



The Military and Public Behavior

Transcript of meeting held in Washington, DC, on December 9, 1997

JULIUS BECTON, JR.

Lt. General, United States Army (ret.)

CALVIN TRILLIN: Somebody asked me yesterday if my presence on the program this morning was an indication that I had a distinguished military career that I had just been too modest to mention, and I'll admit when I looked at those medals out there, I allowed myself to think that the only thing standing between me and some of those combat medals was the absence of a war while I was in the Army, but I have no absolute evidence for that.

Our speaker, Julius Becton Jr., did not choose his military service so carefully. He was in the Army for nearly 40 years and fought in three separate wars, and emerged from the Army after holding some of its most important commands as a lieutenant general. That may sound like enough of a career for most people, but he's had a number of important posts since then. He, for five years, was the president of Prairie View A&M University, his alma mater. He was the director and a agent of reform in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is the federal agency that Americans see only after a catastrophe or disaster at a time when they are usually at their—or at least have reason to be at their most uncivil. And he is now in what may be his

most challenging job: the superintendent of schools for the District of Columbia.

He has the credentials to talk to us about any number of aspects of our deliberation, but I, for one, am very happy that he's gonna talk about the Army and public behavior. I think if—whatever we might have thought of the way President Clinton phrased his question in the Akron conversation the other night, it reminded us that now, when there's an Army that's a volunteer Army and somewhat separated in many ways from the citizenry, that there is a suspicion that we have something to learn from the Army, from the way they've handled one of the most difficult situations that we're investigating, and that is how people get along together.

And I don't think there's anybody better equipped to tell us that than General Julius Becton, so I'm very pleased to present him now.

JULIUS BECTON: Thank you very much, Bud, and I appreciate that—particularly the brevity of it. I find it interesting, and no one mentioned to me that I would be encountering Bud Spillane again. Bud was a neighboring superintendent and taught me everything I knew, learned, since then. I did make the observation one time when I followed Bud on a speaking engagement that I would never do that again. Bud, you didn't speak to this group yesterday, did you? OK.

Now in the words of my favorite philosopher, Yogi Berra, I want to tell you something before I start talking. First, contrary to the media public discussion about the District of Columbia public schools, our school groups, the judge that has helped me to be a superintendent, the late opening of the schools and an array of things, I can tell you that the District of Columbia public school system is alive and well and getting better every day.

And second, before I start talking, and against the better advice of my staff, I'm going to perform a small test. You have in front of you a piece of paper that says 'CEO Philosophy of Management.' Now this is a philosophy I've used for, oh, 25 years, except for point one. Point one I put in as of last year when I became a superintendent. But I want to refer you to the bottom sentence and

not the top, the sentence that starts off, 'Finished files are the results of,' etc. I want you to count the number of F's that you find in that simple sentence. Now I say it's against the advice of my staff, because they're sitting in the rear and they said, 'I hope he really doesn't do that.' But I'm doing it and I'll tell you why in a few minutes.

Unidentified Man: Just the F's or...

BECTON: No, no, just on the last sentence at the bottom. And when I can find a Army general and his lips stop moving, we can move on. I don't see any. OK. How many found six? I won it! Thank you, ma'am. Most of you found the F in 'finished,' the F in 'files' and the F in 'scientific.' But what about the F in O-F, O-F and O-F? I did this for one reason: Because I have used this approach for about 20 years. I've used it at Harvard when I spoke to a group of graduate students up there. I've used it at MIT. I've used it—most speaking places. I've used it with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Normally, about 10 percent will get all six. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 20 percent.

I used this yesterday out at Bud Spillane's old elementary school. I talked to fourth-graders, fifth-graders and sixth-graders. Interesting enough, the group that consistently will get the most correct answers are fifth-graders. Obviously, you are well-read, you're educated, you're intellectual. But the fifth-graders, they weren't trying to find out what the hell Becton's talking about; they just counted F's. And that's what I asked you to do.

A small point, but if I tell my soldiers and my teachers, sometimes we take too much for granted, and sometimes we fail to look at the small print. And, ma'am, you're from Northern Ireland, I believe?

MARI FITZDUFF: Mm-hmm.

BECTON: There's a message there, folks. OK. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to present my views to this distinguished group, and at the outset, let me extend my personal thanks to Dr. Rodin for the invitation. By the way, one other group that always gets six, too: proofreaders, because they go backwards when they check spellings.

OK. As a superintendent and CEO of the District of Columbia public schools, I want to welcome all of you to Washington. And as you know, tourists come here in great numbers, especially in the spring when thousands enjoy the beautiful cherry blossoms which ring the Tidal Basin. In fact, last April, my wife, Louise, and I went to take a view and overheard a visitor ask a tour guide, 'The cherry blossoms are absolutely lovely, but is it always this windy?' 'Madam,' the guide replied, 'you must remember that this is the nation's capital. Where government meets, it's always windy.'

Hopefully, I won't be too windy, but I would like to think that we will have a little bit of intellectual provocation. I must admit that my presentation—as it unfolds, you will find that I've taken liberties and flexibilities with respect to my assigned topic. In short, I'm gonna talk about a few other subjects as well.

We have a responsibility to attempt to frame a debate in the public arena regarding issues which, although not always at the center of public consciousness, strike to the very heart of this nation's reason for being and what it can offer, both to its citizens and to the world at large. This country's experiment that we all know, begun in Philadelphia over two centuries ago, has yet to achieve in total its grand agenda and promise, but it is not for the lack of trying that achievement is not fulfilled.

In any civilization, public discourse provides the best avenue to the improvement of the government and the lot of the governed, but especially here in this grand country, that avenue has spawned many twists and turns throughout our short history. In many ways, the silence of public apathy has been deafening. To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 'The greatest tragedy of this period of social transition may not be the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.'

My intent is not to offer you a history lesson on military involvement. We have too many historians here that I've been talking with. But nor is it to detail a prescription of contemporary activism and political military affairs. Rather, my intent is to provide a hopeful, provocative framework which we can use to stimulate debate and thought today and reasoned discourse tomorrow.

There is no easy formula for social progress. I know of none, have experienced none and offer none. For some reason, a quote from John Steinbeck came to mind as I was preparing these remarks. I can't remember where I read it or heard it, but it goes something like this: 'Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon, you have a dozen.'

I'm hopeful that some of the ideas I outline today will spark your interest and spawn your other ideas. If we work on them, we may come up with one that are better, or maybe we can have a dozen. Improvement in the condition of man vis-a-vis society and the government has been hard to come by for most, and in the main has been evolutionary and not revolutionary here in the United States, thank God. So what we can do here can have a positive impact on our growth as a nation, if we are blessed by wisdom from some higher force and stay the course.

Public behavior and responsibilities of institutions, the theme of this assembly, constitute a full plate of challenges. Two days of discourse and thoughtful reflection do not a renaissance make, but if we are indeed thoughtful and build a careful framework, we may spawn a broad conversation in this land, at least at the academic level, which just might make a difference. Let's hope so.

I began public service over 50 years ago, long enough to have experienced a great many challenges, wins, losses, draws, and what some have called character-building opportunities. My experience has taught me that while never perfect, always a little bit too slowly to my liking and filled with starts and stops, this nation seems to find the right solution to social, national and international problems. Why? Because our collective and sometimes accidental dedication to a document scripted over 200 years ago was declared a goal for its citizens, so correct in thrust and so universal in application that it still lives with timeless characteristics. And as you heard last night, our speaker made that point.

While the creators of this nation may not have fully understood the grave social consequences of their pronouncement that 'We hold these truths to be

self-evident: that all men are created equal,' they took the great risk by stating that 'We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.' And, my friends, so does the armed forces of this country so tacitly promise, each to the other and collectively to the nation.

Throughout the history of this country, the military forces of the nation have played a central part in this development, and not just in the fighting of its wars, but in exploration, building, research and in evolution of its leadership systems. It can be safely said that the framers of our Constitution really got it right when they crafted a relationship between a military and a civilian government. In another circumstance, we might not be meeting today and discussing the challenges President Rodin has laid out before us.

We have indeed experienced a renaissance and a relationship which has evolved between the military forces of this country and the government, and likewise society as a whole. Our country began with a citizen soldier Army, and although the current version is all volunteer, we still savor the citizen soldier ethic in our forces. At times, the military has felt estranged from the population. At the very beginning of our country, during the days of the Articles of Confederation, during the latter stages of the Indian wars of the 1870s, during the Bonus March of the 1930s, the period immediately after the Korean War and, most recently, the tragedy of the war in Vietnam—in each instance, the country was focusing on other issues which diverted the public consciousness and generate ambivalence.

Kipling said it all: 'For it's Tommy this and Tommy that, and chuck him out, the brute, but his savior is his country when the guns begin to shoot.' In each instance, the military family felt ignored and unappreciated, retreated into itself and became insular, and in each instance, the estrangement passed. Such is the resilience of the force.

Today I sense a philosophical difference between the center of gravity of the military services and the current administration. This philosophical difference does not bode ill for the country; it does make for some uncomfortable cocktail parties, however. The focus of the military service is steady and resolute, execution of the mission and the defense of the country.

The difference find their grounds in how to achieve the mission, not in fundamental issues of the relationship between the military services and the government or the country as a whole, and this is the strength of our relationship: allegiance to the Constitution.

But perception of the character of the mission and redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of the service tends to turn on these philosophical differences. The military services tend to be conservative; not politically conservative, but philosophically conservative. We now stand in the aftermath of the Gulf War, which placed the military in a somewhat surreal landscape, and almost bloodless, at least for our side, and one perceived by many as a computer game war, which implies expectations for the future which I frankly don't think will happen.

Our military also faces a redefinition of its roles and missions, especially in the mission category, which now includes peacekeeping, which may be an oxymoron label which, when applied to military forces—the transitions required of the military in this area are significant and demand great skill and proper definition and execution, both by the civilian leaders of the government and within the military hierarchy.

We need to enter into a national dialogue to achieve consensus on emerging roles and missions issue. The ramifications of peacekeeping stand at the center of the question. At the same time, the military is in the midst of one of the largest, proportionally, reductions in force levels since demobilization after both World Wars I and II, and its success during the Gulf War, even in the face of these reductions, is a testament to the quality of the men and women who are recruited to serve their country.

But with all the good which resides within the military forces of this country, there is also some bad, which infiltrates from the civilian community from whence the force is built. We have all seen infiltration of skinhead—the skinhead culture and a terrible legacy. We are currently faced with sexual harassment and misconduct issues which require a great deal of understanding. While the undercurrents of these and similar aberrations have plagued the military forces for decades, they are somewhat isolated and

correctable. And even though some will take issue with the pace of activity in addressing these issues, I am confident that they will be resolved in a just and a forthright manner.

The military can be relied upon to fix what is broken. It always has. And in fundamental issues of social fairness, the military has led the country in doing what is right. Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct cases with the armed forces represent the exception and not the rule. According to the Department of Defense, sexual misconduct involves less than 1 percent of the military members. Sexual misconduct is illegal under military law and is swiftly punished, as current cases have shown. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination are more prevalent and, I suspect, harder to uncover and rectify.

Just the increase in the number of women service members since 1973 tells me that this is true. In 1973, 45,000 women in the military services constituted 2 percent of the force. Today they represent about 14 percent of the force, some 195,000 strong, an increase that shows the services are continuing to lead the way in diversity in the force. But sexual harassment and gender discrimination are not tolerable and won't be tolerated in the military services. Why? Because they're wrong. They interfere with mission accomplishment and they erode morale. Commanders won't stand for this. The issues of leadership and responsibility for the led stand at the core of the commanders' values. They will fix the problem.

Today's military services are the most diverse in history and the most integrated major institution in America. We have come a long ways, but we still have some distance to go. And as you know, or having heard, I entered the Army at the end of the Second World War. It was a segregated Army and a segregated country. And while I can take risks and spill my blood in defense of democracy, I had to sit in the back of the bus, eat at the counter—in the kitchen, wait in a colored waiting room and drink from the colored-only water fountain. And my enemy, the German and the Italian prisoners of war, rode in the front of the bus, ate at the counter, sat at the larger white-only waiting rooms and used the white-only water fountains. Not a pretty picture,

but a true one, and one which many good people today either forget or simply forget to remember.

Here is another example of how it was back in those days. I, along with other blacks, attended an integrated officer candidate school in 1944-'45 at Ft. Benning, Georgia. But when departing the post after graduation as a brand-new second lieutenant en route to a segregated unit in the Pacific, four of us, all black shavetails, were harassed by two white enlisted MPs. But in 1948, a plainspoken man from Missouri pronounced the following, and I quote: "It is the declared policy of the president that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services, without regard to race, color, religion or national origins."

This, my friends, is the exact text of President Truman's Executive Order 9981, issued on the 26th of July, 1948, which ended for all time segregation in the military services of this country. There was some foot-dragging, but that too passed. And my service, the Army, led the way, albeit slowly.

Let me give you three quick examples of both the good and the bad to illustrate my point. The first example has to do with President Truman's executive order. Immediately after the order was issued, all commanders were directed to read the order to their personnel. I was on reserve duty at Aberdeen Proving Ground between semesters in Muhlenberg College; hence, I was present. I was present in the theater when the post commander, a colonel, assembled all the officers and read the order. And he then said, 'As long as I am the commander here, officer club number one, officer club number two, non-commissioned officer club number one, non-commissioned officer club number two, swimming pool number one, swimming pool number two, will remain unchanged.'

It doesn't take much of a brain surgeon to figure out what he's talking about. He said that as long as he was the commander, there would be no change at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Example number two: As the first black infantry company commander in a recently integrated 2nd Army Division in 1955 in Germany, my soldiers, both

black and white, often found themselves defending theirs and my honor in off-duty locations where soldiers gathered.

A third example can be found again in Germany. When I assumed command of the 7th Corps in 1978—I might add the 7th Corps at that time was the largest corps in the United States Army and was the very successful corps that operated down in the Gulf some years later. At that time, however, we had the mission and responsibility of defending freedom in the central region in NATO. Manfred Rommel was the overburgermaster in Stuttgart, which is the home of the headquarters of 7th Corps. Manfred was the son of the great field marshal, "Desert Fox" Rommel.

Anyhow, he, Manfred, was and is a rabid defender of fairness and equal opportunity and two of us worked together to develop the right climate in Stuttgart for all of our personnel. Some illustrations. When our soldiers would find themselves discriminated against in a cafe or a restaurant in Stuttgart, the facility quickly received all kinds of frequent health and sanitation inspections by the city health department. When our soldiers were not permitted—or were not picked up by taxicab drivers leaving Stuttgart to come back to their bases, those cabs or the offending cab company received all kinds of increased attention from the safety and transportation offices of the city of Stuttgart.

And just yesterday, I'm delighted to say I received a very interesting two-page Christmas letter from Rommel. He is really a giant among many.

Please note that none of the aforementioned examples took place in combat. Why? When the shooting starts, we're all brothers or sisters under the skin. In 1966, black soldiers constituted about 18 percent of the combat units in Vietnam and, as expected, constituted about 18 percent of those killed in combat. At the same time, blacks made up about 11 percent of the population. And, of the total Army at that time, black soldiers made up about 13 percent of the enlisted force, but only 3 percent of the officers.

Why this apparent failure on the part of my service? Well, it wasn't so much the failure of the Army as it was the failure of the country to offer the equality

in the civilian community which President Truman had ordered in the military 18 years before. The young black man with ambition had neither the educational opportunity nor the economic opportunity in the civilian world in this country to get ahead, as he saw it. He was right. The Army and the armed forces, as a whole, offered both.

Combat units of the Army could use the skills, such as they were, and the Army shock troops—the airborne soldiers, the special forces soldiers—offered additional \$55 a month for paratroopers at that time. The combat units offered the chance for leadership and a young black was seeking status. He found it and did his duty, and he did it well.

So it should come as no surprise that blacks migrated to combat units for better pay. And it also should come as no surprise that these units produced the most casualties. The young black man found a grudging equality in a stateside Army, and he found real comradeship and equality in combat.

In between World War II and Vietnam, there was Little Rock, Oxford, Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, Memphis and other tragedies, but the military was trying to get it right, because an order had been issued and a policy had been sustained by successive administrations. It ended up leading the way, and still does, in my judgment.

American society, as a whole, have been moving more slowly. I believe, however, that education can accelerate the pace of positive social change. I am convinced that education is the reason that I am where I am today.

Let's look at some statistics. Your current Army has a better statistical balance with respect to minority distribution in the Army as a whole than it did back in 1966. Minorities now: about 30 percent of America. Minorities make up about 39 percent of the Army. Minorities are 45 percent of the enlisted force.

What is clearly more important than statistical balance and distribution of the total force is the fact that incumbents in a position of leadership reflect selection on merit. The Army is truly a meritocracy. Advancement is based on achievement and what you know, and not on who you are or who you

know. This environment has produced the following: minorities constitute about 20 percent of the officer corps; minorities make up about 50 percent of the non-commissioned officers' corps.

Now I'm sure that you're wondering why the continuing disparity in this mix; that is, officer vs. enlisted, vs. the country as a whole. Well, the answer's quite simple. It's education. To be a commissioned officer in the Army requires a college degree almost 100 percent of the time. Educational levels within the Army break out like this. Officers with bachelor's degrees are about—about 86 percent. The remaining 14 percent generally have a minimum of two years of college. Enlisted have some college—enlisted with some college, a baccalaureate degree, of about 25 percent, and the remainder have a high school diploma or a GED.

Now compare the foregoing with the following national statistics, and I think a bell will ring. Minorities constitute about 16 percent of all college graduates, at least as of March of 1995. Remember, I cautioned earlier that education is the key, and it still is.

There's another thing that troubles me as we run out the clock on this century. We have clearly moved to 100 percent volunteer force. Only the most senior officers and non-commissioned officers of today's services are products of conscription Army. Whether they were drafted or not, they have that leveling, and it is that leveling which citizen soldiers bring to the party which we may have lost. Whether this loss is damaging, I don't know, but I wonder just as well, and I think so. The draft was a leveling instrument of democracy. In its original form, it ensured that all able citizens participated in the defense of their country. They all had hands-on experience in being a patriot.

One of the most important aspects of the draft was that it kept the general population connected with its military institutions. Almost every family in America had a family member who was serving or who had served in the armed forces. Additionally, the draft ensured that the military didn't become too insular. It kept the military in touch with main street USA. On the other hand, the Vietnam era was a victim of tinkering by Johnson era Congresses,

which produced poor man's vulnerability due to questionable deferment categories. In short, we skewed the drafted force to the low end of the socioeconomic scale in our country. In my judgment, this was wrong.

My feeling is that every citizen should make a personal investment in this country in order to appreciate what it offers, and in so doing learn about other citizens, a process which is otherwise routinely missed. In short, every citizen should feel and learn diversity.

Don't misunderstand me now. I'm not advocating a return to the draft, per se; I am advocating introduction of a period of national service for all citizens. This national service should include options for military service, a teacher corps, a health corps, conservation or environmental corps or a service corps with the Veterans Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs or other governmental support areas. Participation in national service would be mandatory, initiated by registration for the draft by every 18-year-old, both male and female. Deferments could be issued for attendance at college, but participation after college graduation would be required.

Eighteen-year-olds could have the option of volunteering for the draft after graduating from high school. By volunteering, the draftee would have a choice of programs, with military service having a scholarship program as it does today. The system would operate in a manner similar to the operation of the selective service system, which even today requires all 18-year-old males to register. Of course, the call-up remains mothball in case of national emergency. The operational framework is there, and criteria for national service is not that hard to develop.

It would take some real political courage to see this idea through to fruition, but I believe the political costs would be worth it, and the opportunity for our young people to feel and learn diversity would be assured. Diversity is good for us. We need only to understand it in order to appreciate it.

The military service have learned how to deal with diversity and, more importantly, how to profit from it as an institution. They are not perfect yet,

but they are way out in front of the rest of the country. To twist a motto of the infantry, 'Follow me. I am the military. I will lead the way.'

Diversity is a force multiplier in its most basic form. It can be a fundamental force multiplier for the nation. Therefore, we need to embrace it and nurture it. National service can become a means to that end.

While we move to a greater acceptance of the value of diversity, we need to ensure that the pluses of diversity are not obscured by the overzealous application of numbers-crunching and prophets of doom. For example, in the current debate on affirmative action, it is my judgment that neither side of the question is right. It is much more important for us to expend our precious energy on preparing all our citizens for inclusion in this society through quality education than to squander time and resources on frail arguments on quotas and distribution, both pro and con.

We must take a lesson from the armed forces training establishment—the basic training arena. It is in basic training that wars are ultimately won. It will be in our education system, K through 12, that the future of this society and this nation will be assured and the quality of our armed forces maintained. To borrow from the real estate saying invoked today which trumpets, 'Location, location, location,' we must realize that 'Education, education, education' is a key. Quality education for all should be the mantra recited by all concerned citizens, and all citizens should—let's change that. All citizens must be concerned. We as leaders must make it so.

While the meritocracy of the armed forces prove that pure competition on a level playing field can produce the requisite opportunity for all and ensure quality in the force, this reality, unfortunately, cannot be readily and immediately applied to our current society as a whole. We have shortchanged underclass, which cannot fairly compete for opportunity in this society. The obvious common denominator in the opportunity equation is education. We need to have a massive attack on the education deficit of the underclass, which, I might add, includes white as well as people of color. This attack on the education deficit must hit both the target of equality of access to education and a target of quality in education.

We need to rid ourselves of the cottage industry of special interest groups, which has grown up around the core of civil rights movement of this country, championed by Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy. We need to replace this throng with enlightened citizenship, all citizens intent on one goal: 'that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'

We do this by investing in a country's intellectual potential, fully infused with the diversity of this country. Why? Because such investment will be the salvation of this nation, and because the military services, the harbingers of social change in this country, will become better than they are today as a result.

How many people—young people out there are just waiting for their chance to follow in the footsteps of May Jamieson or Goizueta, the late president of Coca-Cola? We simply cannot afford to waste any more youth. We mortgage our future to do so. We doom ourselves to mediocrity if we shrink from our responsibility.

Recently, President Clinton suggested that Colin Powell benefited from affirmative action. What Colin benefited from, as did I, was a more level playing field and the opportunity to compete. Equality in opportunity is not a racial or gender thing. It is a basic right, guaranteed by the Founding Fathers of this nation. Ensuring that there is equality in opportunity is a basic and fundamental responsibility of us all.

Let me focus for just a moment on the needs of military service for a solidly educated entering recruit. The military is becoming increasingly more complicated. Computers, highly technical weapon systems and complicated support structures are now central to everything the military does. The better educated the recruit is, the shorter the training course required to bring him or her up to proficiency and then—more productive. Conversely, if the pool from which the services recruit is less well-educated one, the services may not be able to recruit enough young men and young women who are properly

prepared, and two, the service will have to extend the length of time allocated to training courses to take up the slack in educational equality.

The military has had to put a quick fix in a system before, due to educational levels. For example, in the 1970s, the Army actually ran high schools for soldiers. During that period, the 1st Cavalry Division at Ft. Hood, Texas, had the Cavalry Academy, which accounted for about 800 full-time soldiers, student soldiers, each semester, taking high school-level courses and working on their GED certificates. You should be aware that 800 soldiers constitute the equivalent of a battalion.

I know this to be true from my personal observation, because I was a commander of the 1st Cavalry Division in that time period. We had some 15,000 soldiers. There was a price to pay: an additional unit training. These soldiers were not available to their unit during their school attendance for about four hours each day. The Army was in the initial stages of the all-volunteer force, and the educational quality of some of the recruits could have been better. We haven't seen a return to those days yet, but the potential is before us. We may reach a point in this country where the quality high school graduate is so scarce, the military services can't compete.

Remember, during the days of the Cold War, when [the] Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense or somebody from the White House would make a pronouncement that such-and-such was in the national interests of the United States? Well, in my judgment, education is in the national interests—security interests—of the United States, and you and I need to take an interest in the security of United States education.

Let's look at it another way. Politicians say that all politics is local. I believe all education is local. And since it is, I believe the block grant or some similar funding mechanism straight to the needy school district is the way to go. An infusion of financial strength into ailing school districts is the opening shot in this war. For this to obtain, the Congress should expend its energies in the educational arena on the big gainers rather than working marginal issues such as vouchers and so-called scholarships. In the great scheme of things, vouchers and scholarship initiative will have negative effect on solving the

big problem in education, which is: How do we keep from losing another generation?

Now to put these initiatives in perspective, current voucher thinking, at least last month, would affect about 2,000 DC public school students, as opposed to the remainder of the 74,000 in the system. This will not get us the best return for our educational dollar. We really need to rethink our strategy on this.

In the District of Columbia public schools, we need teachers and teacher training. We need a greater capital budget to repair aged and poorly maintained buildings, and build new ones, and capitalize new educational support equipment. That's what we need, and I suspect the same is true for disadvantaged and urban school districts throughout the nation.

So much for my slight excursion from my assigned topic. These issues are contemporary, however, and if not forcefully addressed, we have a negative effect on the quality of our armed forces. The military services tend to reflect the best and the brightest this country has to offer. Quality education ensures that these best and brightest entering classes of recruits continue in the future.

Since the military services have a stake in the outcome of bettering the education process in this country, the military needs to expand its support of this process. During the period of the Cavalry Academy high school program that I spoke about earlier, each Army division and large Army units were assigned parts of the United States as recruiting areas. The divisions organized recruiting teams out of hide and worked the areas.

This process should be brought back again with support of needy school districts taking the place of recruiting missions of the mid-'70s. The schools would be supported by military services, mentoring programs, teacher support, leadership training and other activities consistent with military expertise. This program will serve to ensure that the armed forces remain connected with the country, provide positive role models for some some of America's neediest youth, and by the very nature of people in the program, demonstrate to all the strength of diversity.

Coupled with the foregone, I would like to see a resurgence of Junior ROTC in this country. The program gives young people a very different view of discipline, a feeling of inclusiveness, a connection to history and a feeling of service to the community. Junior ROTCs date back to National Defense Act of 1916. In its current form, the JROTC system includes Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force; it is composed of 2,414 ROTC units and more than 380,000 cadets in the entire US secondary school system. We need to triple or quadruple that system. In order to do this, educators need to learn about the system and embrace it. I have a fundamental belief that many educators today have a bias against Junior ROTC programs, and I really don't know why. I suspect that this may be a concomitant bias against the Senior ROTC as well. It may be a holdover from the Vietnam era anti-war feeling. It may be something else, but it's there.

If I had my way, there would be a Junior ROTC program in every inner-city high school in the country and in the other disadvantaged and underfunded school districts that I spoke of earlier. This will require some heavy lifting on the part of the military services and some equally heavy lifting on the part of school districts' administration. I think the payoff would be great. I can see firsthand the value of programs we have in the District of Columbia public schools. I hear the comment from our youth, and they speak reverently about one of the instructors in the Naval program—'Well, Master Gunny said,' and 'We need to ask Master Gunny.'

The program provides role models for the very youth who need it most. It provides another educational avenue to deliver knowledge to some who have a hard time finding it, but who need it most. Junior ROTCs work to inculcate honesty, integrity and the ethics of selfless service and a feeling of community involvement. It also builds spirit and esprit. All I see is a win-win situation for our youth.

And so I come to the last challenge I have set out to describe to you today, one which may sound trite at first, but one, on reflection, may be the most daunting task of all. I believe there is a military model of ethical values which, if properly defined and linked to community, educational and

commercial business issues, could generate a renaissance of ethical thought and practice in this country. All contemporary polls and rankings of institutions within society that I've seen place the military services toward the top of the scale. The military services generally is viewed in a positive light. Its core values are, I think, the reason for this. 'Duty, honor, country' illustrate the basics of this ethic.

Almost everyone in America, at one time or other, has heard or seen 'Duty, honor, country,' and has a basic understanding of what the implication of these three words are to the military. But these same people tend to view these implications in the abstract. They resist internalizing the ethical values embodied in the trio, a system of ethical values internalized by the general population, understood and supported, nurtured and taught, defended and exported, a system of values in which all can believe and embrace. We need to find a way to embrace a self-interest.

There is a superb book making the rounds today, written by two old friends of mine, Gordon Sullivan and Mike Harper. The name of the book is "Hope Is Not a Method." Gordon Sullivan, retired Army four-star, who was the chief of staff of the Army from 1991 to 1995; Mike Harper, a retired colonel, who was the director of the chief staff group, a brain trust for the Army chief. The book contains a wealth of information for business leaders and others, especially for those organizations undergoing change. For me, however, most important was the superb way in which the authors cover the importance of values.

And speaking of values with respect to organizations, the authors said, 'Values give an organization a self-ordering quality, a kind of organizational ballast which provides direction and stability in periods of turmoil, stress and change.' What a superb, crisp, clearly understandable definition of values. One can easily and quickly paraphrase their definition to relate to a society as a whole, such as, 'Values give society a self-ordering quality, which provides it with direction and stability in periods of turmoil, stress and change.'

The military, as an institution, needs to work the values issue carefully and continuously. The Department of Defense should get out front and work with

media and educational establishments in a public discussion of values and ethics. This proposition has a great deal of risk inherent in it, since many—and, I suspect, some in this room—have a skeptical view of anything military. But the issues are clear and the task difficult.

In his masterpiece, the "Story of Civilization," Will Durant begins with an opening—with outlining in volume one, chapter one, the conditions of civilization. He indicates that civilization is social order promoting cultural creation. He says that four elements constitute civilization. They are economic provision, political organization, moral—tradition and the pursuit of knowledge and the arts.

He expands moral tradition into ethical imperatives for civilization, and he defines for us a relationship between race and civilization, one which I think you'll find interesting. Durant advanced the theory in 1935 that, and I quote: "There are no racial conditions to civilization. It is not the great race that makes the civilization; it's the great civilization that makes the people create a culture. The Englishman does not make British civilization; it makes him." He, in my judgment, was right on course.

Durant goes on to say that 'This appearance of any of the conditions of civilization may destroy the civilization.' But one of the most profound writings which I've found in any book, and especially in the 11 volumes of Durant's "Story of Civilization," is his basic definition of civilization, and I quote: "Civilizations are the generations of the racial soul. As family rearing and then writing bound the generations together, handing down the lore of the dying to the young, so print and commerce and a thousand ways of communication may bind a civilization together, and preserve for future cultures all that is of value for them in their own. Let us begin"—"Let us before we die gather up our heritage and offer it to our children. Man differs from the beast only by education, which may be defined as the technique of transmitting civilization."

The transmission of knowledge and values assured a viability of civilization. We need to work both. In transmitting core values, we invest in our civilization. Knowledge wraps around it all, and knowledge comes through

education and experience. While experience is a sometime game of chance, we cannot leave education to chance.

And so, at the end of this long journey—and as I promised, I've taken a few excursions outside my theme box—but I think—at least, I hope—I made it back on task. I appreciate your patience. You have my recommendations. What are your questions?