

The strengthened role of the United States in the world today depends directly on the improvement achieved in the performance of our whole system since the beginning of 1961.

You know--and I do not need to repeat before you--the facts of the increase in our military strength.

We have spent more than \$30 billion in the last 4 years attempting to achieve a better defense strength than would have been spent had we followed the last Appropriation Bill of 1960.

We are today stronger in every aspect of our defense than we were 3-1/2 years ago. But the effectiveness of that strength, the faith in it among our allies, the respect for it among those who have ambitions of aggression, rests on other sources as well.

The 43 consecutive months of economic expansion--the record of the fullest employment in American history, the stability of our prices--wholesale prices have actually dropped during the greatest economic expansion in our history--the success of our space program, the legislative response to both long-standing and recently developing needs of our society--all of these are major factors in the influence we now exert for freedom and that we exert for peace around the world.

The point I am making is vital for your profession.

The military man is many persons. He is the great captain who commands fleets, air forces, and armies. He is the dedicated professional in school, on patrol, on guard. He is the draftee taking his turn at freedom's watch. He is the reservist or the guardsman leaving his home to go to summer training. He is also in a sense the civilian who devotes his mind and his energy to public service. Whoever he is, wherever he serves, the man is a product of our whole society, and he means more to peace today than he ever meant before.

As Secretary Vance observed, for more than 30 years my association with the military has been an intimate one, as a member of congressional committees, for a brief period on active duty in World War II, as a member of the National Security Council when I was Vice President, and today as Commander in Chief nothing is more gratifying, nothing more reassuring than to see, as I do every day, the quality of the new generations of military men.