7-26-1947

On the Unveiling of the Monument to Colonels Travis and Bonham

Strom Thurmond

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Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, "On the Unveiling of the Monument to Colonels Travis and Bonham" (1947). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 205.
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ADDRESS OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, ON THE UNVEILING OF THE MONUMENT TO COLONELS TRAVIS AND BONHAM, AT SALUDA, SOUTH CAROLINA, JULY 26, 1947.

The people of Saluda have gathered here today to pay a belated tribute to two men of this county---two men who more than a century ago gave up their lives in order to fight for the furtherance of freedom and liberty in this country.

The bravery of William Barrett Travis and James Butler Bonham in the massacre of the Alamo while they were fighting for the freedom of Texas is being recalled here today and this monument is being dedicated to them. Actually, it also stands as a reminder to all of us of the courage, the heroism, and abilities of thousands of forgotten and unsung patriots who founded our country so firmly and so securely that in 1947 it is not only the richest and best country of the world but it is the true home of liberty, of decent living, of more individual freedom than exists anywhere.

This monument to Travis and Bonham, who were born and reared so close to this community, should then recall to all of us the great debt we owe to our ancestors who fought and died that our inheritance would be strong and great.

You know the history of the Alamo. You know how that handful of brave, purposeful men, fighting under the directive skill of young Travis, killed thousands of invaders before finally being butchered when Santa Anna's horde ultimately swarmed over the ramparts of the meager fort and stormed to victory.

You know, too, how the appeals for assistance, carried
bravely by Bonham, were rejected because of the lack of preparedness on the part of others in Texas. You know, again, how the up-hill bitter struggle was carried on by other brave men and how, after their strength had been marshalled and they had finally prepared themselves for the warfare, that they triumphed and Texas became free.

The bravery of those men from Texas, from Alabama, from South Carolina--yes from all the south which had sent many men to the new frontier--is not forgotten. But remembered, too, is the fact that they were not prepared for the fight; that they had not looked too well to the future and that they had failed to determine upon a commander with authority to order other garrisons to the assistance of Travis and his handful of men in the Alamo.

The parallel that we in the United States and that we in South Carolina can draw from the defense of the Alamo is obvious. We have recently concluded another world war into which we were forced when we were not prepared. The bitterness of our early losses and the enormity of destruction caused by our peaceful frame of mind have not been erased by the ultimate victory which was reached only after 14,000,000 persons were under arms and after our industrial and scientific forces had been strained to approaching their limit.

Can't we use this monument dedicated to Travis and Bonham to remind us constantly that we must strive not only for peace in our time but also for peace forever? May we not use this event in
Saluda today to serve as our guide toward a future that will be
glistening with opportunities and bright with man's ability to
live peacefully with man?

Using this idea as a torch, I believe that we can as-
sure a world of peace by practical application of preparedness.
Our efforts will be forgotten and, in fact, will be useless, if
we merely announce a high-sounding ethereal manifesto. We must
be tough. We must be practical. We must be earnest.

It is perfectly obvious that the next world war—if
our efforts for lasting peace are not successful—will be fought
on levels never before embraced by warfare. The attacks will
come without warning—they will be a series of Pearl Harbors.
Our homes, our industries as well as our military installations
will be attacked. Our civilian population will be in the front
lines. Our professional soldiers and sailors may well be wiped
out in the first few instants of the conflict. The rest of us
will be left to battle for ourselves—unless we take steps now
to forestall these developments.

It is imperative that we act now—that we act today.

How, then, may we proceed?

I say that proper preparedness can be accomplished in
the United States by the application of sound military sense to
our every-day life. This application may, it is true, mean self-
denial to some of us but it will not turn us into a militaristic
nation. It will not result in tremendous standing armies. But
it will require foresight and determined action on the part of our leaders and full cooperation from all of us.

First of all, I believe that we must have true total mobilization. We should pass laws at once that would become operative as soon as hostilities begin. All of our scientific, industrial and manpower resources should be embraced into this plan. It should extend to such measures as civilian defense matters; rationing of essential or scarce goods; control of wages and profits. The whole pattern should be arranged with the idea that equal contributions to the war effort will be made by all groups of our citizens.

I speak strongly in favor of unification of our armed services. Those of you who served in the recent war will recall, I am sure, instances of improper coordination or cooperation that would not have occurred had our armed forces been under a single command.

It is imperative that our military strength be organized throughout the country to embrace all of the reserve organizations and such groups with civilian bases as the national guard.

That brings us up to the question of universal military training. I am a firm believer that all of our young men would profit by having some military training. I know that the country would thus profit by having a trained body of men who could be placed quickly into our armed forces should a war emergency arise.
I do not believe that we can ever again allow our military establishment to be weakened to the point that we will have to rely upon a small professional army. We will need the strength and abilities of all our man-power.

Right away, our government should implement the work being done on scientific developments. We know that we barely won the race for atomic power and we know, too, that other nations are at work on other means of offensive military might. Our scientific achievements are great and our scientists are skilled but we must give them freedom and resources so they can develop more weapons for our use and for the maintenance of peace in the world.

I am convinced, too, that we need a sound intelligence service which will provide our state, commerce and military establishments with information on important developments throughout the world. There is nothing underhanded in having intelligence officers at work for us. All nations have such services; many of them on giant scales. We, ourselves, have intelligence activities but they should be broadened so that we will know at all times about developments that might threaten our safety and the peace of the world.

There are other necessary steps for the preservation of peace—and if that fails, for the maintenance of our freedom and independence. Our neighboring countries in South and Central American should work out with us a joint plan for defense of this Hemisphere; our merchant marine should be maintained at a high operating level, not only to provide employment for our seamen,
not only to keep up our commerce with the rest of the world but also to provide ships and facilities for the future conflicts. We should conserve our natural resources and we should add to the stocks of those resources in which we are deficient.

Industry has already realized that it must decentralize if it is to survive economically. Many plants are moving to the South and West to get away from the concentrated areas of the East. South Carolina has benefited by the location in our midst of numerous industrial plants. We welcome more of them because we know that our workers are eager and able to produce many types of goods. We welcome them because we have space to spare for them to grow and expand and to help our economy.

And finally, our goal of preparedness and peace for the world may be accomplished by our vigilance against subversive activities on the part of disgruntled citizens or by work of foreign agents.

All of this, my friends, seems to add up to a program for preparedness, a program for peace and a program for preventing war. We know that Japan would not have attacked us at Pearl Harbor had it believed we were prepared to repulse that attack. We were not prepared. We suffered a terrible defeat. And we paid for that defeat with long months of crawling back to the offensive; we paid with lives and with money.

The people of South Carolina can join in the national effort to effect this preparedness and to maintain this peace. We
can continue to grow in strength. Already we are making satisfactory progress toward improvement of our agricultural economy. We are getting new industries. Many of these are small plants which will grow into big ones as our people progress with them. The new skills being learned by our boys and girls will provide more money for their betterment and for the betterment of our entire state.

South Carolina is attracting attention of industrialists elsewhere. We know that our progress has not stopped. We know that so long as we maintain an encouraging attitude toward industry that we will continue to receive favorable consideration. We know that we want to diversify. We intend to extend our sound growth to many fields of industry.

I pledge you this: So long as I am Governor of South Carolina, I will endeavor to bring industry into our state and to help it become a vital part of our life. I am expending much of my energy right now to help make our state government more efficient and to see that it serves the people of the state. I know that our people want good government and I intend to see that they receive the reward that is rightfully their's.

To the people of Saluda county I congratulate you not only on the thought and purpose of this monument to two men who fought for freedom and who died in their efforts, but also on the 51st anniversary of establishment of your county. You have prospered, particularly recently since new industries have been established in your midst. You are to be congratulated for the abilities you displayed in providing homes for industrial plants. I know that you have not stopped your
efforts. I know that you will continue to rise higher and that you will do your part in helping South Carolina and our country enjoy peace and prosperity throughout our lives.

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