Statement to Reserve Forces Policy Board by Colonel Strom Thurmond.

It is indeed a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with members of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

The members of our Association are intensely interested in working closely with the Defense Establishment in order to build a stronger and better Reserve.

With the chaotic conditions existing in the world today we fully realize that we could become involved on very short notice in either another Korean incident or an all out war.

We know that the Department of Defense shares with us the concern that we have in regard to the fact that our Reserves are not organized at this time.

In sharing this concern, however, there has developed within the Department of Defense, a method of operation which we believe in the long run can only impede our objectives where the Reserves are concerned. Without regard to the individuals and the places where this problem has started, it is a disturbing fact that those of us who are skilled in reserve matters are asked to work with the Department of Defense. It is our understanding that even this board, which was created by law to advise the Secretary of Defense on Reserve policy, at times is by-passed or given too short a time to consider highly involved matters. Certainly we in the Association have had very few opportunities to advise with the policy makers on Reserve matters, and apparently due to the time pressures or the classified nature of the matters which this board is considering, we have had fewer opportunities to consult with you. Certainly the experience of our individual members, as expressed through the representatives of our Association, should be of considerable value to anyone trying to solve a problem which can only work if there is cooperation and support of individual reservists. I am stressing this point, because I hope we can turn back this most unfortunate trend, and through trying months that are ahead of us work together as a team.
We understand that the Department of Defense has been asked to make further studies on the new look for the Reserves. We hope that this has been referred to your Committee for study. We understand that in all probability no bill dealing with this subject will be presented to Congress before next year. Until an adequate procurement system is provided so that enlisted Reserves will become available, our Reserves will become weaker and weaker. I recently wrote a letter to the Secretary of Defense on this subject, which I will be glad to read to you.

A major problem facing the Reserves is the admitted lessening of morale among its officers. We sincerely believe that the Reserve Officers Personnel Act, for which hearings are scheduled in the Senate Armed Services Committee on the 20th of July will, if enacted into law, be a wonderful boost to the morale of all Reserve Officers.

We are disturbed that the Defense Establishment is opposed to certain provisions of this bill. It is our understanding that the Department's position is contrary to the recommendation of this group. We hope that your committee will again recommend to the Secretary of Defense, that the Defense Establishment encourage the Senate Armed Services Committee to report the bill favorably, as it was passed by the House of Representatives.

There are four principal provisions of this bill, in which we are extremely interested:

a. Promotion under provision of law.

b. An authorized strength

c. A percentage in grade.

d. That date of rank in all Services be the same as date of commission.
We are extremely interested that the Department of Defense seek legislation to provide rehabilitation pay for Reserves who are on extended active duty and who have given ten or more years of their lives to their country. We understand that you have this matter under consideration and hope your Committee favorably recommends this action.

It has indeed been a pleasure to meet with you.