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Address at Donaldson Air Force Base on Armed Forces Day

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) AT DONALDSON AIR FORCE BASE, GREENVILLE, S. C., ON ARMED FORCES DAY, MAY 18, 1957.

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

The President has designated today as Armed Forces Day to honor the men and women of our fighting forces. It is an honor well-deserved because nowhere on earth is there a force of more loyal and patriotic citizens. In war and in peace, the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States have served the nation. They have lived up to their obligations and many times have exceeded those responsibilities by acts of heroism and service.

I want to join today in expressing gratitude to our Armed Forces for the magnificent job they are doing all over the world where they are stationed in
73 countries on three continents.

There has never been a time in the history of our country/when it was more necessary/to remain alert and militarily strong. We must be prepared to meet the aggression of communism, because communism understands power when it refuses to understand, or at least to recognize, anything else.

In a dictatorship/it is a simple matter to devote one-seventh of the country's national production/to armaments. That is what Russia is doing today.

Of course we do not know the full strength of Russia's armed forces, but we know enough to realize/that, unless we are constantly prepared, we would endanger the peace of the world/because
the Soviets would take military weakness as an invitation to attack.

In World War I and World War II, the German submarine fleets were the scourge of the seas. They made it practically impossible for Allied ships to sail until convoy protection was devised for shipping and transports. Those were terrible days, and I hope we shall never have to face such times of danger to national security.

But we are told that Russia now has a greater fleet of submarines in her navy than the Germans had at the beginning of World War II. The Russians have approximately 500 underseas craft -- the largest such fleet in the world. They are continuing to turn out submarines at the rate of three every two weeks.
Only 10 years ago, the Soviet fleet ranked seventh in the world. Today the Soviet fleet is second only to our own Navy.

The Red Navy includes 25 modern cruisers and 130 up-to-date destroyers. Recent plans announced by the Russians are for the building of two 30-to-40,000 ton nuclear-powered war ships.

The Red Navy also counts 3,000 jet planes of late-model fighters and bombers.

The Russian Army of 175 divisions includes 65 armored and mechanized divisions as a part of the striking power of the Soviets. They have great reserves of man-power and all citizens between 16 and 50 are required to undergo military training.
Great progress has been made since World War II by the Russians in placing new weapons in the hands of their ground forces. They have also increased their speed of movement with modern tanks and other mechanized equipment.

Both the Russian ground forces and air forces have made swift progress in the development of atomic weapons and in the developing of missiles capable of supersonic speeds in flight.

We must consider the communist war machine a modern one in every way, capable of quick and deadly assault anywhere in the world the Red leaders might choose to strike.

I do not suppose that anybody really knows what the Soviet leaders believe
and think. We only know what they say, and what they say does not often correspond with what they do. If we could believe what the Russian leaders say, we would not have to worry about maintaining strong armed forces in this country because the Russians claim they have peaceful intentions.

We have only to examine the record of their international relations to know that the treaties the Soviets make are not scraps of paper. They are actually clever fabrications of deception.

As examples, recall the many broken treaties in Soviet relations with other countries. These would include the Nazi-Communist pact in World War II, the treaties with the Balkan countries after the war, the agreements concerning China
and Japan, and many others.

If we knew the full story of how the conquered nations of Europe were deceived, we would probably be even more amazed at the record of broken promises the Reds have established. Some day I am confident we will know that story, because I believe freedom finally will prevail. In Hungary and in Poland there have been demonstrations that the love of liberty is not dead in the hearts of the people of those countries.

For a few minutes let us examine the most recent statements of the communist boss, Nikita Khrushchev, who was interviewed in Moscow last week by Mr. Turner Catledge, managing editor of
Khrushchev applies different standards to different countries, for it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion from the statements he made. He condemned the United States for military preparedness, but apparently saw no reason to criticize Russia for the same reason.

The Red leader insisted that the United States wants war. He said: "A country which does not want war would not continue to develop its armed forces and to stockpile weapons, and would seek agreement with the other side...."

If the Red leaders want peace and want to find a way to arrive at international agreements to be kept, instead of broken, they will apply the
same rules to themselves that they now apply to the United States.

Ten years ago the United States suggested and urged approval of control of atomic power by international inspection. Last year the United States proposed the open skies inspection plan to give each nation greater confidence in the other countries of the world.

But the Soviets have refused to agree to either plan. In fact their aggressive actions during the years following World War II have caused many people in this country to doubt that it would be wise for the United States to enter into a program of international inspection and control of nuclear weapons. They fear that the Reds would use the plan to learn the scope and substance of our military
preparedness/while concealing their own status from real inspection.

One of the statements made by Krushchev/struck me as being a very old concept/instead of a new one, as the Red boss would have the world believe. He advocated setting up some kind of organization/to review the present and future problems of Europe. His plan would be for the United States and Russia to dominate this organization, because they are the two most powerful countries in the world.

That idea, stripped of its propaganda frills, is clearly the old European plan of maintaining a balance of power between the two strongest nations, by dividing up the rest of the continent into spheres of influence between the two powers.
Krushchev claimed that some of the countries which are now members of NATO would like to get out of that organization, that they were forced into NATO by existing circumstances. His implication is that the United States coerced them into joining.

His proposal for a new European organization includes the disbanding of NATO, the present European bulwark against Red aggression.

But, while he is able to analyze what he regards as the faults of the United States, Krushchev cannot see the inconsistencies of his own position.

He defended the interference of the Soviet army in Hungary on behalf of aggression, while condemning the intervention of the United States in the Middle East when our purpose was to keep peace.
He defended the Russian action as different because "the Hungarians have their own independent state, their own independent government and are pursuing their own independent policy."

But the Red chief viewed our intervention in the Middle East as trying to impose American "colonialism" on the nations of that area in lieu of British colonialism.

It is not difficult to see that Krushchev and his associates permit themselves liberal bounds within which to operate in a "neighborly" fashion. At the same time they severely limit the extent to which the United States is expected to act in international relations, unless we want to be labelled as aggressors.

What all this means is that communism
has not changed. The Soviet leaders are up to their old tricks. Some nations they have seized by force. Others they have conquered by subversion.

The United States has remained too strong for the communists to seize, either by force or by subversion, in spite of their spy rings. So now the Reds smile and talk about neighborliness, hoping to persuade us and our allies that their intentions include only the most peaceful acts.

If they cannot use force or subversion, they hope to use confusion to deceive us. If the people of this nation were deceived, it might lead to a reduction in our armed forces and relaxation of our vigilant attitude toward communism.

That would accomplish the purpose
of the communists. Nothing would please them more than to make us believe that we could depend upon promises without military security. Once they considered themselves strong enough, they would not hesitate to destroy us.

If Russia ever believed their own striking power to be superior to the retaliation power of the United States, we would find ourselves in a precarious position. What they would do, we have no way of knowing except by the history of their relations with other nations.

One of the primary reasons we must maintain our military strength is to prevent war in an effort to halt anticipated aggression. We stopped such a war by forcing the British and French to end their attack on Egypt.
This was not done because we believed in the policies of Nasser and his handling of the Suez Canal situation. It was done because the United States regarded the preventive war as morally indefensible.

Since we try to follow a moral course in international relations, we cannot strike the first blow. Therefore, if a blow is struck against us, we must be prepared to the best of American productive ability to launch a counter-attack designed to destroy the enemy's war machine completely.

We must remain strong militarily, because in nuclear warfare we cannot expect to have a second opportunity to retaliate if our first blow is not powerful enough to stop the aggressor.

I hope the time will never come that
we shall have to fight back against any aggressor, as we did in Korea and in two World Wars. Nothing would please me more than to see this country able to reduce its expenditures to a fraction of the $45.3 billion proposed for 1958. That is 63 per cent of the entire budget.

But that time has not arrived. We cannot trust communism's smiling face as long as communism conceals its nuclear weapons in clinched fists.

We must continue to maintain powerful armed forces in friendly lands all over the world. We must also make every possible effort to develop the best weapons science can devise in order to provide our fighting forces with mobility, power and reach.
Atomic missiles have greatly increased the fire power of our forces. Surface to air missiles, air to air missiles/and air to surface missiles/are in the hands of our forces where they are deployed over the world/to defend the peace. These modern weapons are certain to deter would-be aggressors, so long as they are superior to those of the potential enemy — and we must keep them superior.

For the ultimate defensive power, we must swiftly complete development of our ballistic missiles, including the intercontinental ballistic missile.

These weapons must be perfected to supplement the atomic-powered submarines in our fleet/and the planes capable of delivering bombs against a foe anywhere
in the world.

Our radar warning system has been greatly improved in recent years. With detection of an attacker early in his approach to this continent and the ability to intercept and thwart the attack, I hope we will be able to protect against any assault which could be launched.

To accomplish the peaceful ends envisioned by the observance of Armed Forces Day, in honor of the men and women who serve in our armed forces, I believe the United States has to preserve three strengths.

We must remain strong militarily. We must remain strong economically, or we lose the means of providing military strength.
We must remain strong spiritually, or we shall not have the will to carry out the objectives of world peace through economic and military strength, because inspired determination certainly is a need for meeting and solving such problems.

END