8-22-1957

Radio script of Senator Strom Thurmond for his regular weekly broadcast, recorded 1957 August 22

Strom Thurmond

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Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, "Radio script of Senator Strom Thurmond for his regular weekly broadcast, recorded 1957 August 22" (1957). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 1595.
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MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

During the past week, I have spent a good deal of time talking with various officials of the Defense Department, the Army, and at the White House in an effort to protect the continued operation of Fort Jackson. Fort Jackson is one of the finest training centers in the United States and I was shocked to learn that it was one on a list of 16 installations in danger of being closed as a result of Defense Department cut-backs.

Camp Gordon, in Georgia also was on the list and I also objected strongly against closing it.

As the situation now stands, the Army has indicated that it is subject to the direction of the Defense Department and will have to follow whatever orders are issued with reference to the military installations which are on the list.

The Defense Department informed me that careful study is being given to the entire program and that action would not be taken before giving interested parties an opportunity to be heard.

In talking with White House officials, I have emphasized the value of Fort Jackson and Camp Gordon. I urged that action be taken by the White House to alter the plans under consideration by the Defense Department.

Nothing new has developed during the last few days and I am hopeful that Fort Jackson and Camp Gordon will be taken off the list of installations which are in danger of being closed. I am continuing to keep in close touch with officials in the Defense
and Army departments and at the White House about this matter.

In the Senate on Thursday I made a statement against the present policy of the Defense Department of cutting back the military reserve program.

When national defense is at stake, there is no economy in trying to save a few dollars on our own military programs when we have wasted so much money overseas in so-called economic aid to raise the living standards of foreign countries. I am as anxious as anybody, and a great deal more anxious than some members of Congress, to take every action possible to bring about more real economy in the Federal Government. But I do not believe it is real economy to reduce our reserve forces. The United States has never been a country that depended on a large standing army to meet its defense needs.

The United States has depended upon its civilian soldiers the reserve forces to bear the heaviest burden of warfare. In World War II, 98 per cent of our fighting forces were either civilians or members of the reserves.

The reserves are particularly valuable because they have both the viewpoint of the civilian and the military man.

I have urged that the Defense Department advise the Congress of its needs so as to be able to maintain our reserve forces at their present level. The appropriation of funds for this purpose is real economy because it has been estimated that four or five reserves can be maintained for the same amount of money it takes to maintain one member of the regular forces.

On several occasions I have discussed the dangers involved
in efforts of some people in this country to let down the flood gates of immigration for aliens to enter the United States. It is so difficult to screen out communists and other undesirables that I believe it best not to lower our defenses.

However, this past week a bill was passed by the Senate to make it easier for certain immigrants to come into the country. I was one of only four Senators who voted against easing restrictions. I simply cannot agree to accepting unknown dangers when we are already faced with a constant fight against communism.

As I am making this recording, there has been no indication in the House of Representatives as to what will finally be done with the Senate version of the so-called civil rights bill. Efforts of Republican leaders to reach a compromise have not impressed me favorably.

In my opinion almost any compromise will wipe out the gains made in the Senate by approval of the jury-trial amendment. Even with the jury-trial provision, the bill is unsatisfactory to me. If it is returned to the Senate, I shall vote against it again just as I voted and fought against it when it was debated in the Senate. Until the civil rights bill is disposed of, there appears to be little hope of adjournment, although it is possible it could come quickly.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington. Thank you for listening and this station for making this time available each week.

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