



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

An independent institution established by Congress to strengthen the nation's capacity
to promote peaceful resolution to international conflicts

Reverend Sidney Lovett USIP Headquarters Groundbreaking Ceremony June 5, 2008

Behold an invocation morphed into remarks. Father Ted gave me his blessing on that. I look out on some of you and say you have been part of the creation of this magnificent Institute. You have done many things to bring it about and we're very grateful. President Washington thought that there should be a peace office. Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Dr. Banneker also wanted a peace office in the first constitution. But they failed, and probably over a hundred legislative efforts to create this, failed, until, lo and behold, founded in the bicentennial year, the National Peace Academy campaign, with the help of many of you was able to bring the legislation to the floor of the Senate in 1984 where it passed within a Defense Authorization Bill in the dark of night.

Now, this birth was not accompanied by planetary conjunctions, but it did have a lot of wise men and a lot of shepherds along the way, and I salute you, who have been part of this creation.

I should note, for the record, that Senator Matsunaga, Senator Hatfield, and Senator Randolph of West Virginia were some of the key people, along with Congressman Glickman and Congressman Conti. And then, later, to be aided and abetted by our distinguished Senator Stevens.

There were other workers in all of this; Mike Mapes was the donor of his life for the creation of this legislation. Of the inaugural board, those who were not with us, Ev Kirkpatrick, Bill Kintner, and that wonderful connector of all, Morrie Liebman, were instrumental in bringing the leadership of Ambassador Sam Lewis and Ambassador Richard Solomon.

So much for the legislative history. Now, you and I are on hallowed space known as Braddock's rock, where Colonel Washington bivouacked with General Braddock before that ill-fated mission to Fort Duquesne. When Washington became president, he thought this would be a grand spot for a national university, but it did not prevail. But look what did. A National Observatory, offices of the Naval Medical Service, Office of Strategic Services, offices for the early Central Intelligence Agency. You and I are sitting on hallowed ground. And so, as Dr. Solomon points out, the need for the focus on how to bring peace is very much among us.

One evening, August 1863, President Lincoln walked unaccompanied from the White House to the Observatory to ask some questions about the moon and how it appeared on the national telescope. I like to think that President Lincoln will step down from his chair over there (pointing to Lincoln Memorial), and will, with the hallowed dead of this country's treasure, visit the Institute in its new quarters to remind them to give everything they have to the pursuit of peace. And so, I give to him the last word and in a sense, the invocation:

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations". Amen.