Press release on Thurmond address for Political Emphasis Week at Presbyterian College, 1959 April 10

Strom Thurmond

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CLINTON, S. C., April 10 -- Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) today urged Presbyterian College students and "all who cherish liberty" to fight any change in America which would imperil individual freedom.

In a speech prepared for Political Emphasis Week activities at PC, the Senator spoke on the subject of "Our Changing Nation." He emphasized the vast growth and development of the Federal Government into an "awesome, octopus-like monster, with tentacles of control and regulation into every phase of our activity and conduct." He warned that the more areas into which government is injected the greater is the subjugation and oppression of the individual.

The South Carolina Democrat charged that increased Federal "handouts for virtually everyone and every segment of our population has plunged our country into a quagmire of socialism and a public debt totalling approximately $284 billions." When the debt hits the 350-billion dollar mark, he said, the bankruptcy point will be reached.

Complacency on the part of the American people was tabbed by the Senator as the principle reason for the change of the role of our government from serving as the "first line of protection for individualism" to the "principal weapon in this land for collectivism."

The Senator called for a curb on non-defense spending items and for an increase in defense expenditures--all within the bounds of a balanced budget. He said a balanced budget with increased emphasis on our national defense posture is essential to thwart the Communists from taking over the United States by either of two avenues of attack--internal collapse or armed aggression. Of the two attacks, he said internal collapse of our economy and our free enterprise system posed the graver threat because most people are unaware of the seriousness and progress of this attack.

Presbyterian College was praised highly by the Senator for its "well-balanced educational program with the proper emphasis on mental, spiritual, and physical development and growth." He said the greatest opportunity Presbyterian offers students is the development of strong traits of Christian character, pointing out that "therein lies the hope of our troubled world and the happiness and ultimate salvation of each individual."