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Address by Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) at the Poultry Festival of the South Carolina Poultry Improvement Association, Batesburg-Leesville, S.C., 1958 June 11

Strom Thurmond

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, friends:

When my good friend, Percy Gooding, acting in behalf of the South Carolina Poultry Improvement Association, invited me to be the speaker at this splendid occasion, he offered two special inducements.

First, he promised, you would have on exhibit here some of the best broilers ever to wear feathers. Second, he said that some of the prettiest girls in the State would be here. I am delighted to be able to confirm that Mr. Gooding is a man of his word. I might add that I am glad that I do not have to judge either the broiler contest or the beauty contest.

I have learned with great interest that people of Batesburg and Leesville are planning to make this Poultry Festival an annual affair. That, in my opinion, is a fine idea. This Festival provides a wonderful opportunity for the poultrymen of our State to get together, to compare notes, and to devise plans that will work for the betterment of the South Carolina poultry industry.

I feel very much at home in this section of the State, having been born and reared in Edgefield County, having taught school in Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda Counties, having served as resident judge for the judicial circuit which embraces Lexington County, and now making my home in Aiken. I am impressed by the great changes which have taken place since I was a teacher of
vocational agriculture in the late 1920's in neighboring counties. Even in those days, the farmers of this section of the State were known as pioneers in turning their land to new and more profitable uses. Not content with an agricultural economy based wholly on cotton, they had turned to the growing of peaches, with good success.

Throughout the State of South Carolina, we are now witnessing a revolution in agriculture. We have discovered new possibilities in poultry, soy beans, truck farming, tree farming, and cattle raising. I have followed these developments with great interest, because I believe that the future of the South Carolina farmer depends, to a large degree, on his ability and willingness to explore new and progressive adventures in agriculture.

You who have made such great strides in the development of the poultry industry in South Carolina are numbered among the most farsighted and progressive citizens of our State. Batesburg and Leesville have become the center of a highly concentrated area engaged in the production, processing and marketing of poultry.

This is a commendable example of the way in which the American people, through their own efforts, can find new opportunities for economic progress. It is the traditional American way. It is the direct opposite of the Communist system, in which the role of every citizen is planned for him by a government bureau.

As a whole, the people of this country are dedicated to the maintenance of the American system, as opposed to Communism. They are opposed to any extension of the Communist system, either at home or abroad.
However, in carrying out this policy of opposition to Communism, the Ship of State has been directed into some strange and dangerous waters. At times, we seem to be steering a course directly toward the shoals and reefs of Communism.

In a recent speech in Hartsville, I charged that the atmosphere in the Nation’s capitol is one that reflects alarming disregard for the virtues of the free enterprise system, which has made the United States the greatest country in the world. To back up this charge, I pointed to certain wild-eyed spending programs that have been approved by the Senate within the past few months. I stated that these new schemes will contribute considerably toward putting the Federal government further into business, deeper into debt, and farther down the road to Socialism.

Today I want to talk with you about another program which in the past few days the Senate agreed to continue at a high level of spending over my vigorous objections. The Administration gives it the appealing title of “mutual security.” It is commonly referred to as “foreign aid.” But, actually, it is the “great giveaway.”

On Thursday night the Senate came within one vote of putting a provision into the 1958 version of this bill to authorize the President to extend aid to any and all Communist countries, with the exception of the Soviet Union, Communist China, and North Korea.

When a program with the specific purpose of combating Communism is used to extend financial aid to Communists, we have a situation that is not only paradoxical but also dangerous to the security of the United States to a frightening extent.
As I told the Senate, we cannot nourish a part of the Communist animal without nourishing all of it. I contend that aid to a Communist nation amounts to giving aid and comfort to the enemies of this Republic. It is as simple as that.

Those who would rationalize a program of giving aid to governments that are unfriendly to the United States justify it by saying that there are cracks in the Iron Curtain, that the enslaved people of Eastern Europe have never fully accepted Communism, and that aid from America may help the satellite countries to achieve a full measure of independence.

As a justification of a program for aiding Communist nations, this rationalization fails to satisfy me, in several important respects:

First, it is a mistake to believe that this aid goes to the people of enslaved nations and encourages them to break away from their Communist rulers. Such aid programs are administered with the collaboration of the Communist governments, and these governments make sure that the aid is used in such a way as to strengthen their regimes.

Second, it is a mistake to believe that Communist satellites are free to break away at will from the Communist empire. The ruthless action of the Soviet Union in Hungary is an example of the treatment that is dealt to a country which tries to break away.

Third, if we attempt to bolster the economies of Communist satellite states by supplying commodities they lack, we run the grave risk that some of the supplies will be moved, in undercover fashion, to alleviate critical shortages in the Soviet Union or Communist China.
Fourth, in propping up the economies of Communist satellites, we are assuming a burden which would normally fall on the Soviet Union or another member of the Communist empire.

Fifth, our strategy of making the greatest effort in foreign aid in the countries where the threat of Communism is the greatest makes it appear to the rest of the world that the United States offers a premium to those countries which have the most Communists. The policy invites the development of Communist movements in countries that do not have such troublemakers now.

Finally, aid to Communist countries builds up the strength of countries which might well be fighting against us in the event of war.

In the ten years since Congress first embarked on a foreign aid program through its approval of the Marshall Plan, we have seen many changes in the concept and form of the program.

We originally contemplated a comparatively modest plan for the restoration of Western Europe. The Marshall Plan worked well. It gave some Americans the confidence to launch into a global program with multiple objectives. The global program has not worked well.

Military assistance, which most directly strengthens our defenses by building up the armed strength of our allies has been sadly mismanaged, and at times it is even given to nations that are not true friends of this country.

I quote from House Report No. 1261 of the House Government Operations Committee:

"The conclusions of the Comptroller General mean that the United States has given military end items
to some countries/to equip a total force which is
either beyond/(1) the manpower capabilities of the
country to raise, (2) the technical capability to main­
tain, (3) the economic capability of the country to
sustain/even if such a force could be raised, or
(4) the desire or willingness of the recipient country/
to fulfill or comply with the military objectives
assigned to it. It means further/that the maximum
military effectiveness of the countries involved/could
have been developed with less United States aid/than
that which has been furnished, or which will be fur­
nished in the future/so long as such an unrealistic
basis/is used for programming military assistance."

This House report was based largely on the findings of the
Honorable Joseph Campbell, the Comptroller General, who deserves
the thanks of every citizen/for his able work as the watchdog
of the Treasury.

Mr. Campbell made a number of disclosures, among them the
fact/that there has never been/an internal audit of the military
aid program, and that no estimates have ever been developed/as
to the long-range cost of the program.

Indiscriminate economic assistance/has failed to contribute
to the security of the United States/in proportion to its cost
to the American taxpayer.

We have assumed that economic development can pave the
way/for the growth of democracies patterned after our own/in the
undeveloped areas of the world. However, this program of force­
feeding industry and agriculture, through heavy governmental
expenditures, is basically opposed to the American system of free
enterprise. It is more closely akin to the principles of state
socialism. In the cases where our economic aid results in a
sudden increase/in the wealth and productivity of a nation --
and these cases are rare -- we are likely to find that the
government which develops is a government which relies heavily on continued governmental control of production. Dictatorship is a more likely product than democracy.

We have made the mistake of trying to buy friends. You cannot just go out and buy love of representative democracy and love of freedom like you can buy a ton of coal or a bushel of wheat. Love and friendship must first exist in the hearts of the people themselves, and if it does not exist there, no number of our dollars will put it there.

Who is to say that we did not have just as many, if not more, friends at the end of World War II than we have right now? Who is to say that, instead of curing the ills of the world with our dollars, we have not added to them -- by aiding communism in many instances, by subsidizing socialism in even more instances, by destroying the independence and self-reliance of many nations, by upsetting the way of life of peoples when they do not want it upset?

In addition to making the mistake of trying to buy friends, we have also made ourselves appear to be rich and arrogant, in our relations with the poorer nations of the world. The recent riots in Formosa should be evidence enough of the envious feeling we have generated among the countries with small resources.

Through the foreign aid program we have imposed a heavy burden on the taxpayers of today and the taxpayers of tomorrow, for this burden will persist for generations to come. Recently the Congress voted to raise the debt limit to $280 billion. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have authorized or spent an amount equivalent to approximately one-fourth of our national
debt, in this and other "give-away" programs. The interest alone
on the foreign aid portion of the national debt is costing us
between two and three billion dollars annually. At the same time,
some of this assistance has been used by foreign countries to
reduce their own taxes and pay off their own national debts.

I am alarmed at this program. It is wrong in its conception,
and it has been bungled in its execution. In the past 10 years/
many mistakes have been made and many instances of wastefulness,
extravagance, graft and inefficiency have been brought to light.
I would like to recall for a few moments several of these projects/
to illustrate some of the follies of our foreign aid program.

Our foreign aiders have poured millions of dollars into
overseas reclamation projects which will make it possible for
foreign countries to reclaim thousands of acres of farmland to
compete with our own farmers here at home who have been in an
agricultural recession for the past several years.

They have also helped set up textile and other industries in
foreign countries where low-wage competition can have further
adverse effects on domestic employment. Of the foreign aid
money used by recipient countries to purchase textile products
in 1957, only 7.5 per cent was used to purchase our own products.
The rest, amounting to $89 million, was bought from Japan and
other competitors.

Our country, which plants very little rice, has sent
technicians to Korea to teach Korean rice growers how to grow
more and better rice. At the same time, shrewd Korean and Vietnam
merchants have made large windfall profits and have maneuvered
kickbacks while trading in foreign aid items.
The House Government Operations report says that a quarter of a billion dollars in assistance to Iran from 1951-56 was administered in a "loose, slipshod, and unbusinesslike manner," adding that amounts requested for aid to Iran "seem to have been picked out of the air."

In Laos, where we have been spending more money per capita than in any other country, the Communist Party is gaining more and more political power. In addition, the country's Minister of Planning and Reconstruction, who is the leader of the Communist political movement, has a voice in the spending of some of this American aid.

In Saudi Arabia, we have been giving millions to billionaire King Saud who has more than a hundred wives and gold-plated Cadillacs.

If all this were not enough, this program has also provided wage boosts to Iranian government workers, public baths for Egyptian camel drivers, airplane rides for thousands of Moslems to visit their religious shrine in Mecca, a sugar beet refinery where there were insufficient beets, and we have even given some countries so much that we have contributed to their inflationary spirals.

Certainly, with a national debt of $280 billion, with a possible deficit of $9 billion facing us during fiscal year 1959, with greater expenditures required for missile and satellite development and research, with other economic and social needs staring us in the face at home, and with our people paying almost one-third of their income in taxes, the time has now come for the United States to take steps toward shackling this foreign aid monster and bringing its spending spree to an end. No one can
argue with the principle that the best assurance we have for the preservation of freedom in this world is the maintenance of a strong America, and if this strength is to be sustained and maintained, then we must reduce our foreign program lest we spend ourselves to death and ruin our country economically in accordance with the prophesies and hopes of Marx and Lenin.

Furthermore, if given the chance, private investment could replace foreign aid in many nations.

Some feel that the greatest hindrance to foreign investment is fear of confiscation. I do not agree. I think the greatest hindrance is foreign aid. Private capital does not go to a country whose economy is choked with sterile capital that yields no profit.

The largest receiver of federal handouts since World War II has been Western Europe; and it has been the smallest receiver of new investment funds from private sources. As of 1956, Western Europe had received close to 70 per cent of the money spent under the foreign aid program. But the ratio of private investment in that area by the United States runs only about 14 per cent. On the other hand, Latin America received 2.4 per cent of the foreign aid expenditures through 1956, but it received 35 per cent of our foreign private investment. Only an invisible amount of aid went to Canada, but 34 per cent of our foreign investment has gone there.

If investment capital is to be stimulated, foreign aid must be cut off. Private investment has been encouraged everywhere through the faith that we may have a lasting peace.

The change-over from the charity dollar to the investment
dollar would have a stimulating effect, and it would inspire the nations we have been trying to help with confidence and new hope. In addition, it would demonstrate to the world the virtues of our free enterprise system.

Aside from these points, however, it would release thousands of foreign aiders and bureaucrats, which, in itself, would be a worthwhile accomplishment toward reducing the size of our Federal government.

In summary of my comments on foreign aid, let me say that I favor a reduction in the size of this program now, not tomorrow, not next year, or in 1960 -- but now.

America should continue to help faithful and loyal allies in Europe and Asia with a program of reasonable military assistance in order to keep American boys at home and strengthen the free world. As to economic aid -- or whatever modern term it has been given in recent years in order to deceive the public -- I believe that if we are going to give such assistance it should be on a loan basis so that we can stand some chance of recovering some of these funds.

I know that you, as good patriotic citizens who believe in maintaining a strong defense establishment and a sound national economy in order to stave off the aims, desires, and purposes of the Communist world, will continue to do your part to fight against the evils of this and other programs which jeopardize the welfare of our country. I am proud to be a citizen of a State whose people have always stood firm for the priceless principles of Americanism.

In spite of the unwarranted slurs that have been recently cast at our State -- and which I have had the satisfaction of refuting with the facts -- South Carolina has always ranked among the top in
furnishing fighting men of high caliber and valor to defend our country from outside attack. In addition, our people and their spokesmen in the halls of government have been in the forefront of the fight to protect our country from sinister forces which would subvert, corrupt, and spend our country into internal collapse.

Many of you have written to me in Washington, urging that I continue my efforts to preserve these principles. These expressions of interest and support have encouraged me greatly. With your support, I shall continue to fight to instill the principles of Americanism and constitutional government in all our legislative programs. When this is not possible, then I shall continue to exert every effort to defeat legislation which is devoid of these principles.

You can do your part by keeping yourselves informed and making your views known. An informed and outspoken electorate is the best safeguard of democracy.

I also urge you to continue to uphold the cherished American tradition of self-reliance, in the same spirit in which you have applied yourselves to the development of the growing poultry industry in South Carolina.

In closing, I want to say that it is good to be here today with such loyal and true citizens who believe in our free enterprise system, true Americanism, and the solid principles of constitutional government. Again I wish to thank you for this invitation to share in the events of this great festival. I would also like to commend everyone who has sponsored and participated in these festivities which have thus far proved to be most successful. This is all evidence of the initiative, hard work, and good common sense which our poultrymen have always exercised in attaining success.
Finally, I wish for everyone of you continued success and progress in the years that lie ahead. If I can ever be of service in any matter, I hope that you will not hesitate to call on me because I am in Washington to represent and serve all of our people and I am always anxious and willing to perform these duties for each of you.

- END -