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Power for peace

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS BY STROM THURMOND TO A JOINT MEETING OF THE
CIVIC CLUBS AT THE FRANCIS MARION HOTEL, CHARLESTON,
S.C., May 17, 1956 at 1:00 P.M.

POWER FOR PEACE

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Members of the Civic Clubs
of Charleston, and Other Friends:

In the words of President Eisenhower, "The purpose of Armed
Forces Day is to increase public understanding of, and to emphasize,
our peaceful aspirations."

We desire today to focus attention on the Armed Forces and
the men and women who man the ramparts of our National Defense.
The men and women who make up our Armed Forces are not only our
sons and daughters, but they are also our hope of national survival
and the preservation of world peace.

Armed Forces Day this year finds the world without overt,
battlefield hostilities. An uncertain peace hovers over the nations
of the globe. The continuing possibility of its sudden disruption
poses a disquieting threat to the lives of millions.

This uncertain peace makes impossible at present a limitation of
armaments that would permit economic resources, not required by
defense, to be devoted in greater measure to the direct benefit of
mankind.

In the United States we are faced with the necessity of devoting
approximately one-tenth of our gross national product to expenditures
for national security.

The keynote of our national policy is permanent peace with fairness
and justice to all nations. In search of means toward this end,
President Eisenhower met with the heads of the major powers in
Geneva last July. There he explored the possibilities of agreement
on critical issues that jeopardize peace. Subsequently, Soviet
leaders demonstrated their unwillingness to create the indispensable conditions for an enduring era of international tranquility. Nonetheless the President has publicly declared our government's intention to intensify its efforts for peace.

Until those efforts have reached fruition, the free world must continue many of the politico-military steps that so far have dissuaded the Communists from a large scale attack, and have helped to bring about a current Communist tactic of self talk and promises of economic aid.

The free world's collective security arrangements, begun with the North Atlantic Pact, now have extended to the Near East (Baghdad Pact) and to Southeast Asia (SEATO). This year the Federal German Republic, among others, formally joined the European military alliance for freedom. We now have defense partnerships with 44 nations, all of them in keeping with the United Nations Charter.

Our security partnerships around the globe serve as a system of warning to the Communists that they no longer can accomplish the easy, piecemeal destruction of the free world.

The nature of our deterrent forces has been shaped by what we know about the capabilities and what we judge to be the intentions of the Communist powers.

The Iron and Bamboo Curtains stretch 20,000 miles along the borders of Eastern Europe and Asia. Behind them are an estimated 175 Soviet and 150 Chinese Communist divisions, with a capacity for both atomic and non-atomic aggression. It is estimated that there are more than 5 million men under arms in the various Communist countries. It is also estimated that they have a mobilization capacity to increase their forces to about 375 divisions in the
field/within 30 days/in a general mobilization. They are supported
by an Air Force numerically superior to ours and a Navy second only
to our own.

We have developed in the free world/the capability for retali­
tion/as the best deterrent to a full scale Soviet attack. We also
have developed a flexibility of military power/so that its use may
be selective and adapted to circumstances, both military and
diplomatic.

Our 1956 defense program is designed to meet the military needs
of today -- superior retaliatory potentiality, flexibility, and
defensive capability. It represents the continuation of a reorienta­
tion of our Armed Forces/to meet current needs that have been in
progress since cessation of hostilities in Korea.

The program makes provision for steadily increasing efficiency/
in step with scientific advances. It is designed to assure a stabili­
ty that will not veer, like a weather vane, with every wind of
propaganda by unfriendly nations.

The 1956 military program/provides for continued improvement
of our military effectiveness and combat readiness/by developing
and making operational new weapons/and by integrating the latest
scientific developments, including new atomic weapons, into our
military planning.

It recognizes that America's most precious commodity is its
citizens. So it places dependence upon military formations that
make maximum use of technology and require a minimum number of men.

This principle, coupled with the ending of hostilities in
Korea/and the fact our Army is now helping train and equip more
than 200 indigenous combat divisions in 44 countries, has permitted
force level adjustments.

The President's $35.5 billion defense budget for the forthcoming fiscal year provides for military personnel of 2,817,516 compared with a peak of 3,685,000 during the war in Korea.

The program recognizes that advances and developments in science and technology have dictated an accelerated program of continental defense.

Our 1957 defense program places renewed emphasis on the purchase and development of missiles. The proposed budget for the coming fiscal year provides $2 billion expenditures for missiles. Of this amount, $1.776 billion would be for procurement and production, and the rest for research and development. The Department of Defense is currently developing various types of missiles.

President Eisenhower said in his Budget Message that "expenditures for the procurement of guided missiles will be the highest in our history, increasing by more than one-third over 1956 and about double the amount spent for this purpose during 1955".

General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, Army Chief of Staff, recently disclosed that the Army and the Navy, using the REDSTONE missile as a steppingstone, were intensifying efforts to produce a missile with a range of 1,500 miles.

Several ballistic missiles are under development, including one of intercontinental range. The ballistic missile is a very high speed type of guided missile that is usually rocket-powered, and, in most cases, is guided for only the first brief part of its flight; thereafter, like an artillery shell, it follows a ballistic trajectory.

The Air Force has been assigned responsibility by the Department
of Defense for development of the intercontinental ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead.

Meanwhile our airpower plays a primary role in both defense and retaliation.

The Air Force, during the coming fiscal year, will complete its planned buildup to 137 wings, with personnel planned at 936,000 by mid-1957. The buildup of the Strategic Air Command forces is scheduled to be completed by June 30 of this year. The medium bomb wings are already fully equipped with jet-powered B-47s. All Air Force combat wings except those using B-36s will be jet equipped by June 1957. The Air Force also will increase the number of air-borne early warning squadrons for the continental defense system.

In the Navy the number of carrier air groups will remain at 17, but their combat effectiveness will be greatly increased. Part of the additional striking power will come from two new FORRESTAL-class carriers, additional modernized carriers, and new high-performance jet-powered planes.

The strength and capability of our air power cannot be measured simply in number of planes or wings. For example, at the end of World War II, the B-29 was our best bomber. As an interim weapon we had the B-36, which is now being phased out in favor of B-52s. One of these aircraft can carry, on a single mission, a destructive force greater than that of the total bomb tonnage dropped on Germany during World War II.

Both Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Nathan F. Twining, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, have assured the public recently that we retain a general overall qualitative air superiority over the Soviet Union.
Both these officers, however, warned that their assurances are by no means as optimistic as they may sound. They noted that our superiority is threatened by 3 factors. First: the Soviet Union has achieved a greater rate of progress in building up the effectiveness of its air power; secondly, it is turning out scientists and technicians at a much higher rate than we are. Finally, we are handicapped by the difficulty experienced by our Armed Services in retaining highly trained technicians.

The planned increase in deterrent capabilities of our Armed Forces is by no means limited to air power. With its mission still to control the sea lanes leading to and from this continent, the Navy is undergoing its greatest change in history. It is passing from steam to nuclear power, from guns to missiles, from gunpowder to nuclear weapons, and from subsonic to supersonic airplanes.

The Navy already has proved the feasibility of atomic-powered submarines and it has commissioned its first missile-launching ship, the converted cruiser, USS BOSTON.

It is now planning the application of atomic power to surface ships, with the ultimate objective of developing task forces capable of remaining at sea indefinitely without refueling. The retaliatory striking power of such force would be many times that of World War II task forces.

The $9,565,000,000 expenditures allocated in the budget for Navy expenditures contemplates a sixth carrier of the FORRESTAL class, additional nuclear-powered submarines, guided missile destroyers and frigates, and an experimental nuclear-powered cruiser.

By the end of the fiscal year 1957, the Navy should be operating a total of 1,005 active ships, including 411 warships, compared with
the present force of 984 active ships including 403 warships. Naval personnel is expected to be at 663,223 by the end of 1957.

The Marine Corps will continue to maintain 3 divisions and 3 air wings/in a high state of combat readiness. It will, in conjunction with the Navy, continue efforts to improve helicopter-borne/“Vertical envelopment” landing force operations.
The Army is adding to our deterrent power by development and expansion of its atomic capabilities. It is streamlined and pointed toward an active duty strength of 1,034,000. It has CORPORAL guided missile battalions, HONEST JOHN batteries, and 280mm gun battalions, all with atomic capabilities.

Under its expenditure allocation of $8,582,000,000 and its prescribed force level, the Army at the end of 1957 will be organized into 19 division, 10 regiments, and 141 anti-aircraft battalions. There will also be an increase in units armed with new weapons.

One infantry division will be converted to airborne, raising the number of such divisions to three. The new airborne division will be devoted to experimental work in organization, tactics and weapons.

During the past few years, the Army has been testing various organizational and tactical concepts to determine how it should fight an atomic battle. The Third Infantry Division and the First Armored Division were reorganized in accordance with atomic fighting concepts and recently tested at SAGEBRUSH. Study of the effectiveness of these changes will affect the future organization of Army units.

Doubtless a significant part of our deterrent force is the presence of American soldiers in many foreign countries. Although they make up an important segment of NATO forces, their real deterrent power lies in the fact that they are constant reminders to would-be aggressors of our unshakable resolve to defend free peoples everywhere.

Steps are being taken continuously to increase the scope and effectiveness of our continental air defense system, which is directed by the USAF. Our scheme of continental air defense is integrated about a wide-spread system of warning devices and units designed to alert defense forces on approach of hostile aircraft.
The warning system consists of a series of transcontinental radar screens, either completed or in the process of construction. They are complemented by radar aircraft and by the Ground Observer Corps. The pine Tree System stretches along the United States-Canadian border, from the Pacific to the Atlantic. It has been extended to the seaward flanks by Texas towers and picket ships. During the coming fiscal year, the number of radar sites will be increased, and seaward flanks will be reinforced by additional towers.

In cooperation with the Canadian Government, work on the Mid-Canada Early Warning line and on the Distant Early Warning Line across the top of the continent will be advanced. Additional picket ships and aircraft will be placed in operation.

The Coast Guard follows a course of training, which keeps it ready to function as part of the Navy in the event of war. This training is carried on, despite the fact that the Coast Guard is charged with a wide variety of peacetime duties, which include inspection of merchant vessels of certain tonnage, weather patrols, protection of ports and waterfronts, loyalty screenings of crews on vessels handling certain types of cargoes, the transportation of explosives, and its aids to navigation research.

Should an enemy blow be struck against us, the power of our Active Forces would be employed to repel or blunt that attack. In support we must have Reserve Forces so organized and trained that they can be speedily mobilized to reinforce the Active Forces in combat or to man defense operations at home.

Depending on the nature of the attack by an aggressor, our
Reserve Forces might well be called upon initially to perform a vital domestic role before undertaking their primary military function. In the event of direct massive assault against the United States, maintaining order and organization under the conditions that would prevail in attacked areas would constitute a major challenge. Trained Reserve Forces ready to function under disaster situations could provide the decisive margin.

In the light of these circumstances, it is imperative that our Reserve Forces be ready to carry out their roles. A significant step toward the achievement of this end is to be found in the Reserve Forces Act of 1955, which was passed by the first session of the 84th Congress.

Among the most significant provisions of this new law are those that provide trained young men to the Reserve Forces. Young men between the ages of 17 and 18½ years are permitted to enlist directly into the Reserve for an 8-year period of service. One of the requirements of this 8-year enlistment is that of undergoing an initial period of active training lasting for 6 months.

In addition, there is an incentive provision available to young men who enlist in the National Guard, under which they may participate in a period of active training of not less than 6 consecutive months and thereby reduce the period of their draft liability to 8 years.

In addition to providing the basis for improved Reserve Forces, the Reserve Forces Act of 1955 contains features that provide benefits in other areas.
An important element of our reserve force is the National Guard, Army and Air Force. It now consists of 5,958 federally recognized units. Its manpower goal is 477,500 by mid-year.

Three times in this century the United States has found that being unprepared did not prevent war. Now we are determined to try to win the peace before war starts and to be ready to meet it if it does. Our best assurance against a nuclear war is to have the power to make it utterly unprofitable for a would-be aggressor to start one.

In closing, let me say that it is appropriate that we have taken these few minutes today to recognize our great Armed Forces which protect us, and more important, the men and women serving in this demanding task.

While we observe Armed Forces Day only once a year, we should be constantly aware of all aspects of our national strength and be reminded of the continuing efforts for peace that this program affords.

We have been building "Power for Peace." Let's continue to build it so strong that the communists would not dare attack us.