

AUTHORIZED ADVANCE FOR ADDRESS OF HAROLD E. STASSEN AT A MEETING SPONSORED BY THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DURHAM, N. H. January 28, 1948

Subject: Military Training

It is imperative in the years immediately ahead that America should remain strong in a military sense. This does not mean that military strength should be our sole reliance. The productivity and stability of our domestic economy is of greater importance. Neither does it mean that we minimize the significance of the United Nations. I have consistently urged that the United States should take the leadership in the strengthening and development of the United Nations. Neither does it mean that I in any way underestimate the vital concept of the Marshall Plan. This also needs to be followed through.

But none of these steps will avail us if we permit America to become weak and ineffective in a military sense in these uncertain, unstable post-war years in the face of the obvious clash of ways of life with Russia.

If we are to be strong in our armed forces we must remain alert and up to date with our air force and out in front with our research. But we also need to maintain minimum available manpower, reasonably trained and equipped for both active duty and reserves. No matter what changes science may bring about, it will always be necessary to use manpower in considerable numbers for the stability of friendly areas under attack, and for the occupation and holding of unfriendly areas after attack.

The current shortage of active duty manpower in our armed forces makes it essential that new action be taken by legislation to insure this minimum strength.

I have supported General Marshall's suggestion for Universal Military Training, not from the standpoint that that exactly needed to be done, but that clearly some action was necessary. I recognize that there are many who sincerely oppose it. I say to those who differ, that it is not enough to state opposition. Proposals need to be made for a meeting ground, in accordance with the operation of our representative government, that will assure this minimum strength.

I specifically suggest for consideration, one possible answer for agreement and action in this session of the Congress. I propose that the leading proponents and opponents of Universal Military Training reach a temporary agreement and enact into legislation the following steps:

First: The registration of all young men in the country, nineteen years of age or over, who have not yet served in the armed services.

Second: The establishment of a peacetime selection method for those who are registered.

Third: The provision that these young men may be called only upon specific action by Congress, specifying numbers and the purposes and conditions of the call.

It appears to me that such legislation would make it possible from time to time for Congress to pass upon the deficiencies in reserves and in training and active duty, and authorize the selection of the essential number of our youth that our country, in a critical uncertain period, would not become too weak in its armed forces.

It could reasonably be anticipated under such a proposal, just as it is anticipated under Universal Military Training, that a sufficient number of young men would decide that they would prefer to enlist for a term of active duty service rather than be selected in this manner, so that the minimum active duty requirements would always be filled. But in any event, Congress would always be in a position to take action, with machinery already established, to make certain that the essential military strength in manpower is maintained.

The establishment of such procedure would make it clear to all other countries that we intend to maintain essential strength. At the same time it would not give the military leadership over-all obvious to other countries that we were not taking an all-out military turn in our policies.

I emphasize again that I make this detailed suggestion, not with an attitude that here is the answer, but rather to stimulate counter-proposals and conferences between those in both parties who now have different views that must be reconciled into action lest we drift along. America by drifting into weakness would add to world uncertainty at a time when steady, firm leadership is a number one need in the world.



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