

Fellow veterans, friends, families – good morning.

What a great honor it is to stand before this distinguished crowd on this fine Boston morning. I can't think of a better way to celebrate the 20th anniversary of my class' graduation from Boston College than by sharing a few moments with you today. Speaking of reunions, my wife and I may be celebrating our 20th, but let me extend a special greeting to the Class of 1964 celebrating their 50th class reunion this weekend. They are certainly well represented with us today.

I am especially grateful to Paul Delaney and Bob Sherwood for granting me the podium – completely unvetted and uncensored. And as I reflected on their invitation to speak there were essentially two directions I could take. On the one hand was I call the 'Pentagon Speci

I don't disappoint.

So perhaps I should start with a brief description of who I am. You heard my name and you may have even read my bio. Let me keep it simple: I am an American Soldier – a Soldier for Life. I was

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born to French parents who emigrated to the U.S. when I was 12. Like most kids growing up in Europe of my generation, we lived in the shadow of the Soviet Union – never quite certain what that meant – but also in awe of the power of the United States and quite frequently reminded of the not so distant memories of World War II. In fact still today, my grand-mother recounts her grueling experience under Nazi occupation and how one night in June 1944 – while six months pregnant – she went to sleep in her Normandy home with

escalate with drastic effects on an increasingly interconnected global society and economy.

In short, conflict in our future will be unlike any form warfare we have experienced in the past. In the coming decade our military will be increasingly engaged with regional partners to develop capacity and capability. Our general purpose forces and special operations forces will become more interoperable. While SOF will maintain its ability to conduct targeted surgical strikes when required, but will also through a spectrum of special warfare activities build a global SOF network with highly trained partners who can be leveraged at a moment's notice to react to a crisis in a given region.

Our global presence and engagement must reassure our friends and deter our foes. And it is our service men and women, who now more than ever, will be our nations' ambassadors overseas. Out of necessity they will operate in the realm that defines a major segment of the post-war strategic environment – that 'human domain' I just spoke of – that of clashing cultures, language barriers, religious differences, sectarian tensions, ethnic fault-lines, abject poverty, pandemic disease, natural and man-made disasters, uncontrolled migration and mass urbanization. This list only touches the surface,

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but it does highlight the need for the continued education and professional development of not only our military but our entire civil society because our national power at the end of the day is our human capital.

And so we turn our attention back to that human capital in our military.

that this generation of warriors will significantly shape the future of our nation.

To my fellow veterans and their families in this distinguished audience, I say simply thank you. I know the sacrifice you have all made in the course of your service to this country. Whether you made a career out of the military or served honorably for a period and then moved on to other aspirations, the point is that you served. Every veteran in this room knows what it's like to rise before the break of dawn, build a team from the ground up, train on an assigned task until you have so perfected it that you could do it in your sleep, then deployed without question when the nation called, and in some cases watched your fellow service members make the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

Just this past week on Memorial Day, as the President laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown in Arlington, millions of Americans across this nation descended on the hallowed ground of our national cemeteries to pay their respects at the graves of our warrior heroes. It was a day to remember our fallen and honor their sacrifice. I too remembered my own lost brothers and sisters in arms, and every year I pay special tribute to one in particular: my Boston College

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classmate, friend and mentor Dave Connolly. ROTC programs are

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**important than any hardware, I believe our nation is strong and I
assure you that millions of Americans stand ready today to defend it
and if need be give their lives for all of us.**

Thank you and God bless.

Ever to Excel !