

## RESERVE ENSIGN'S GRADUATION—UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

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**T**HIS is not an ordinary occasion. The circumstances under which these exercises are held are indicative of its exceptional nature. Extraordinary conditions justify, and indeed require, that recourse be had to extraordinary measures.

In view of the volcanic state of world affairs, it is timely for us to face facts realistically, and to state conclusions frankly. Never before—at least during the modern centuries—has the world been confronted by such a threat as it is now called upon to face. Not since the days when the hordes of Islam sought to overrun Europe has there appeared a challenge of such widespread significance as that with which the dictators now threaten the world.

So defiant and rapid has been the onslaught of these modern Tamerlanes, that the anxiety of virtually the entire universe has been forced to give way to the realization of a sense of immediate danger. In their mad, but unfortunately up to now, triumphant march, the laws, practices and decencies maintained among nations have been despised and violated.

The uses and rights of private property have been disregarded or destroyed. The guarantees of political and individual liberty have been cast aside. Freedom of religious worship has been either infringed upon or denied. The very foundations of Western culture and civilization have been uprooted.

When, climaxing all this, the dictator has gloated that his aim is at world conquest, it is high time that our Nation spared no effort for national defense. Let us face the realities, though they be hard as gun steel, and as bitter as sacrifice can be. What are some of the realities?

One is that America is only one step away from war. Anyone who tells you otherwise is dodging the truth. Anyone who tries to minimize, to evade or to escape this grim fact, even though well-intentioned, does not square with things as they are.

Yes, America is only one step from war—the most destructive, all-encompassing war that this planet has ever known. All the instruments of man's genius are being engined for the purpose of spreading death and extinction. There is no one who is safe. There is nowhere to be safe—if we allow the enemy to come to us. And it is as certain as the rising of tomorrow's sun that come to us he will, unless he is crushed and smitten before he makes his lunge.

Why is America so close to war? There are physical causes and there are moral causes. Let us consider the latter first. By our very nature, by the consecrated blood of our forefathers, by our creeds and covenants, we are the