

STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR WEEKLY RADIO BROADCAST, APRIL 3, 1958.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

During the past several months, there has been a great deal of discussion -- in Washington and all over the country -- concerning the future of our National Guard and Army Reserve. Much of this discussion has been in the nature of speculation, as it had to be, in view of the fact that the Department of the Army has stated repeatedly that its reorganization plans were not in final form. It has been quite clear, however, that a substantial reduction in the size of the National Guard was being seriously considered for the fiscal year beginning next July 1.

This past week, the Department of the Army revealed its plan for the reorganization of the Reserve components of the Army, including the National Guard. The Army estimates that it will take about two and a half years to complete this reorganization.

I would like to discuss this plan with you for a few minutes today. Every citizen should take an active interest in the welfare of the National Guard and Army Reserve, for several reasons.

First of all, we are all interested in the plans being made for the defense of our country. Since the time of the American Revolution, when the "minute man" left his plow and picked up his musket, we have depended on Reserve units to swing into action quickly to back up the small, hard core of professional

soldiers. It is essential that the Army Reserve and National Guard be equipped with modern weapons, and that the units be thoroughly trained in their use.

Secondly, we are all ~~of us~~ interested in having our government ^{practice economy} ~~be as economical as~~ possible. ^(much as) The cost of national defense is staggering. It runs around \$40 billion a year, with little hope that it will be reduced much below that figure in the foreseeable future. The cost of maintaining a Reserve or National Guard division [/] is about a sixth of the cost of maintaining a Regular division. A strong Reserve force is an economical way of contributing to our national defense effort.

Finally, the nature of the National Guard organization [/] makes it a useful part of the State government, in carrying out those functions in which the militia is required.

The Department of the Army plans to reduce by about 25 per cent [/] the number of company-size units in the Army Reserve and National Guard. It plans to eliminate six National Guard divisions and four Army Reserve divisions. Along with this reduction, it is planned to convert the remaining divisions into modern pentomic type divisions, as has already been done in the Active Army.

As soon as this plan was announced, I informed the Secretary of the Army [/] that, while I favored the modernization of the Reserve and National Guard, I was strongly opposed to any reduction in strength. I was encouraged by the Secretary's subsequent statement that the size of the Reserve force was a matter for

Congress to determine.

I do not believe that Congress will favor any plan/to dismantle our Army Reserve and National Guard.

The 51st National Guard division of South Carolina and Florida is the second largest National Guard division, and one of the best-trained. I have especially urged the Secretary of the Army to see that it is maintained at full strength.

The Army has announced, as a part of its reorganization plan, that it has found that all existing armories and reserve centers/which are in adequate condition/will still be required, and that additional construction will also be necessary. This is good news. It indicates that we may soon be able to get underway with the armory and reserve center construction program/which has been stalled in the Executive Department/for many months.

I thank you for listening, and thank this station for granting me this time each week.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.

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