MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

One of the interesting ideas being offered around Washington this week is that earth satellites can be boomerangs.

The reasoning goes something like this:

When the Russians sent up their sputniks last fall, they gained immense prestige, but, nevertheless, the Kremlin made a tactical error. The people of the United States were made to realize that our military forces were not strong enough.

Almost immediately, tremendous pressure was put on the Pentagon, the President and the Congress to increase our defense efforts. Therefore, it appeared, that the Soviet sputnik was a boomerang, because its most significant effect was to make the United States reorganize and strengthen that part of our armed forces having to do with intercontinental and intermediate range missiles and the Strategic Air Command.

It is still too early to gauge the full effect of the first American earth satellite, but people are wondering if this may not turn into a boomerang too. Our satellite is a tiny one compared with the Russian sputniks, but, in some ways, at least, it is a superior scientific instrument. People are pointing out that we could have sent it up many months ago, if we had wanted to, and that the Russians aren't so far ahead of us after all.

So you see, we may be right back where we were last summer, with our military program bogged down in a sea of public complacency.
In spite of the increased awareness of the gravity of our national security position, there are things going on that disturb me greatly.

A few days ago, your South Carolina Congressional delegation was visited by the leaders of the South Carolina National Guard. We were informed that the contemplated manpower reduction in National Guard strength embodied in the 1959 budget means that five or six National Guard divisions may be abolished completely. It is possible that the 51st Division, of South Carolina and Florida, may be one of the divisions that will have to go under this plan.

This is an economy measure, but I cannot see any economy in it. A National Guard or Reserve Division can be maintained for one-sixth the cost of a Regular Army Division.

We know the Russians have 175 divisions in their ground forces. They have the tanks and other heavy equipment for 300 divisions. The Russians are not relying wholly on push-buttons and long-range missiles; they are keeping their ground forces at a high level of efficiency.

I have written the Secretary of Defense, Neil McElroy, informing him of my deep concern for the future of our National Guard. I intend to continue to fight to keep our National Guard and Reserve units at the highest level of efficiency possible.

Although I am far from satisfied with our military position, I am convinced that our military planners are capable and dedicated.
Their greatest obstacle, I am convinced, is the plan of organization at the Pentagon. We have had unification of the services in name only. We tried to eliminate duplication and succeeded only in replacing it with triplification.

I believe that a real unification of the services will create an organization that will help, instead of hinder, decisive action in the Pentagon.

I have embodied in a Senate bill a plan of unification that will do the job, in my opinion. It is a sweeping measure, setting up a civilian and military chain of command that makes every man's responsibility crystal clear. In addition, it sets up a Research and Development Service, co-equal with the Army, Navy and Air Services.

Thank you for listening. This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.