

WEST POINT CADET SPEAKS HIS HEART AND MIND

A student at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point expressed his personal observations and concerns that stem from his role as a soldier, as an officer, as an American, and most importantly as a Christian, to the *Eagle Forum Report*.

My West Point class will shortly take to the stage and swear our oaths of commission. Our mission as soldiers is independent of political outcomes. These competent men and women swear to uphold and defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. But I am concerned about a change in our nation's culture that was revealed during the last election cycle.

We swear subservience and deference to civil authority. Whether Clinton or Trump claimed the presidency was moot. The President is our Commander-in-Chief. In the hysteria that followed the November election, we looked with disgust at those screaming, "Not my President." In the rare instances when military members expressed this sentiment, swift discipline and good order were brought immediately to bear. No disrespect is ever allowed towards the chain of command. We remain apolitical and no political party or presidential candidate can change our stance. Politicians can make our job harder or easier by varying degrees, but regardless the mission WILL get done. Duty and our sacred honor demand it.

President Donald Trump has garnered a higher degree of trust among the military due to his selection of cabinet members with military backgrounds. These are competent men who are now ideally placed to do some good. But our genuine concern is in something much deeper, something that has spread through the culture of our nation.

The political and social discourses surrounding decisions in this nation have switched from disagreements on policy while bearing similar goals in mind, to two completely different vi-

sions of what the nation is and ought to be. Our nation was founded by men who hotly debated policy issues, but our founders fought to create a nation and had a prosperous and moral vision for America's future. Their end goal was the same. They merely differed on how to get there, but this form of debate is no longer the case today.

As a man who has sworn to uphold and defend these ideals, I find this new attitude very disturbing.

The United States continues to exist because countless men and women throughout history have taken its ideals to heart and carried them like a flame into a dark world. Certainly, there have been times in our history when we have stumbled, fallen short and failed to live up to our noble ethic. But the fight has never ceased. The pursuit has never ceased. The torch is passed to each generation.

America is not a given. America cannot, and will not, endure if the collective population fails to pass on the core values of freedom, liberty and morality to younger generations. **The insulated, blind youth of my generation seem to think that there is no danger in experimenting with failed ideas such as socialism and dangerous big government policies. The danger is real and we are never more than one or two generations from a total collapse of the American ideal.**

The military cannot counter this change. We cannot sustain a set of values within a culture with which we are at odds. We are a volunteer force. A

couple months of basic training is not going to hammer out 18 years of cultural conditioning in a society opposed to the idea of American superiority.

By American superiority and exceptionalism, I do not mean to say that Americans are inherently exceptional or better than anyone else simply by being an American. No, rather that American exceptionalism that the ideals and values that have made this nation successful are exceptional in and of themselves. People who internalize and live out these values are exceptional.

Many of us at West Point have renewed our faith in Christ. We remember that the Lord calls us not to place our faith in men or governments, but in Him alone. As an American, I may despair over the state of the nation, but as a Christian I can cast my worries on Jesus with the full knowledge and faith that His will shall be done. The ideals we hold so dear in this country are, after all, based in immutable truths that are passed down by our Creator. **Judeo-Christian principles have always guided this nation. But even if the whole nation turns away and all we have worked for crumbles, my brothers and sisters will keep the faith.**

Despite these concerns, I am confident that West Point men and women and the future officer corps of the U.S. Army will remain dedicated to the morals and ideals of this nation above all else. We will continue to meet the many challenges on behalf of all Americans.

