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Address of J. Strom Thurmond, Governor of South Carolina at Dedication Ceremonies of Radio Station WLBG, Clinton, South Carolina, 3:00 PM, Sunday March 28, 1948

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA
AT DEDICATION CEREMONIES OF RADIO STATION WLBG, CLINTON,
SOUTH CAROLINA, 3:00 P.M., SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 1948.

This Easter marks an occasion which will long be remembered in
this section. A new force has begun operation in the Piedmont of South Carolina.

This is Radio Station WLBG, which is conducting its dedicatory program today.

With this broadcast, WLBG joins a large number of radio stations
in South Carolina, and it joins an industry that is dedicated to public service/
and to the progress of civilization. That progress comes through education,
entertainment and information. Radio has a real public trust to present such
programs as will benefit the masses of people and will assist them to raise
their standards of living and increase their prosperity and enjoyment.

This Radio Station has pledged itself to participate generously in
such programs as will serve the public interest. By so doing, it should
help this section to broaden its economic base and to develop both agricultu-
 rally and industrially. It should take a leading role in the progress of the
up-country of South Carolina.

The growth of radio stations in our State is a real indication
of their importance to our people. As recently as two years ago, there were
only about 15 stations in South Carolina, and most of them were located in the
larger cities. Today, that number has nearly doubled and numerous others are
in process of construction and will soon be ready to begin operation. I believe
that a significant trend has been developed by these new radio stations. Most
of them are in the smaller cities of the State. They are serving local
audiences on a local basis. They are filling a need that apparently has not been filled before.

There is something almost akin to magic in radio. Standing before a microphone, a man may send his voice all over the world in a flash. Radio is instantaneous. It is becoming an increasingly potent force in the development of our civilization.

To an increasing extent, recent years have radio has developed into a true voice of history. In recent years, political leaders in the nation and the world have turned more and more to radio. In addition to its swiftness, radio faithfully records what is said into it. Thus, a speaker cannot be misquoted nor misunderstood. What goes into the microphone comes out of your radio. The living history which radio transmits day by day has an important affect on the lives of all of us. If radio and free communication had existed in the years before our generation, we would possibly be now living in a better world.

The public service which radio gives so unstintingly is vital to the American way of life. Every day, over our radios, we hear news practically as it develops. We are kept constantly abreast of developments all over the world through the means of radio. Time is always available without charge on our radio stations for the presentation of worthwhile forums and discussions which do much to bring us better understanding and background of present day issues. The agricultural news broadcast by radio stations results in increased benefits to farmers. Radio is always in the forefront of campaigns for civic betterment.
The educational possibilities of radio are great, and radio has assumed its responsibilities in this regard to the fullest. I was particularly glad to learn that WLRG will work so closely with Presbyterian College. This fine institution, which has played so large a part in the development of South Carolina, combines to an admirable degree the closely allied fields of education and religion.

In these truly dark days, we need a strong re-affirmation of faith—a return to the fundamentals of the Christian religion. This morning I participated in a truly inspiring sunrise Easter service. The eternal story of the resurrection and its glad promise holds special significance for us now.

Let me tell you that story as it was written by St. Mark:

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into
Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have
told you.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre
with fear and great joy; and did run to bring
his disciples word.

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold,
Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came
and held him by the feet, and worshipped him."

Religion and freedom/walk hand in hand. Both the freedom and
religion/of the free peoples of the world/are now imperiled by the Godless
Communists of Russia. In the fight against this atheistic menace to our
civilization, a free radio is imperative.

In America, more than in any other nation, we have the blessings
of a free radio. The Federal Government, unlike many other governments, does
not have a state radio system. That is why American radio is better than any
other in the world.

In years not so long gone, we have seen what may happen/when
nations make radio their creature. In Germany/Dr. Goebbels used radio to whip
the people of the Reich into a frenzy for war. In Italy, Mussolini used radio
to inflame the peaceful Italian people for the same course. The state radio
of Japan paved the way for the kamikazes of Okinawa. Now the state radio
of Russia/is building up suspicion and hatred for the Western democracies.

State radio systems have worked along the lines of democratic
principles. Great Britain so controls radio. But in the minds of thoughtful
people, national employment of radio — even in the hands of so fair and just
a people as the British—remains a potential threat against democratic rights. Governments are no better than the men who make them up. Power-mad governments can forbid—and have forbade—the right of criticism to their opposition. And democracy does not thrive without opposition.

The United States government regulates radio wisely. Because radio frequencies are the property of the people, it licenses commercial stations for stated periods. It may withdraw those licenses if it finds that such stations are not operated in "the public interest, the public convenience, and the public necessity". This is right and proper. Radio frequencies are limited, and it is not fair that anyone should have perpetual ownership of them.

The Federal government does not tell American radio what programs it can transmit. American radio is not required to praise the government or any man in it. Radio programs are not censored by the government.

As Governor of South Carolina, I can speak my mind over this radio today. If I were a farmer, or a mechanic, or a professor, or a stenographer, I could do the same thing. The government of the United States does not decide whether or not I can speak. It does not have any idea of what I may say. Any South Carolinian—or any American—may stand before this same microphone and criticize my administration. The right to criticize their government is denied to most of the peoples of the world.

Under this freedom American radio has flourished. Tonight, you may turn the dial of your radio and pick up a hundred radio stations. You may get as many different programs. You may hear news, music, drama, opinion,
politics. All of these would be gloriously independent. But if you lived in Russia, you would hear only what the Kremlin wanted you to hear. What came out of your radio would be scientifically-applied propaganda.

In essence, what this means/is that American radio has developed in accordance with the American tradition of individual freedom. Because it has developed in such a way, it has woven itself into American life. Radio is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity. Because of the American radio and the American press, we are better informed, and more quickly informed, than any other people. We know more of what is going on—both in America—and abroad—than other people. That is why we are the world's best guarantors of democracy. For people make their decisions on the basis of information, and fully informed people cannot be led down the trail by demagogues. The Bible says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free."

To the best of my knowledge, the American government has no plan to assume direct control over radio. Such a design/would be unthinkable to all of us. But sometime—even in America—a sinister figure may arise/who cannot stand the white glare of publicity. He will want to throttle radio/because it will be dangerous to his plans. When that time comes, our democracy will be in grave peril. If the radio goes, the press will be next.

Radio demonstrated during the past war that it is fully responsible and can be trusted to the utmost. No censors were placed in American radio stations, as they were in other nations. I have never heard of one instance/in which a radio station broadcast information/which imperiled our security.
I salute American radio for its great contributions in our way of life. I salute American radio for the pleasure which it has brought—free of all cost—into our lives. And above all, I salute it as one of the foremost guardians of American liberties.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to the management of Radio Station WLBG. Long may this station serve in the public interest, the public convenience, and the public necessity.