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STATEMENT OF
HONORABLE ROBERT P. PATTERSON, SECRETARY OF WAR,
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON EXPENDITURES
IN THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS, OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, RE H.R. 2319, CREATING A
NATIONAL DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT,

2 April 1947

I give unqualified support to the bill to unify the armed forces,
H.R. 2319.

Provisions of bill

The bill ^{*establishes*} ~~creates~~ a National Defense Establishment, consisting of the
Department of the Army, Department of the Navy and Department of the
Air Force.

(Grant)
The head of the National Defense Establishment is the Secretary of
National Defense, with the power and duty:

- (1) to establish policies and programs for the National
Defense Establishment and for the departments and
agencies in it;
- (2) to exercise direction, authority and control over such
departments and agencies;
- (3) to supervise preparation of budget estimates by the
departments and agencies, to determine the budget
estimates of the National Defense Establishment for
submission to the Bureau of the Budget, and to super-
vise and control the budget program of the National
Defense Establishment.

The proviso is made that the three departments shall be administered
as individual units by their respective secretaries, under direction of the

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discussions I have had with the Secretary of the Navy have left me with the conviction that there are substantial values in the concept of local autonomy, -- states rights or home rule if you will, -- in the three services and that these values should be preserved. I can think of no good reason why the Secretary of National Defense should concern himself with matters of administration that pertain to the three departments. In the second place, the Navy had decided views as to the soundness of these reservations, and I have no hesitation in saying that it will be of lasting benefit to develop the type of organization that commands the support of Army and Navy alike. I am therefore unqualifiedly in favor of these provisions.

I will not detain you with a discussion of the other features of the bill, important as they are. Other witnesses will take them up in detail.

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In conclusion, I urge that you report this measure favorably. It will give the United States an efficient organization of the armed services. It will strengthen national defense without calling for the expenditure of more funds. It is unique in that respect; that other measures to strengthen national defense call for the spending of more money. It will strengthen the national defense, and I am confident that throughout the world it will be viewed in that light.

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