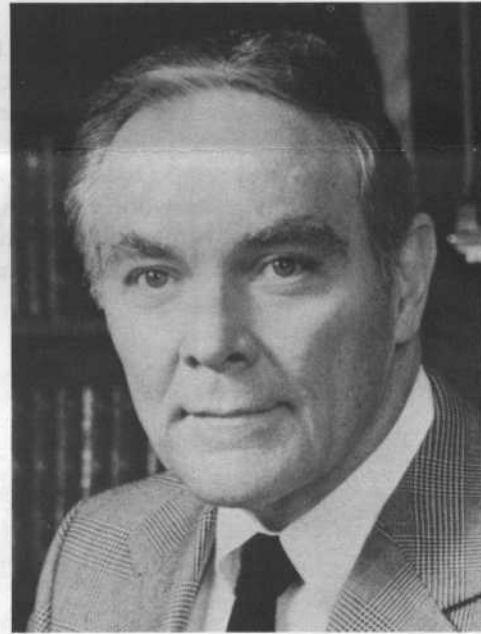
Secretary Haig graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1947, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army, and advanced through a variety of military assignments, including service in Japan, Korea, Europe, and Vietnam. He pursued graduate studies in business administration at Columbia University in 1954-55 and received a Master's Degree in international relations from Georgetown University in 1962.

He served in the Pentagon from 1962 to 1965, where his positions included Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Army and Deputy Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. And he served in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967, receiving the Distinguished Service Cross.

In January 1969, he was assigned as senior military adviser to Dr. Henry Kissinger, then Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and 18 months later he became the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. He was promoted to full general in 1972. During his four years in the White House ending in 1973, he made 14 trips to Southeast Asia as the personal emissary of the President, including negotiating the Vietnam ceasefire and the return of U.S. prisoners of war. In addition, he coordinated preparations for President Nixon's historic visit to China.

Mr. Haig was serving as Army Vice Chief of Staff when President Nixon appointed him in May 1973 to rebuild the White House staff. Although this was to be a temporary position, the President subsequently named him White House chief of staff, and he retired from the military after 26 years of active service.

He served in the White House until October 1974, when President Ford recalled him to active duty as Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command. Two



months later, Mr. Haig was also appointed Supreme Military Commander in Europe. In that position, he was responsible for the integrated military forces of the 13 member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He resigned his post effective June 30, 1979, and retired from the Army.

He was elected president and chief operating officer of United Technologies and a member of its board of directors on December 21, 1979 where he served until assuming his present position.

Secretary Haig delivered this presentation on May 16, 1981 at the Hillsdale College Commencement.

Thank you very much, President Roche, honored guests, distinguished members of the Hillsdale faculty, families and friends of the graduates who made this very special day possible and graduates of the class of 1981. My wife Pat and I are very very proud and pleased to have been asked to participate in this very

im•pri•mis (im-pri-mis) adv. In the first place. Middle English, from Latin *in primis*, among the first (things).

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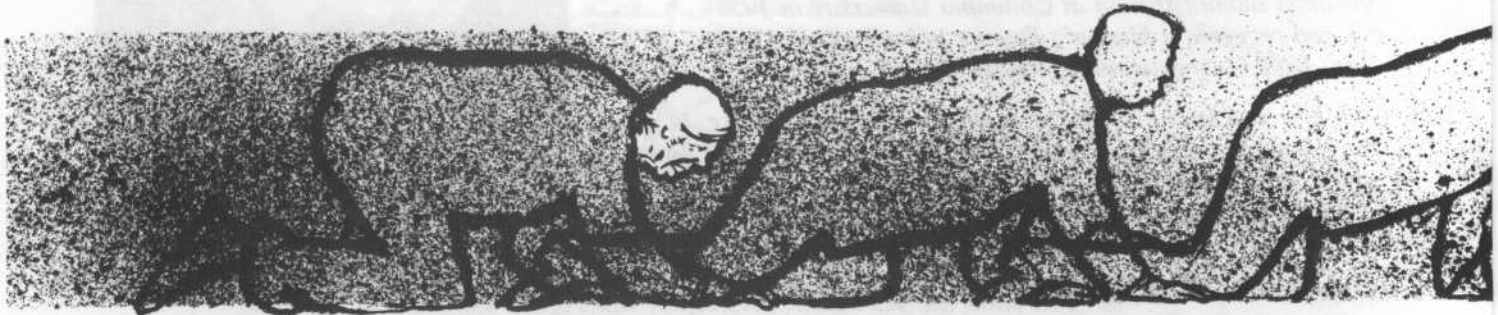
special occasion here at Hillsdale. You know your institution is one that enjoys a unique reputation among America's institutions of higher learning. It's an institution whose philosophic bedrock is imbued with the fundamental principles that have made this nation what it is today. We are also very pleased to be in this Hillsdale community—a community where love of flag and love of nation is an everyday part of the epic of this community.

Now I think most importantly we are pleased to participate because we know this institution espouses a philosophy that recognizes that the best government is the least government, that the growing and pervasive influence of central government in the mainstream of American life involving excessive reliance on government regulation either in the guise of protecting the consumer or the environment has increasingly become an inhibitor of the growth of our free society. Here is an institution where it is recognized that the good of the common man is always best served by the unrestrained, unfettered, skill, ingenuity, and work ethic of the uncommon man. And I know with confidence that there are many uncommon men and women in this graduating class today.

“Well, Al, if you manage to arrange three meetings a week alone in the Oval Office with the President, you will be vicar.” And Henry said, “Oh that's not good enough.” He said, “What you must have is that while you are in one of these meetings, the hotline rings from Moscow and it's Brezhnev and the President says, ‘Not now, I'm too busy.’” And so I thought about it and I said no, I know when I'll be vicar. I will be in one of those meetings, the hotline will call, the President will take the call from Brezhnev, he'll frown, he'll say, “Here, Al, it's for you.”

Now as I look at the very happy faces of the graduates and the always composed faces of the faculty, I think of the experiences I had at my graduation when a particularly obnoxious professor said to me, “Al, you got through, I don't know how but you did.” And I said, “Professor, I want you to know that you gave me the most comprehensive course I've ever had. What you failed to teach in the classroom and that was plenty, you surely covered in the final exam.”

A Spanish philosopher once wrote that the true mission of higher education was to teach vital ideas. Perhaps the most vital idea you can learn from your col-



Now I feel somewhat as a rather unique phenomenon to be the Secretary of State of the United States and to have been asked to participate. I think it's the first thing that this institution has accepted from the federal government in recent years. I want you to know that I come here basking in the approval and affection of the Washington community.

I turned on that very naughty late night Friday night television show that you young people look at so consistently last night and I noticed that the very pretty little news commentator flashed a rather grim picture of me on the screen and announced that following the tragic attempt on the life of his Holiness, Secretary Haig rushed to Washington cathedral to establish his precedence in the order of. Now you know I suppose I asked for that by proclaiming early on in my incumbency that I would be the vicar of foreign policy. And I must tell you after a few weeks of some controversy I began to wonder what it really meant to be a vicar, so I called in my old friends Cy Vance and Henry Kissinger who had preceded me in my job and I asked Cy, what did it mean, how would I know when I was vicar? And Cy said,

lege years is that self-respect is fundamental to the individual. I would add that self-respect is also fundamental to the nation.

At times over the past several years it must have seemed to you that our country had forgotten this idea. The American people experienced profound self-examination and even self-doubt. Somehow the great motivating goals of the past had lost their power. We searched, seemingly in vain, for an objective to guide the future. Our confidence was shaken. Our values were questioned. Our institutions were attacked.

A loss of momentum and confidence at home was bound to affect our standing in the world. Our self-doubt transmitted itself to others who depended on us. Doubt of the present easily became fear for the future.

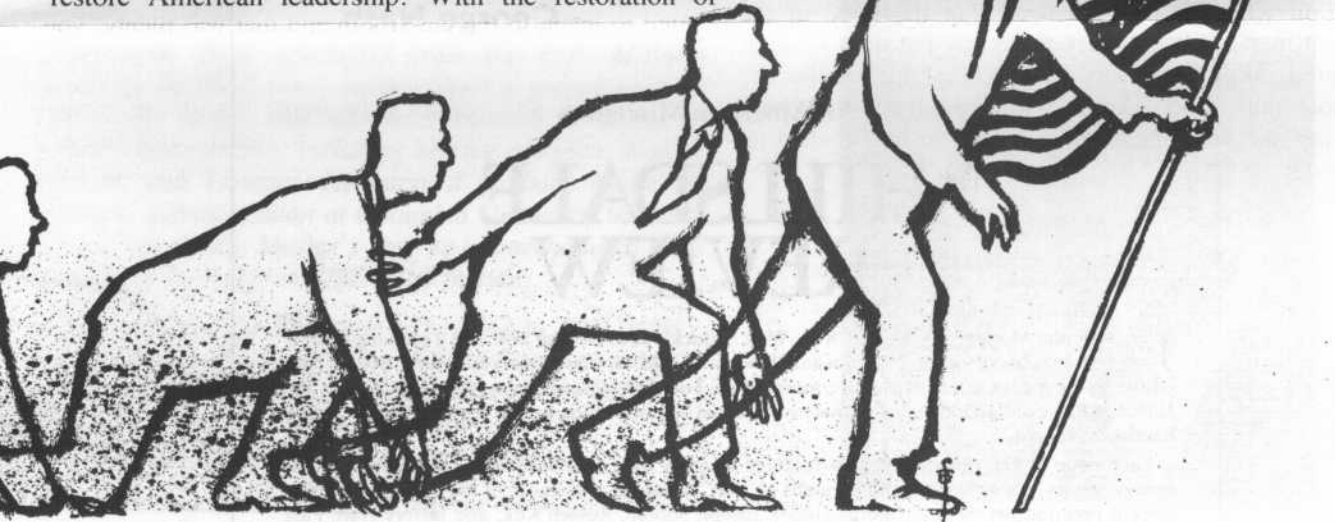
I believe this era in our national life has now drawn to a close. We have rediscovered ourselves as Americans. We are confident again, our values are sound, and our institutions are worth defending.

America's new confidence is founded in an old tradition: respect for the irrepressible genius of the individ-

ual. One of the marks of this genius is man's ability to glimpse a remote future and to be inspired by it. As the President has put it, Americans have begun to dream again of a better future. Americans have begun to believe again that this future, remote though it may seem, can be reached.

The resurgence of the American spirit has led to a remarkable consensus in our national life. Never have I seen such a firm and consistent consensus among the people, the Congress and the Executive. The issue is not whether we should strengthen America, but how quickly we can do so. The issue is not whether we should defend our interests abroad but how vigorously we can do so.

In my view, the renewal of American self-respect, pride and confidence is the most important development in the world today. With this ingredient we can act to restore American leadership. With the restoration of



American leadership, the achievement of a more peaceful and prosperous world becomes less remote.

The President has a clear sense of our objectives in foreign policy and a coherent program to restore American leadership. There should be no mystery about American purposes abroad. We want a world hospitable to our society and to our ideals. We seek a world where there can be peaceful change, where nations can settle disputes short of war. We shall work to restore the prospect of a world free from threats of force or the use of force.

Let me discuss very briefly the main lines of action in our foreign policy. First, we shall insist on greater restraint and reciprocity in East-West relations. If we are seriously interested in a world where there can be peaceful change, where nations can settle disputes short of war, then we must act to restrain the Soviet Union and its surrogates. The improvement of our military capabilities, despite the cost, underlines our resolve in dealing with Moscow.

Our second line of action is to reinvigorate our

alliances and friendships. A basic step is the restoration of a sense of confidence and trust in our leadership of the Western world. Irritants are being removed. We are seeking a larger consensus among our allies on common actions. And friends exposed to dangers believe once more that the United States will help them. On my trip to the Middle East and during the recent NATO conference in Rome, the change was evident. Our allies and friends are deeply appreciative of a more robust American leadership, but also one more sensitive to their interests.

Third, we are seeking a more just and responsible rela-

tionship with the Third World. The developing states are beginning to see the difference between the offers of the East and the offers of the West. The Soviets bring weapons, a pervasive presence and eventually a client-state relationship. The West brings economic development, science, technology and humanitarian assistance. We will encourage the movement toward association with the West. It is in our interest to do so and it offers the best hope for the developing states themselves.

Fourth, and finally, the President has advocated a revolutionary program to cure America's economic ills. The combination of spending and tax cuts, the regulatory reforms, are essential elements of fiscal responsibility. We have seen very clearly that an ailing American economy ultimately does great harm to our foreign policy.

The framework for action that I have outlined today draws upon an American consensus convinced of the worth of our society and the rightness of our cause. It is neither a boast nor a call to arms. Moderation and a willingness to negotiate will always be an essential part of

American statecraft. But there must be restraint by others as well. Our allies—and our adversaries—must know that we are reliable. We shall not be passive when our interests are threatened.

Clearly, the restoration of American leadership in the world will not be easy. As Justice Learned Hand once put it, "We shall have to be content with short steps; we shall be obliged to give and take; and in the end we shall have fabricated an imperfect instrument." But as we take these steps, we go forward made confident by the spirit of liberty—the spirit of America. We strive to make of our

country, in Hand's words, "a signal, a beacon, a standard, to which the best hopes of mankind will ever turn."

Your generation now begins to assume this arduous task. It is your privilege to be able to do so in an atmosphere of fresh pride and confidence. Perhaps Benjamin Disraeli captured today's moment best when he said that "the youth of the nation are the trustees of posterity." As you become the trustees of America's future, I ask only that you act with a sense of honor and a brave heart. Thank you.

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—George Nash

An American Miscellany

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