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Stalin and Communism

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS BY J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AND STATES' RIGHTS DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AT THE AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION, MIAMI, FLORIDA, OCTOBER 17, 1948.

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

Since the American armed forces broke the Hitler military machine, we have seen the rapid spread of another kind of influence which appears to be no less dangerous to the peace of the world than were the legions of Adolf Hitler.

Instead of appreciating what this nation did to save their own country and their own heads, Stalin, Molotov, and Vishinsky have done nothing since we cracked Hitler's war machine but scheme and plan to extend their own sphere of influence. They have constituted themselves as a road block to world peace.

The Soviets have practiced every known brand of international intrigue and diplomatic double-talk. They have worked their way into the little countries of Europe on the basis of being a friendly ally. Within a few months this "friendly ally" has converted the helpless little countries into Russian puppet states, and the people in them have been enslaved by the iron rule of Moscow.

Nothing has come out of our victory in World War II more heart-breaking to me than what has happened to the peoples of the little nations like Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Finland, and Poland. These people celebrated on VE Day, because
they believed home rule and liberty would once more be theirs to cherish and enjoy. Instead, they have merely had the heel of one dictator taken from their necks, and the heel of another placed on them.

As Americans, we must calmly and realistically face this problem—this threat to the peace and happiness of all mankind. Communism now threatens to engulf all of Europe to the English Channel, and if that threat is carried out, we may expect their campaign to spread with greater force in all parts of the world.

What is happened in Berlin now is just window dressing for bigger things to come. Russia is using Berlin for more important plans in expanding her hold on Europe. She would, of course, like to take over Berlin for psychological reasons, but she is more interested in controlling the Ruhr.

The situation in Germany cannot longer continue. If the blockade in Berlin is removed, we should push immediately for the adoption of a peace treaty with Germany. It has now been over three years since the fall of Berlin, and not even a preliminary treaty has been drafted, because the Russians will not cooperate.

If we cannot draft a German treaty by conference with Russia, then there is no alternative but to recognize the Soviet Union as a potential enemy state.
As matters now stand, we are in war that is not war, and we are in peace that is not peace.

I think all of you will agree that unless there is some break in the present tense international situation, there is little hope of escaping ultimate conflict. Therefore, it is our duty to exploit every possible compromise of our differences with the Soviets. But we should always keep in mind that a policy of appeasement was tried by Chamberlain with Hitler and it did not work. We may compromise honest differences of opinion, but we must not compromise principle, or appease Russia just because Russia threatens another war.

The only way to deal with Stalin is in a two-fisted manner, and he must be made to realize that we are not too proud to fight.

Our best insurance for peace is to be prepared for war. Any other course, in the light of present world conditions, would mean flirting with national suicide.

We must be prepared for total war.

We cannot again depend upon the slow, gradual utilization of our manpower, and our financial and industrial potential. We must at once begin to educate the civilian toward a full acceptance of his duties and his responsibilities in the event of war. We must write legislation providing for total
national mobilization, and we must write it now.

We must see to it that our armed forces remain effective on the ground, on the sea, and in the air. We must also see that such organizations as the National Guard, the Organized Reserve, and the Naval Reserve are promoted, so that trained personnel will be almost immediately available to expand standing armed services.

In this connection, a report has recently been made in Washington recommending that the National Guard be federalized and taken away from the control of the states. I am opposed to this proposal. Removal of the Guard from State control would violate the basic principles of our government and weaken our national defense.

Adequate attention should be given to the development of new weapons of warfare; to the extension of our intelligence service on a world-wide basis; to closer coordination between those responsible for our foreign policy and the heads of our armed forces; to the maintenance of a strong Merchant Marine, and, finally, to a proper evaluation of our material resources on a plan consistent with their rapid utilization for war.

We have learned the bitter lesson that Stalin respects only one thing — military power. When, during the last war, it was proposed that the Pope be consulted on a certain
matter before the Big Three Conference, Stalin bluntly asked —

"How many divisions has the Pope got?"

That is a realistic viewpoint, is it not?

With military might at our quick command, we must give the United Nations both moral and physical support. If the dream of Wilson and Roosevelt for world order through international cooperation is to be realized, the United Nations needs something more than lip service.

If the Soviet Union was not sincere in becoming a member of the United Nations — if she is determined to use her veto power to make that organization impotent and meaningless — then the quicker the United Nations develops a firm policy and treats the Soviet as a belligerent, the better it will be for mankind.

We have had thousands of years of war. We cannot expect to form an organization which overnight will assure world peace. We must, during these formative years, protect it from losing the respect of the world just because one member will not trust it or respect it.

In the United Nations lies the hope of the world to prevent its destruction by new forms of warfare, many times more deadly than any ever used before. The United Nations is confronted with a severe test, and in the critical months ahead
it must have the active support of peace-loving people everywhere.

The two great forces of the world are in conflict. Communism is fighting democracy in the affairs of mankind. Come what may, we in the United States are going to preserve our way of life. By keeping the torchlight of freedom burning within our shores, we will make it possible for it to burn once again in other lands where liberty has perished.

To accomplish these things, we must separate the influences which represent true democracy, from those which stand for the hyphenated-American kind of thought control and slavery of the individual.

We must let the world know that the United States has but one foreign policy -- the American foreign policy.

We must let the world know that this nation did not pour out our great resources to destroy the Nazis, in order to have Communism arise as another totalitarian bid for world domination.

We must stand with Stephen Decatur, when he said --

"My country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be right; but right or wrong -- my country!"