

**Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation**

**ILE Graduation Address**

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**28 MAY 09**

**Good morning. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would also like to start by saying congratulations to the graduates. Welcome distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and especially, students, faculty, family members, and friends of the graduating class.**

**It's a pleasure to be here as you conclude "the best year of your lives" – although I'm told the workload to get to this point makes the best year of your lives a relative term...it will, however, make today the best day of your life.**

**And what a great day it is for the graduates and their families. You've had a good year, and you are probably excited about what the future holds for your next assignment.**

**It is also a great day for the faculty. It is appropriate that we pause for a second and thank this great faculty here at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. The faculty has guided you through all your studies, year lessons, and served as mentors throughout this year.**

**To the faculty – thanks, we very much appreciate what you do...the impact that you have on the Armed Forces in the Western Hemisphere is immeasurable and I thank you for that.**

**I've spoken at a few graduations and I'm often reminded that being a speaker at a graduation is like being a corpse at a funeral...they need you for the ceremony to start...but they don't expect you to say much.**

**I'll keep my remarks mercifully short!**

**Your participation in this course was significant for your professional growth as agile and adaptive leaders, and it also laid the foundation for relationships and partnerships that will enhance collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among our nations of the western hemisphere throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

**...a 21<sup>st</sup> Century that will present complex, dynamic, and unanticipated challenges. The conflict our Armies are engaged in are "asymmetric" and "protracted" in nature. Transnational issues like extremism and narco-terrorism threaten the peace and security of our entire Western Hemisphere.**

**The challenges you will face after graduation, are shared challenges. We can no longer look at violence, poverty, or corruption occurring inside one country's border as isolated events. The countries of the world are inextricably linked. As you all know, the Armies of the Western Hemisphere are in this together. Our successes will not be easy...and they will not be quick. We must demonstrate patience and resolve and together seek solutions.**

**Each of you, by virtue of your education and demonstrated professionalism, will be asked to lead in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Your nation and those in the western hemisphere need your leadership.**

**The critical and creative thinking skills you have developed here at WHINSEC will be essential as you rejoin your organizations across the Americas as leaders...leaders who will be faced with ambiguous and complex problems that require innovative solutions. As we all know, 21<sup>st</sup> Century problems cannot be solved by 20<sup>th</sup> Century thinking. These problems demand agile and adaptive leaders, are courageous enough to see and exploit opportunities in the challenges and complexities of the future.**

**You all seated here today, are...the courageous agile and adaptive leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...you are the essential critical and creative thinkers that, over the past 10 months, have completed an education that emphasized not what to think, but how to think...an education that stressed the importance of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order effects...and an education that recognizes the military is necessary...but by itself, it is not sufficient to meet future challenges.**

**In March of this year, Admiral Jim Starvidis told the US Congress, "To confront the challenges and embrace the opportunities of this century...U.S. Southern Command has shaped its initiatives to cultivate innovative ideas and harness integrated effort. The changing global and regional conditions of the 21st Century require more of an integrated and comprehensive approach..."**

**The importance of our ability to leverage every element of national power and to be inclusive with our international partners must be recognized by our leaders. This comprehensive approach is embodied here at WHINSEC more so than anywhere else. There are 17 separate courses being provided to more than 1300 students from 16 different countries giving the students here, regardless of which course they attend, unique opportunities to develop a JIIM mindset to solve challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

**In this graduating class we have students from eight nations...we also have students that are from multiple services – sitting here today we have Air Force, Marine Corps, Army, and National Police organizations...this incredibly diverse, joint, and multinational environment sets the conditions for all of you to realize the power of the comprehensive approach.**

**You are the leaders that will take the essence of the comprehensive approach back to your organizations and provide leadership beyond the traditional model of C2 – command and control – and be someone who realizes the importance of leadership that embraces C3 – collaboration, coordination, and cooperation...which allows us to move beyond unity of command to force unity of effort and unity of purpose among a diverse array of actors in a whole of community effort...a community effort who's foundation of partnerships and relationships began with the cultural awareness and common experience shared during your time here at WHINSEC.**

**Finally, as you complete this significant period of leader development in your careers. You will go forth and set the conditions, and facilitate the growth of leaders in your Nations. As you do, remember that there are three components of leader development: education, training, and experience. Over the past 10 months you have had a heavy dose of education, have added to some of your experiences, and touched on some training. What we all must keep in mind is that it is the combination of education, experience, and training that will best prepare every leader to make decisions in a complex and uncertain environment...the appropriate blend of all three is what gives us our greatest versatility.**

**As 21<sup>st</sup> Century leaders you must:**

- **learn faster**
- **thrive in complexity and ambiguity**
- **recognize and exploit transitions**
- **rapidly innovate**
- **adapt to the environment**
- **build strong teams of diverse actors that can thrive under the rigors of our profession.**

**The future environment requires you to continue to seek and take advantage of opportunities in education, training, and experience throughout your careers. Your development as a leader does not end today...it is a life-long process. Your participation in this course illustrates your grasp of the importance of taking advantage of opportunities.**

**As you graduate today, let duty and honor guide your everyday decisions...let loyalty and selfless service be your watchwords...let integrity, personal courage and leadership provide you with the tools to successfully complete your mission. I charge you to use these values to live the WHINSEC motto Paz, Libertad, and Fraternidad (Peace, Liberty, and Brotherhood) throughout the Western Hemisphere.**

**As we conclude today, we all need to acknowledge another common bond we have...regardless of which country we serve...the sacrifice and support of our families is what empowers us all. To all the families – thank you for your sacrifice and your support**

**Congratulations again to the graduating class, I'm honored to be a part of this ceremony.**