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It is a great pleasure to be with you today. I bring greetings from Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce.

The Department of the Interior, on behalf of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, accepts with great pride the contract for the first Army Junior ROTC unit ever installed at an all-Indian high school.

Fort Sill Indian School, I am sure, is justly proud of this achievement and honor. The staff of this fine institution is aware of the importance ROTC can play in the life of this country.

ROTC training at Fort Sill will give to young Indians an opportunity to prepare for military service in at least two ways: It will make it possible for them to receive initial training toward becoming commissioned officers if they desire Army careers and it will give them valuable training that could prove highly important to them--and the Nation- - should some emergency arise.

By enrolling in the Junior ROTC, students here help prepare themselves for such Army officer-producing institutions as West Point, Senior ROTC schools, and officer candidate schools.

The Army Junior ROTC came to Fort Sill High School because the Indian teachers, parents, and students here wanted a ROTC unit.

Indian Tribes represented by the students in this area - - the Fort Sill Apache, Kiowa, Comanche, Caddo, Delaware, and Wichita -- have a great history of outstanding "achievements for Indian people and their country.

The Department of the Interior is pleased to note that the active Army instructors for Fort Sill’s Junior ROTC will be American Indians. We believe this bodes well for the success of the program.

That policy is in line with President Nixon's self-determination .program for American Indians. Indian leaders today seek their own paths of development and achievement. They are leading into an age that will be largely determined by them.

They are following a self-determination policy President Nixon stressed in a special message to the Congress on July 8, 1970, when he called for a “new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions.”

A very significant part of the new Bureau of Indian Affairs program calls for more Indian control of education programs. For Indian education programs to become truly responsive to the needs of Indian children and parents, control of education programs must be in the hands of Indian communities.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is moving fast toward achievement of that goal. Now - - in 1972 -- BIA has 15 Federal schools controlled by Indian corporations, 75 other educational programs operated by tribal groups, 3 reservation junior colleges controlled by Indians, and 200 BIA schools with Indian advisory school boards or education committees.

In the last two years education funds in the Bureau of Indian Affairs increased by nearly $20 million, making available $174 million in the 1972 budget for Indian education programs.

The amount of money available for Indian scholarships has increased five times in the past four years, rising from $3 million in 1968 to more than $15 million in 1972.

Students who enroll in the Junior ROTC program at Fort Sill High School can qualify themselves better to compete for four-year Army ROTC scholarships that are worth about $10,000 over a four-year period at colleges and universities which have Senior ROTC programs.

The Department of the Army has found that a large number of four-year scholarship winners are students who availed themselves of the privilege to participate in Junior ROTC programs. The Junior ROTC is an integral part of our Nation's strength. It helps prepare young people for military duties they may have to assume in a national emergency. While America is a peaceful country and does not covet the territory of any other Nation, it must keep its defense forces in a state of readiness.

President Nixon has underscored the need for the United States to maintain a strong defense posture. Only recently, he said that he has found it does not pay to deal from weakness when you sit across the bargaining table from the great powers of the world.

Americas Indian people have always responded to the defense needs of their country. Since World War I their young men have served in our served forces with honor and distinction.

The highest United States military honor -- the Congressional Medal of Honor -- is given for military heroism “above and beyond the call of duty. Three American Indians have received that honor. 'They are Jack C. Montgomery a Cherokee, and Ernest Childers, a Creek, who served in World War II and Mitchell Red Cloud, a Winnebago from Wisconsin, who served in Korea.

Mr. Childers retired from the army and is now serving with the Department of the Interior’s Job Corps program.

Many of you, I am sure, are familiar with one of the most brilliant tactics devised by the U. S. forces to confuse the enemy in World War II when an American Indian language was used as a “code” for sending radio messages in the Pacific Theatre of operations.

The code was highly sophisticated use of the language and dialects of the Navajo Indian tribe, practically an unknown tongue at that time.

Ordinary codes used by the military were considered obsolete within 24 hours, but the Navajo “code” was so effective that it remained unbroken throughout the war and the story of its use was a hidden chapter in military history until V-J Day.

Ernie Pyle, the famous war correspondent, wrote about the project as one of those primarily responsible for the victory in Japan. Noting the success of the code in confusing the enemy, Pyle said “practically nobody in the world understands Navajo except another Navajo.”

Indians are subject to the same laws and requirements for military service as all other citizens.

In World War I, more than 8, 000 served in the Army and Navy, 6, 000 by voluntary enlistment. This great demonstration of patriotism was a significant factor in bringing passage of the Indian Citizenship

Act of 1924. In World War II, 25,000 Indian men and women served in the Armed Forces.

You can readily see that America knows it can count on its Indian people for prompt response to defense needs of their country.

I congratulate the Fort Sill Indian School for installing an Army Junior ROTC Unit. I am sure both the school and Nation will benefit from this development.

Thank you.
