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President's New Military Reserve Plan

Strom Thurmond

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The President's New Military Reserve Plan
Past Problems—Present Policy—Changes Proposed—Action In Congress

**PRO**

U. S. Secretary of Defense Wilson
Asst Secty Carter L. Burgess
Asst Secty of Labor Siciliano
Dir. of Mobilization Flemming
American Veterans, World War II
Nat'l Sec. Trng. Commissioners:
General Smith and Atherton

**CON**

U. S. Senator Strom Thurmond
Manpower Commissioner Boring
The American Legion
The National Grange
American Federation of Labor
Nat'l Assn. of S. S. Principals
Methodist Board, World Peace
Military Reserve Plan

...Tho He Decide Justly, Cannot Be Considered Just—SENECA

by HON. J. STROM THURMOND—
U. S. Senator, South Carolina, Democrat

Senator Thurmond, who is President of the Reserve Officers Association, appeared before the House Armed Services Committee to testify on behalf of the ROA on February 24, 1955. The following extracts are taken from his remarks.

"THE RESERVE OFFICERS Association supports fully the broad objectives and aspects of the administration's plan to strengthen the Reserve Forces. It does, however, disagree with some of the details of the bill being considered and also certain of the purposes which this bill is designed to accomplish.

"The bill before you is, in essence, a manpower procurement bill dealing primarily with the problem of securing enlisted manpower for the reserves and effecting a higher degree in participation in the reserve training programs.

"This Association is in accord with the concept that every able-bodied, male American owes, as an obligation of citizenship, a certain amount of service to the Military. This is service either with the active forces, the reserve forces, or in combination thereof. It does not agree that this period of obligatory service should exceed eight years. Furthermore, it feels that this period of obligation should be subject to reduction by the President when force levels have been reached in the active forces and in the expanded reserve in order that the manpower pool may not increase beyond the minimum figure necessary to provide a source of recruitment for the regular military establishment. Failure to hold the manpower pool to minimum levels will result in many young men escaping service, and the average age of inductees increasing to unacceptable figures.

"The Association believes that the sources of manpower for the reserves should be two and two only.

"The first source would be from prior service personnel with remaining periods of obligatory service, or those who have discharged their obligatory service who can be induced to remain in the reserve on a voluntary basis. The second source would be non-prior service men who enlist in the reserve components throughout the country and immediately thereafter go on active duty for training for a period of six months. After this training is completed they then return to their reserve units for a period of seven and one-half years. All services should be required to use both methods. The numbers who would be trained would be the maximum consistent with the existence of facilities and available funds. It should be noted that the Department of Defense recommends this training plan be on a carefully controlled basis and, it is our understanding, intends it to apply only to the Army, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard. It should be noted that under their present program the Navy is following a somewhat similar plan which they call 'Accelerated Reservists Training.' Consistent with the position stated above, we recommend that a floor be placed under the number that would be trained by this method, and that this floor would be 150,000 trained annually for all the military services. It should be borne in mind that this floor represents only 75,000 man years of trainees which should not tax the training facilities of the military establishment to a significant degree.

"The bill before you establishes a total of five million men in the reserves, divided between a 3,000,000 man re-defined Ready Reserve and a 2,000,000 man re-defined Standby Reserve.

"It is the opinion of the Association that the total reserve should consist of approximately three million reservists. We would recommend that the three million Ready Reserve, as recommended in this legislation, be the total reserve and that the Standby Reserve, as recommended in this legislation, revert to the general manpower pool. The Standby Reserve, as recommended in this bill, cannot be ordered to active duty except with the approval of the Selective Service. Furthermore, this bill provides no opportunity for training in the Standby Reserves except on a volunteer, unpaid basis and offers no opportunity for promotion or advancement to its members. It is our opinion that it is not a reserve at all and adds nothing to the security of our country.

"The Association would not change the present definitions contained in the Reserve Forces Act of 1952 for the Ready, Standby, and Inactive reserves, although we would suggest changing the name of the Standby Reserve to 'Mobilization Reserve.' A careful study of these existing definitions shows clearly that they accomplish precisely the same objectives as the new definitions sug-

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The main difference between our positions is one of size. The Association would divide the three million men in the Ready Reserve, as recommended by the Department of Defense, into a Ready, Standby, and Inactive Reserve as established by present law. The Ready Reserve would be the only part of the reserve which would be subject to the call of the President. In our opinion this should not exceed one and a half million men. In the Association plan the million and a half in the Ready Reserve would be divided into two groups of similarly trained and equipped units and individuals. The first would be a so-called 'Hurricane' force, the second, the 'Support' force.

The term 'Hurricane force' is not intended to be a legal term but is rather a descriptive term. This force, backed up by the 'Support' force with only a slightly less degree of immediate readiness, would constitute our Ready Reserve. Membership in this 'Hurricane' force and 'Support' force would be encouraged by special inducements and incentives, including, but not limited to, extra emoluments, identifying and distinctive uniforms or markers, and priority receipt of full combat equipment and realistic training facilities. To the greatest extent possible it would be manned by prior service personnel who would be induced to serve in the Ready Reserve force. This Ready Reserve would be subject to the call of the President.

“The balance of the three million total reserve would be in the Standby Reserve and would be organized, equipped, and trained precisely the same as the Ready Reserve. It would have, however, a lower degree of priority of achieving operational readiness.

We know that it will be argued that a larger Ready Reserve is required, but we believe that such a concept, as expressed in the legislation before you, stems from war plans designed to meet the requirements of full mobilization. It is recognized that the next war may start by an all-out attack on our country. That, of course, would bring in all reserves with the fullest support of the Congress.

“However, we cannot accept a concept that we should tie our ready reserve structure to a plan that would require the use of 3,000,000 men in addition to our active forces. There may be other types of small wars which will require a partial mobilization on a very urgent basis. If such is the case, a relatively small Ready Reserve is imperative. If, however, the entire three million is needed, then it is our opinion that such a need stems from total war. Certainly there will not be such damage that the Congress could not take any action necessary to permit the use of all reserves.

“One of the major deficiencies in the bill under discussion was its failure to recognize the absolute need to provide for an orderly flow of young reserve officers into the reserve program. Basically, such officers come into the Reserve through the ROTC program. Under present conditions the purposes of this program have been distorted to become a procurement program for the needs of the active services. The primary purpose of the ROTC program is to provide young officers to meet mobilization requirements. We recommend that the numbers in the program be consistent with that objective and that upon graduation all ROTC graduates will be commissioned. Those in excess of mobilization requirements will be ordered to active duty for training for six months and then attached to reserve units for a period of seven and one-half years obligatory service.

There is much talk of inducements and incentives to improve interest in and the morale of reservists. The present low morale and low efficiency of the reserves stems from certain easily correctible faults on the part of the regular establishment. There has, in the past, not been an acceptance of the concept by a part of the regular establishment that the reserves are an integral part of our total military structure and not a mere adjunct to the regular establishment. This has resulted, unfortunately, in discrimination and attitudes, particularly in personnel procedures, which can only indicate that in the minds of some regular personnel a reservist is a second-class member of the military team.

Another matter which we earnestly recommend for the consideration of the Committee is the fact that we should endeavor to clean up—one and for all—the problem of reservists who have served on continuous active duty for such periods of time that they, in fact, have become career personnel.

“Without such reservists, the armed forces cannot possibly meet their commitments. Over 80 percent of the officers of the Air Force and Army on active duty are reservists. Smaller percentages prevail in the Navy and Marine Corps. We know of no line of endeavor where an employee who works for the same employer for a period of ten, fifteen, or twenty years is not considered a career employee. Yet these reserve officers who are holding responsible positions on active duty and are as well quali-
We think it is not only appropriate but necessary to mention here that this lesson has not been lost on our potential enemies. Recent studies and analysis of the educational structure and its product in the Soviet Union provide unmistakable evidence that the entire educational structure there has been and is polarized in the direction of the fullest exploitation of its intellectual potential for engineering and science. Until recently it was fashionable to discredit the quality of Russian technological effort in the face of its growing quantity. We now have increasing evidence that this attitude on our part constituted ‘whistling in the dark.’ Our smug self-confidence in our continuing technological superiority is in the process of dilution by growing concern.

“The National Science Foundation, in its annual report for the year ending January 30, 1954, presents some information on the ratio of workers in our economy to engineers and scientists and other technicians. It provides the information that in 1870 there were 1,100 workers for each engineer and scientist. By 1910 the number of workers had decreased per engineer and scientist to 200. In 1950 there were only 60 workers to each engineer and scientist in the United States. The real quantitative implications of this for technological manpower cannot be understood until we realize that our industrial working force has grown enormously during this same period. With these facts in mind we can understand why our tremendous industrial structure would be seriously weakened by the withdrawal of too many of its brains.

“In the case of engineers, about half of our resources have been graduated from engineering schools since 1947. It is not surprising that in spite of this we have experienced in this country since 1950 demand for these persons far beyond available supply. Many of us are convinced that, indeed, in terms of the educational development of our professional potential in our country to meet the technological demands of our times, we have already reached the ceiling unless extensive programs are launched to encourage a proportional increase in the number of our qualified young people who actually go on to some kind of professional training. I mention this only to indicate that in the event of an emergency, our resources of highly trained manpower on hand will without question be the major ultimate limiting factor in our capacity for mobilization. It is our firm conviction that our resources in technological manpower would barely be adequate to meet all known and probable national security needs only if they were properly distributed between and efficiently utilized by military and supporting productive activities. In other words, it is of the utmost importance that we learn to make the most of what we have because the promise of absolute increases in the supply are poor in—

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