

STATEMENT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON DEFENSE REORGANIZATION  
ACT ON SENATE FLOOR, JULY 18, 1958

MR. PRESIDENT:

A reorganization of the Defense Department has been clearly indicated for some time. Recent developments in fields of science and technology, especially those which were revealed in the missile field last fall, have clearly shown that the chains of command must be clarified and responsibilities fixed in our Department of Defense. The urgency of these needs is emphasized by the current high level of international tension over the Middle East situation.

Our Armed Services are led by capable and devoted men whose first loyalty has always been to our country. I am convinced that these men have been making heroic efforts to be effective under the present plan of organization. But they need our help. The responsibilities of the military command are heavy enough without making the Pentagon into an artificial obstacle course. The clear responsibility of the Congress is to remove the obstacles and to institute an organizational system that will help, rather than hinder, the operation of <sup>the</sup> military establishment.

This is not the first effort that Congress has made toward reorganization since the original Act in 1947. Congress has worked diligently on the problem. The Committees of Congress are to be congratulated on their exhaustive studies of the entire problem. Despite all previous efforts, however, it is quite evident that inter-service disputes have continued to an alarming degree, and that under the present system it is difficult to fix responsibility for affirmative decisions.



It is my belief that the bill reported to the Senate by the Armed Services Committee is a good one. It removes existing ambiguities as to the authority of the Secretary of Defense. It gives the Secretary of Defense additional control of unified commands, thereby clarifying the chain of command from the President to the military commander on the scene. This bill also gives the Secretary of Defense greater latitude in dealing with the problems inherent in the changing concept of advanced weapon employment, by freeing him to some extent from the existing prohibition against interfering with the assignment of so-called combatant functions of the individual services. One of the most valuable parts of the bill is that which establishes the position of Director of Defense Research and Engineering and provides for a coordination of research and engineering activities of the Department of Defense. There are other badly needed provisions contained in this bill.

In recommending these changes to the Senate, the Committee has wisely preserved in full force and effect the civilian control of the military which is essential in a Democratic system of Government, especially this of ours. Some people have been greatly alarmed for fear that the reorganization bill would bring into existence a so-called general staff set-up. Certainly, under this bill there is no room for justifiable alarm. Neither the Joint Chiefs nor the Chairman are given any inherent command functions, but on the contrary, even as to unified commands, they can exercise only such command functions as are delegated to them by the civilian Secretary of Defense.

*Mr. President, I am greatly pleased that the Congress is taking action on this vital matter, which is so essential to the national defense of our nation.*