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STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR STATION WMUU, GREENVILLE,  
SOUTH CAROLINA ON IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY, JULY 4, 1959.

It is a privilege to be asked to make a statement to the listening audience of Station WMUU on this 183rd anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We have many holidays in the United States, days which remind us of our heritage and days which commemorate important events of the past. Of these holidays, the Fourth of July stands by itself among non-religious observances.

Recently one of my friends made the statement that he was willing to debate, and possibly compromise, anything except his religion and politics. "I won't be dictated to on religion and politics," he said.

This is the reaction of a typical American versed in American history and familiar with his rights as asserted in the Declaration of Independence and later guaranteed by the Constitution. Exactly 183 years ago in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, **56** representatives to the Continental Congress from the 13 British Colonies along the Atlantic Ocean also refused to be dictated to. Realizing that by signing the Declaration of Independence they would clearly be on record as traitors to the King of England, they nonetheless signed this important document and forwarded it to the King. More than five years of sacrifice and struggle followed before the British Armies in the Colonies surrendered. It was six years before the British Parliament recognized the Independence first declared in 1776, and it was seven years before all British troops departed from the soil of the Colonies.

The Fourth of July is a day of celebration. However, let me remind you that it is also a day of thanksgiving and of prayer. The blessings of freedom have been our heritage for 183 years, and we should thank God for these blessings.

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In closing, I would like to urge every listener to read the Declaration of Independence today, to consider thoughtfully the words written by our nation's Founding Fathers in 1776. Only in this way can you gain a full appreciation of this heritage of every U. S. citizen.

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