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News release, 8:00 p.m., 1960 May 21

Strom Thurmond

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CHARLESTON, S.C., May 21--Senator Strom Thurmond warned here tonight that the recent Soviet explosion at the Summit emphasizes the necessity of insuring a defense force "second to none in the world," and he urged reduction of non-defense spending to provide such a defense force within the bounds of a balanced budget.

Speaking in a re-election campaign engagement at the Charleston County Courthouse, the Senate Armed Services Committee member stated that a cut in frills and socialistic programs would also serve to bolster the country economically and "get our country back on the road to a sound and solvent government." He pointed out that defense spending for 1959 was $4.3 billion lower than 1953 while non-defense expenditures were $9.2 billion above the 1953 level.

"We appear to have provided adequately for the rational actions of any aggressor nation, but we must now insure that we are adequately prepared for the irrational actions of any aggressor nation in view of the rantings and ravings of Dictator Khrushchev," the Senator admonished.

Thurmond was especially high in his praise of the Navy's polaris missile system, which he said should be operational by mid-summer. In describing the polaris missile system, he said:

"The mobility and concealment afforded by the underwater firing of the polaris system from nuclear-powered submarines make it one of our nation's top priority weapons. Trying to find a polaris missile is like trying to locate a black cat on a vast empty plain on a moonless night. The 1200-mile nautical range of the missile from various vantage points makes it possible for the polaris to cover 90 per cent of Soviet territory."

The Senator emphasized the need for full missile strength as soon as possible in commenting briefly on the other missile systems, such as the Atlas,
Titan, and Minuteman. He warned, however, against relying solely on missile strength, pointing out the necessity for a "balanced defense force" to cope with both limited and general wars.

Until our missile systems are fully operational and we have enough of them, he suggested that a portion of Strategic Air Command bombers be kept on a 24-hour air alert to guard against having our retaliatory striking power caught on the ground by a surprise attack. "The U-2 plane incident proved," he said, "that our long-range bombers are still a long way from being out of date since it took the Soviets four years to shoot down one reconnaissance plane--if indeed they did. Unless our bombers are destroyed on the ground by surprise attack, I feel confident most of them could get through to wreak a devastating retaliatory punch against the enemy."

Airlift was another subject which came in for strong support by Thurmond. He said that the United States must have adequate airlift to transport troops and supplies to any point in the world on short notice in the event of an armed conflict.

The Military Air Transport Service was described as being "too small and almost obsolescent from a readiness standpoint." He charged that this was proved by the recent Operation Big Slam-Puerto Pines and the recent airlift investigation by Congressman Rivers' subcommittee.

To cope with the problem, he advocated Congressional approval of the $250 million being sought by Rivers to modernize MATS on an interim basis until better designed aircraft can be purchased.

The Senator again urged that the United States deal firmly with the Soviet Union in diplomatic affairs, pointing out that the Soviets "respect only strength and power." He also called for unity at home and among U.S. allies in standing up to Soviet "saber-rattling" and "bluff and bluster" tactics.

After talking about the cold war and national defense, Thurmond turned to his record of service in the Senate. He devoted particular attention to his
fight to preserve constitutional government and the rights of the States. He
cited these highlights of his efforts to preserve local self government:
(1) his authorship of the original of the Southern Manifesto which was signed
by 101 Members of Congress and which put the South on the offensive against the
desegregation decision; (2) his testimony and speeches against the 1957 "civil
rights" bill, including his record-breaking speech of more than 24 hours against
final passage; (3) his work in winning 34 co-sponsors for the States' Rights
bill, which lost in the Senate by one vote; (4) his discovery and elimination
from a housing bill of a provision which would have permitted integration of
housing by a method of "scatteration" of individually integrated public housing
units in neighborhoods; (5) the successful efforts of the 18 Southern Senators
to defeat the most vicious proposals in the 1960 "civil rights" bill by an
organized filibuster and other parliamentary tactics; and (6) Congressional
Quarterly's voting record analysis which showed him to be the "Most Southern
of the Southern Senators."

The Senator also pointed to his record of perfect attendance and his efforts
to keep the people fully informed on activities in Washington. He discussed
various speeches, articles, and radio and TV appearances he has made outside the
South in an effort to present the South's case to the rest of the Nation. He
pointed out that during the past week, he appeared on a nation-wide radio broad-
cast.

In the beginning of his speech, Thurmond paid tribute to Charleston for the
"vital role" it is playing in national defense with its many defense installations.
He referred to Charleston as being "Polarisville, USA" in view of the location
there of the Navy's only polaris missile base. He also emphasized the need for
appropriation by the Congress of sufficient funds to keep the Charleston Harbor
channel at a minimum depth of 35 feet because of the polaris installation.

Charleston was also praised for its contributions to American history,
particularly in providing 3 of South Carolina's 4 signers of the Declaration of
Independence and all 4 of the State's signers of the Constitution.

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