Address at Senate campaign meeting about national defense and foreign policy

Strom Thurmond

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At the outset of this campaign, I made my position clear on matters relating to the national defense and our foreign policy. I pointed out that no function of the United States Senate is more important than the part which it plays in shaping and handling our foreign affairs.

In view of developments in Korea I want to discuss with you briefly the international situation as I see it.

As far back as the National Governors Conference at Salt Lake City in 1947, I have warned against Soviet aggression and called for a strong hand in dealing with Communism. The then Secretary of State George Marshall addressed the Governors in Salt Lake City and told us in confidence some of the difficulties he was experiencing in his negotiations with the Soviets. The strong position I took in my address at the National Governors Conference attracted nation-wide attention because at that time few public officials had advocated a tough foreign policy in dealing with the Soviets.

If my service in the last war and study of international affairs taught me one thing it was that Stalin and his Politburo respect only power. There was no other course for this country to pursue but to call a halt to Soviet aggression. We must be prepared to take whatever risk there is in drawing a line and telling Russia if you cross that line we will fight.

In my opening speech of the campaign at Lexington I made it plain that regardless of our differences on domestic issues, we as a people must be united in our dealings with the outside world.
In my speech over the radio on May 30 in explaining my support of the Marshall Plan and discussing the grave international situation, I said:

"Regardless of differences on domestic issues, partisanship must stop at the water's edge in shaping our foreign policy. I believe that our foreign policy should be truly bipartisan so that every man and woman in America will feel a personal responsibility for it."

The President of the United States must realize that in these critical times we must have unity in this country. We cannot have unity if the President is going to play cheap petty Pendergast politics with his high office and refuse to invite the Governors of two Southern States to a White House function just because he does not like Strom Thurmond and Fielding Wright because they led the fight for Southern Democracy in 1948.

We cannot have unity in this country if the President is going to continue to appeal to the minority bloc votes in doubtful states by trying to stuff down the throats of our people a program which we know will destroy our way of life in the South.

We cannot have unity in this country, and the President will weaken our national defense, unless he forgets about the minority blocs in the next election and withdraws his program to break down segregation in the armed forces and compel Southern white boys to serve, eat, and sleep together with negro troops and also use the same recreational facilities.

We cannot have unity in this country if the President is going to pay more attention to the minority blocs demanding civil rights legislation than he is to the real Democrats in this
country who are fighting to preserve Constitutional government and home rule. It was shocking to me yesterday to read that in New York the Civil Rights Congress, a propaganda organization designed to break down segregation in the South, switched a rally in Madison Square Garden from civil rights to "a mighty peace demonstration against Wall Street Intervention in Korea and the far East."

Among those leading the demonstration for a "Hands off Korea" policy was Paul Robeson, the negro singer, who has been all over this country demanding that we abolish segregation, and who to show his contempt for our way of life in the South married his son off to a white girl.

Can the President of the United States be so blind that he cannot see that by all of his agitation for civil rights, and sending his minority blocs into Southern States in an effort to dominate our primaries, that he is bringing about discord at the very time we need unity in this country?

In all sincerity, ladies and gentlemen, I believe as a member of the United States Senate I can make such an appeal as I am making to you tonight and build public opinion so strong that the President will be forced to withdraw his civil rights program.

I am sure that what happened in Florida and North Carolina has already caused some of the Pendergast politicians around the President to wonder if they have not gone too far in demanding Civil Rights legislation. I call on the Democrats of South Carolina to finish the job on July 11 and we will not only preserve Southern democracy but we will help bring about a united front in dealing with this grave international situation.
In this campaign my opponent for the Senate has played his typical role of a demagogue in trying to make political capital out of my support of the Marshall plan. He has gone all over South Carolina talking about our government pouring money down a rat hole in its efforts to win the cold war against Russia.

As a result of the Marshall plan we avoided in Europe what is today happening in Korea. By sending our commodities, including South Carolina cotton and tobacco, under the plan designed by our great chief of staff during the war, George C. Marshall, we avoided a shooting war in Europe.

But my opponent thinks he knows more than General Marshall, General Eisenhower, General Bradley, Cordell Hull, James Byrnes, and others who advocated the Marshall plan.

There were only four Democratic senators who joined with 13 senators in voting against the original Marshall plan. My opponent was one of that four. There was only one Democratic senator who joined with six Republicans in voting against continuing the Marshall plan in 1949. My opponent was that one. There was only one Democratic Senator who joined with seven Republicans in opposing continuance of the Marshall plan in 1950. My opponent was that one.

My opponent also voted against the British loan, although it was recommended by the then Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. And remember this, my opponent was one of the seven Democratic senators who joined with six Republicans in voting against the Korean assistance act of 1949.

In other words, the record shows that my opponent has joined hands with a small hard core of Republican isolationists.
in seeking to wreck this nation's effort to win the cold war against the spread of communism.

My opponent did not hesitate to desert the Democratic party of South Carolina and support Harry Truman in 1948 when Southern democracy was under attack. But when it came to standing by our government in its cold war against communism he joined in with the Republicans and deserted all the other Democrats to block the program which Congress almost unanimously adopted.

Just who advised my opponent to become a Republican isolationist I do not know. I can tell him tonight that South Carolina does not believe in isolationism. He has been using the cheap political devices of an isolationist by going around over this state and saying if the federal government can pour billions into Europe we can appropriate a few millions for our public schools.

Any man who will play politics on such a vital matter as our foreign policy is not fit to be in the United States Senate and that is another reason South Carolina Democrats are going to turn my opponent out of the Senate on July 11.

In these times we need men in the Senate—men who have the courage of their conviction and who have the moral and physical fibre to lead their people.

During this campaign I have told how a pardon racket operated out of the Governor's office while my opponent was Governor, and how I brought an end to that racket. Over at Pickens this morning I told of another racket which my opponent permitted to grow up in South Carolina and that was the Industrial Commission granting excessive fees out of compensation due
to our workers for injuries or to their families for death. We cleaned up the pardon racket and with the confirmation of Miss Faith Clayton, after a hard fight, we cleaned up the mess in the industrial commission.

Now I want to tell you about another condition which my opponent cultivated while he was Governor and which shocked the good church people of South Carolina and those who believe in temperance.

You people here in Greenville remember that when he ran for Governor he held his right hand to the sky and said that hand would never sign a bill to legalize liquor in this state.

Well I have here in my hand a photostatic copy of his signature on an almost wide open liquor law. This liquor bill which my opponent made law with the hand which he said would never legalize liquor in this state, created a situation in this state which threatened to corrupt government in South Carolina, both state and local.

This liquor ring was a cancer in our body politic and when I became Governor I cut it out.

The General Assembly upon my recommendation passed the graduated liquor tax under which millions of dollars which had been going into the pockets of liquor dealers have been channeled into our state treasury. Other recommendations which I made, including local option, were not carried out but the good church people of South Carolina can be thankful to the General Assembly for carrying out my recommendation which broke the financial back of the liquor ring in this state.

I charge now and my opponent cannot deny it that he has accepted support from those who were enriched by the liquor
bill he signed. They supported his campaign when he ran for the Senate six years ago and they are working for him in this campaign. My opponent's autographed picture has hung on the walls of liquor dealers in this state.

When my opponent was defeated for the Senate in 1941 by Burnet R. Maybank, this liquor bill was an issue in their campaign.

My opponent had published a full-page ad in the newspapers of the State reflecting on Senator Maybank and tried to prejudice the people of this state against him because he was from Charleston.

Here is the ad, and I hope you will note the similarity of the full-page ad my opponent ran in the papers last Sunday against me. It has the earmarks of being prepared by the same hand of yellow journalism in Anderson, South Carolina, which prepared the ad now being circulated in this campaign in behalf of my opponent.

Senator Maybank in the 1948 campaign charged my opponent with posing as the great white hope of temperance and then signing a liquor bill which caused liquor stores to spring up in South Carolina like mushrooms.

Needless to say, Senator Maybank called my opponent on his hypocrisy just as I am calling him in this campaign. My opponent is not going to get by with running with the wets and the drys any more than he is going to get by with running with the Trumanites and now trying to run with States Rights Democrats of South Carolina.

My opponent claims as a result of his desertion of the Democratic party, he has a lot of influence with Truman in
Washington. Well if he has so much influence up there, why has he not secured the re-appointment of Oscar Doyle, as United States District Attorney. Mr. Doyle was originally appointed on the recommendation of Senator Byrnes. You know he has made a good district attorney. He is entitled to re-appointment on merit. Senator Maybank has recommended his re-appointment but what the junior Senator says is supposed to carry the most weight in this district because he lives in the Piedmont. Either my opponent has no influence in Washington with Truman and Attorney General Harold McGrath, the man he toasted in public on being confirmed to head the Department of Justice, or he is holding up the appointment to carry out some political trades he has made in case he is re-elected.

Well, I can tell you he will not carry out these trades because after January 3 you are going to have a new United States Senator and I am going to join with Senator Maybank in getting Oscar Doyle reappointed.