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Script for WIS-TV, Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC), 1959 November 18

Strom Thurmond

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Our present power for massive retaliation, consisting of the Strategic Air Command, Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles at widely scattered sites, and carrier-based planes with nuclear capabilities, constitutes a deterrent to an all-out war, despite the Russian lead in missile development. A continuation of American lag in research, however, could allow the Russians to enter first into a new stage of weapon development, such as space stations, and this would break the stalemate. We must be first.

Massive retaliation weapons do not constitute a deterrent to limited wars, for there is no certainty we would use them in such situations. To complete our deterrent, we must have adequate numbers of properly equipped conventional forces, and the means to transport them.

The very fact that our national policy toward communism is built around a deterrent force presupposes that our defense problem is here to stay. It will not go away or disappear. Our "deterrent" policy is also premised on the supposition that we will no longer try to promote peace by a display of weakness. If we are to succeed with this policy, and there is no other choice, we must get down to business by the following steps:

1. Achieve the necessary degree of unification of our Armed Forces that will insure elimination of service bickering and delays in decision making.
2. Provide the necessary funds and emphasis to our weapons research and development program to insure a realization of our maximum potential.

3. Increase the number of our conventional forces, and begin immediately on a stepped-up program of modernization of equipment and provision of transport for those forces.

4. Economize on all non-defense expenditures, in order to provide for the national defense adequately within a balanced budget.

These are not easy goals to achieve. They will be most difficult to accomplish. In them, however, lies the only road to preservation of our freedom, perhaps our existence, and victory over Communism.

Whether or not we are successful in achieving these essential goals depends on the American people. The people are the final authority in the formation of the policies of the Government. No fact has better illustrated this truth than the successful demand by the public for a labor reform bill earlier this year.

If the American public will demand of Congress and the Executive Branch that the United States be made first in defense, these goals can and will be attained. Let us hope that the traditional love of peace by Americans will be matched with equal determination to secure the peace through a defense establishment second to none.

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