2-22-1955

Address before the Atlanta Chapter of the Reserve Officers Association

Strom Thurmond

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. code). Use of these materials beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

For additional rights information, please contact Kirstin O'Keefe (kokeefe [at] clemson [dot] edu)

For additional information about the collections, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

Recommended Citation

Thurmond, Strom, 'Address before the Atlanta Chapter of the Reserve Officers Association' (1955). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 1341.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/1341

For additional information about the collection, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

This Speeches is brought to you for free and open access by the Manuscript Collections at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100 by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.

I appreciate the invitation of the Atlanta Chapter of the Reserve Officers Association to speak here on this notable occasion—the birthday of the father of our country.

I am also grateful to General
Bolling for his invitation to visit Fort McPherson during the closing days of National Defense Week. As national president of the Reserve Officers Association, I would like to express the ROA's deep appreciation to this brave soldier and great American for his deep interest in our reserve program. His interest and leadership have been
vital to the Reserve program and reservists everywhere.

I think it is particularly appropriate that National Defense Week should be observed in the period between the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. These anniversaries bring to mind the eminent service rendered our country by these two great Americans during -3-
earlier periods in American history, when our very existence as a young nation was at stake.

George Washington lived in the "frontier" day of the 18th Century. Today, in this 20th Century, we are, in a sense, living in the day of the "frontier" again.

In these times of long-range bombers that travel at supersonic speed, guided missiles and rockets that soar through the skies at the amazing
speed of several thousand miles per hour, and airborne armies that can be dropped from the skies on a moment's notice, no foot of soil in the 48 states can be safe from attack.

In Washington's day, our enemies were Indians, wild beasts, and the Redcoats—all within our borders. Today, in the 20th century frontier period, our enemy is Red Communism. The Communists are a vicious enemy. They
do not believe in God. They do not believe in liberty, justice, nor the dignity of the individual. They have liquidated millions within their own borders, and they will not hesitate/to kill millions more outside their borders/in pursuing their course of dictatorship.

Should the enemy unexpectedly attack from the skies, our reservists would be called upon to take up the
role/the minutemen of 1776 performed with such courage and skill. It would be the job of the reservists/in the various states/to protect our homes and citizens. Time might not permit regular forces to be quickly shifted to the attack areas. The reservists would be capable of rapid mobilization, and by virtue of the units being dispersed throughout our nation, ready
protection would be afforded every section of our country.

Dependence upon citizen soldiers, reserve forces, rather than upon a large regular military establishment, for the protection of our national security is an American tradition. The brave and unselfish men who first secured our independence under Washington were, in every sense, reservists—civilians who needed no extensive
training because their weapons of war hung over their fireplaces, and were constantly used to provide food and clothing for their families.

Through the years, the weapons and methods of warfare changed considerably. More time was needed to train volunteers/unschooled in the art of warfare. But the basic policy of
depending upon reserve forces has not changed.

In this century's two great wars for survival, tremendous contributions to the ultimate victories were made by reservists—men who were summoned in the time of danger. Because of the complexity of modern warfare, they needed extensive training before they could be made effective—training which
took a long time. In this day of intercontinental bombers bearing nuclear weapons of mass destruction, time is no longer on our side. In any future emergency, we must be alert and ready at the outset. We must be prepared.

Now, it is not the intention of the ROA to seek to participate in formulating our nation's war policy.
its overall strategy, or to intrude on the prerogatives of the State Depart-
ment. However, we are definitely con-
cerned/with the development and main-
tenance of reserve forces/which will provide the utmost in our national security.

In view of the mission and object-
ives of the ROA, it seems both appro-
priate and prudent at this time to define our organization's position on
national defense. First of all, we believe our nation must be fully prepared at all times to meet any type of emergency—whether it be nuclear warfare or warfare of conventional weapons as used in the late Korean War. Our armed forces must be ready and able to meet aggression anytime anywhere. Half measures of the nature of partially trained, semi-ready military personnel
in the regular forces or reserves, are totally inadequate, in view of the threat of the Soviet bloc and its vow to achieve Communist domination of the free world.

The Formosan situation serves as a daily reminder that we cannot be content with—nor can our national security depend upon—the inadequacies of our present defense posture. In this connection, I would like to congratulate
the President of the United States for his determined action to save Formosa. This Chinese Nationalist stronghold is a vital link in our defense perimeter to keep our shores free from aggression. Only through such a realistic course can we face the future, confident of upholding the principles of liberty and justice so cherished by freedom-loving peoples everywhere.
The Communist Menace to our freedoms has led to the maintenance of a costly military establishment. This has been largely responsible for keeping our Federal budget in the red. Thus, our problem in these perilous times is to make the best use possible of our defense dollars. Since about seven reservists can be maintained for the cost of one regular, it is essential that we immediately build up a strong combat-ready reserve so that the regular establish-
ment / can be reduced.

We must remain strong, both militarily and economically, if we are to resist the threats of aggression which imperil the free world, now and for the indefinite future. Weakness in either field / could be fatal.

Even now, the Congress is considering the Administration's National Reserve Plan. Under the able guidance of Assistant Secretary of Defense Carter
Burgess, this plan presents the "best yet" approach/to the strengthening of our nation's reserve forces. However, in this proposed legislation/there are several provisions which ROA believes should be amended/to expedite the reserve buildup/and to make the plan more workable and acceptable. Meanwhile, ROA gives a "well done" to Secretary Burgess/for his outstanding progress to
Presently, our reserve forces are comprised of too many skeleton units far below the level of combat-readiness. We lack the personnel, the adequate training facilities, and modern equipment. Given the "tools", we can build a reserve capable of executing assigned responsibilities with efficiency and dispatch. But the seconds and
minutes are ticking away as we seek to rebuild a modern minuteman force in tune with the times. It is imperative that the full energies of our nation's military and civilian authorities be translated into positive action for the build-up and maintenance of a strong combat-ready reserve.

One of the most priceless values each American enjoys is his freedom to assume the responsibilities of enjoying...
our Democratic way of life. Each of us must freely and willingly assume the increasing responsibilities that we as Americans have to share in the security of our country. In our daily life we have many opportunities, some very simple. We can give our blood for the use of our fellow countrymen; we can support the churches of our faith.
keep before us always the religious beliefs of our fathers. We can aid in the civil defense program or the ground observer corps. And, those of us who are able-bodied men of military age must assume our obligation to the military requirements of our national security. If each of us does his share in the way the survival of our country demands, we can be confident that the forces of the
democracies of the world will survive, and that those of us who live in these democracies can continue to enjoy the cherished blessings of liberty and justice.

Lastly, I would like to remind our national leaders of the importance of exercising extreme caution and the soundest judgment in finalizing our defense program. When a mere ripple may be the forerunner to a tidal wave, we can ill afford to gamble with the
international gangsters/sponsored by the Kremlin. Our path to freedom is soaked with the blood of Americans dating from the battles of Lexington, Bunker Hill, and King's Mountain. Their sacrifices and those of their descendents must be a constant reminder that only the strong can be free, and that eternal vigilance is still the price of liberty.

—the end.
International Centres sponsored by the
International Centre for Freedom of
expression. Our fight for freedom is
sought.

With the plan of Americanisation, the
petition to Lexington Mountain Hill.

andkid's Mounting. Their activities
must be stopped. Americanisation
consist of American politics only. The
long.

is still free. and the struggle continues.

the end.