STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR HIS WEEKLY RADIO BROADCAST, JULY 17-18, 1959 (RECORDED JULY 14, 1959)

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

Dr. James R. Killian, a native of Blacksburg, South Carolina, where he attended the local schools, is recognized today as one of the world's foremost educational authorities, particularly in the fields of science and engineering. It is a great pleasure to have Dr. Killian in the Senate Radio Station today. Dr. Killian's recent resignation as President Eisenhower's special advisor and coordinator of science became effective this week, and he returns to Massachusetts Institute of Technology following a leave of absence of almost two years. Dr. Killian, we are delighted to have you here with us today.

KILLIAN: I very much appreciate the privilege of joining you in speaking to the people of South Carolina, a state that I still have very great love for because I was born there.

SENATOR: Dr. Killian, when you became the nation's first presidential advisor and coordinator of science shortly after the Russians launched Sputnik I, what did you hope to achieve?

KILLIAN: Well, I had a number of objectives, based on the assignment which President Eisenhower had given to me. One of these was to mobilize scientific talent of the United States in order to make available to our government the very best counsel and advice in the complex fields of science that bear upon our national security and our national welfare. I feel that we have made steady headway in achieving this particular objective. I thought also that it was of very great importance that the American people gain a better understanding of where we stood in the
field of science because I think that the response to Sputnik led us in many cases to assume that we were further behind than we actually are. As a matter of fact, we are very strong in science. We still have great leadership in this field. I think it is important that this be understood.

SENATOR: Dr. Killian, your success in accomplishing these aims is well known. As an educator and as a scientist, I wonder if you would care to rate our general education system today with others in the world.

KILLIAN: Well, I'm not sure that I know enough about all the other educational systems in the world, but I would say this: I think that the United States has a majestic achievement in the system of education that we have and that this is something that we should support and protect at all costs. I do feel that as we have moved to develop a universal system of education here with all of the great problems that it has entailed and all of the great successes that it has brought, we now find ourselves with problems of how to introduce more quality and more excellence into this system of education—how we deal better with the gifted student, how we identify talent, how we find ways of giving that talent the kind of special opportunity that will enable it best to recognize its full potential. I believe we are making great progress in doing this at the present time. As I go about the country, I find many grass-roots evidence of great interest on the part of local communities, school boards, and schools in finding better ways of introducing excellence into our educational system. I also have a very deep conviction that it is important that we find ways of teaching science better in our school system than we have done in the past. Not that we haven't done a good job, but we've got to do a superlative job in this field if we are going to retain our position of leadership for the
United States. I would add to this that I think it is of great importance as we come to stress science more and more, that we recognize that science is not the only field that is important; we must not do this at the expense of the other great areas of learning, but rather we must bring science up to the quality that we have been able to achieve in many of these other fields.

SENATOR: Well, that is very interesting. Dr. Killian, Russia, through regimentation, doesn't have this basic problem of misplaced talent, I understand. Is that correct?

KILLIAN: Certainly it has been perfectly clear that they have been successful in channeling a great many of their students into the field of science. This comes about because they do have opportunities for regimentation, but it also comes about because they are providing incentives. We must, not by regimentation, but by providing interesting courses of study and adequate incentives achieve the proper distribution of our talent.

SENATOR: South Carolina has produced many outstanding leaders in education as well as in other fields. Frequently it seems that the smallest schools, like Blacksburg for example, have turned out the outstanding graduates. As a graduate of a small South Carolina high school, Dr. Killian, I want to say that we are very proud of you. As a South Carolinian, we are very proud of you and wish you continued success in your undertakings.

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