

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.
R.G. MENZIES, C.H., B.C., M.P. AT BENDIGO ON TUESDAY, THE
12TH JULY, 1960

Sir, Senator, candidate and ladies and gentlemen:

I always know that there is an election on when I come here because they always send me here. Sometimes I see the same faces; and sometimes I don't. But tonight I am delighted to find what, in my experience, must be a record attendance, supporting a record candidate. (Applause)

Some of those who have been listening in tonight will have heard him for a few minutes at the end of his speech. I am sorry that they couldn't have heard him longer, because I think that anybody who sees him, hears him and, as you do, knows him and his work and his quality, must agree that Bendigo has an opportunity of the first quality in this by-election.

I am of course very sorry, personally, that there is a by-election, because it is a by-election that has been brought about by the death of a political opponent who was almost a lifelong personal friend of mine - Percy Clarey: a man I knew very well in what I might call my "respectable" days when I practised in the vicinity of the Arbitration Court, mostly for the Unions (Laughter). And from that time on I knew Percy Clarey and I admired him very much. He was a man of character and quality and I know that a great number of people in the Bendigo Electorate came to have such a regard for him that they may have voted for him though that would not normally represent their political view.

Well he has gone, alas. He is a great loss to his Party and a great loss to his friends. But now you must fill the vacancy. Your choice is not between somebody new and the memory of somebody who has gone. Your choice is between the candidates whose names will be on the ballot paper on Saturday. And I am bound to say that if either of the other candidates is within coo-ee of this one, you must be the richest electorate in the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I know that my genial and unpredictable friend, Arthur Calwell, (Laughter) spends a great number of his waking hours working out rather sharp little observations worth a headline - picturesque -

and he loves nothing better than to describe people on the other side in a rather grotesque fashion. And therefore I am accustomed to being told that I am a "tired old man". Well if I am, that is a very good reason for sending my friend Snell in so that he can dig me in the ribs occasionally and wake me up. And if I am not - and of course Arthur doesn't really think that I am - then this is a splendid opportunity of putting in alongside of me into this Parliament a man whose contribution to our joint wisdom must be of great value to the Commonwealth. This is a rare candidate.

I tell you I know - if you won't give me away on this matter - I'm a bit of an expert on candidates. I have supported some terrible candidates in my time. (Laughter, Applause) They were on the right side, but in the wrong way, if you follow me. And so when I find a candidate who in the homely phrase is a "crocker" of a candidate I am delighted. And tonight I have never been more delighted (Applause)

Now you have been hearing from the other speakers tonight something very accurate indeed about some of the things that have gone on inside Australia. I have, of course, had some small hand in the things that have gone on inside Australia - not that politicians do everything. But it is a good politician who knows what to do and when to do it and when to keep out and not butt in. Now that I think perhaps, has been the summary of our political and government activities. We haven't told every man how he ought to do his job. We leave that to the socialist experts. We have a sneaking idea that most of you understand your business better than we do. What we have to do is to try to create a sort of economic climate, economic weather, in which you can get on with your job and bring about the best results. And that requires - though I say it myself - a considerable amount of knowledge and experience and some wisdom. And we hope that at the end of 10 years or getting on now towards 11 years, we can at least look our fellow citizens of Australia in the eye and say that "we haven't let you down". And I think even our enemies might - except in their more professional moments - be disposed to agree with that.

Of course it is not the business of an Opposition to see anything good in what a Government does. That is understandable. And if I were the Leader of the Opposition today, leading this collection of bits and pieces - with my Deputy Leader contradicting almost everything I said, every time he opened his mouth - with internecine disputes going on around every corner - if I were in that happy position that my friend Arthur Calwell is in, I would, I think, enjoy myself. (Laughter) You see I would have no responsibility, because I wouldn't get into office anyhow. And so I could be quite free and speak at large.

The other day - to give you a simple example - he went up to the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory is, of course, a very important place and presents an important problem. It was a problem when he was a Minister in the Labour Government. But now that we are there and he has no likelihood of having his Promissory Notes taken up, because he knows that he won't win with his Party behind him, or around him, or somewhere, (Laughter) he said that we ought to be spending on the Northern Territory £60m. a year. A good round sum - £60m. a year. So I thought I had better find out what he did about that when he had his last chance which ended in 1949. Well I have no doubt that he was as eloquent then as he is now - and he's very eloquent - and I find that the total amount of money spent by his Government in the Northern Territory in their last full year - 1948/49 - was £2,750,000. And my wretched Government neglects the Northern Territory in such a shocking way that in our last complete year we spent over £15m. (Applause)

Well, you know, I daresay that as they looked at it at that time they thought £2³/₄m. was a round sum and pretty good - I'm not saying that it wasn't. But I think that if I had assumed this post of perpetual Opposition Leader as he has, I would at least not be condemning £15m. if I happened to remember that I had spent one-sixth of that amount. And so I just mention that as throwing a humorous light on politics which is otherwise, of course - I've warned Mr. Snell - a very dull occupation. (Laughter) If it weren't

for your good-natured co-operation this would be a dull meeting. Politics is like that. And you want to remember it.

But I wanted to talk to you in particular tonight, not about these local matters in the direct sense, but about some of the things that are going on outside Australia and which I have had some high responsibilities for discussing at first hand in other parts of the world. They are not academic. What is going on in the world today will determine the whole issue of peace and war. Therefore we have a vital interest in it. And our interest becomes more and more important in Australia. We have 10 million people. We have, numerically, the greatest Communist power of the lot - China - just up north of us. It is estimated by people who know about these things that by the end of this century Communist China will have in round figures a thousand million people - far more than the Soviet Union - and by the end of the century no doubt with considerable industrial expansion, with a considerable growth in skill and - subject to what may happen in the field of disarmament - the most tremendous forces. And between them and us we have Laos, full of disturbances; Cambodia, living ill-at-ease with Thailand. We have Thailand, anxious. We have North Viet Nam in the hands of the Communists and South Viet Nam under a very gallant little President, holding its own, trying to establish its own way of living. Malaya come to freedom and Independence under British Administration; Singapore, troubled, uneasy. And Indonesia, with all its political storms, and problems, and indeed, with still a civil war on its hands.

These geographical considerations are very great, enormous. And we don't do anything good about them by ignoring their existence. We must remember these things and it is because we, as a Government, have understood about these things that we took a leading hand in establishing the South-East Asian Treaty with the United States, Great Britain, France, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, all gathered together.

In Washington the other day I attended the Annual Meeting of the Ministers in this Organization. This is something that is growing, something which, partly because it establishes a sense of community and partly because it attracts the powerful support of

United States, is one of the great items in the future security of Australia.

But in the meantime we are not thinking so much in this world about the Chinese. We have occasion to. The people in Formosa have occasion to. The people in Laos and Cambodia and Thailand, they have occasion to. But in the great nations in the world the discussion, very naturally and inevitably, has been going on about the relations between the Soviet World and the free world, the possibilities of a settlement, the possibility of reducing tension and thereby, of reducing armaments. These are enormous problems. And if any Australian thought they had nothing to do with a general election or a by-election in Australia, he would be making a cardinal error. And if I, as the leader of the Government of this country, ignored them, addressing a great audience of this kind, I would be unfit for my responsibilities.

I was in London when the celebrated event of the Summit occurred. We had had a Prime Ministers' Conference. We had discussed with Mr. Macmillan on the kind of thing that might arise at the Summit, and gave our general views on the matter. There was a high degree of unanimity among the Prime Ministers there and they were Prime Ministers, as you know, from all over the world. Well they went over to attend the Summit, a Meeting worked for by Harold Macmillan, worked for successfully - as we all thought - and we all know what happened : Khrushchev arrived and he just wiped it all out with insults and contumely. Very odd, that, when you consider that a year before he was the man who was saying, "Let us have a meeting at the Summit". You remember that this was one of their great pieces of Communist propaganda : "We are the people who want a meeting at the Summit; we are the people who want peace". They have Peace movements and these preposterous Peace parades which their Fifth Columnists in Australia carry on. "Peace, Peace" they cry, when there is no peace. And therefore one would have supposed that the Master of the Communist world would have arrived and said: "Right, let us sit down together; let us strive here for peace". And instead of that he threw it all away. He said "No conference". And why? Because an aeroplane, a United States aeroplane, had

been found flying over Russia and therefore, engaging in "spying". And you know how offended a Communist would be to think of anybody being a spy. (Laughter).

Why did he seize the opportunity? Because he was indignant about spying? Nonsense! Nonsense! For every intelligent agent employed by any of the free countries I'll warrant he employs a hundred. Nobody has the faintest doubt about it. Anyhow I am always very glad to know what is going on inside the country of a potential enemy. I think it is of great and vital importance to the free world that we should know where they have their points from which they can deliver a nuclear and blasting attack on Great Britain or on the United States itself. What a lot of humbug is talked in this world, putting this thing in a sort of "Oh, it's very unfortunate". Of course he wasn't troubled about that. What troubled him was that he knew it wasn't the first - it couldn't have been - but it was the first they had seen and it was the first that they had persuaded or brought down and it was brought down 1,000 miles inside the Russian Frontier. That is what troubled him. Because you see that meant that everything he had been saying to the Russian people about: "We're not vulnerable to counter-attack; we have much better nuclear weapons; don't worry about these people: they would have to send theirs by aircraft and we could shoot them down". Well it is a bit awkward for that theory when one, the first one, not the first to go but the first to be caught, was a thousand miles inside the frontier. That demonstrated at once that the nuclear deterrent - and we all know that in the hands of the free world it is a deterrent - not a weapon of offence - was and is an effective one. That is what annoyed him. And that is what annoyed those around him. And I have no doubt it annoyed a great number of his own people.

So, his reaction was to become violent and protesting and denouncing and, as you know, he has carried on ever since like a bully, like a crude bully - a very, very able man behaving like a crude bully. This is a tragedy for the world. Disarmament?

What did we expect to get out of a Summit Meeting?
What do you suppose that the fair-minded people who went there,

Macmillan and De Gaulle and Eisenhower, what do you suppose they wanted to get from a Summit Meeting? Not just a general chit-chat about this or that: one or two things that might have brought some hope to the world, some hope to ordinary men and women who are the victims of international tension and will be the mass victims of war, they are the people whose interests matter. And everyone of the four men should have been there thinking of hundreds of millions of ordinary men and women and determined to achieve some result, something that would relieve the tensions: A temporary arrangement about Berlin if you like, I thought might be quite possible. Not a final settlement but something that postponed the argument, let things settle a bit. An Agreement about nuclear tests? Why they had had a Conference in Geneva lasting a long time and the gap which began like that got narrower and narrower until I saw no reason whatever why a Meeting at the Summit should not close that gap and dispose of that problem and give to all of us our first ray of hope about the conduct of the Communist powers.

All thrown away; all rejected: "Go away; I will not confer with you. I do not want to have a settlement about nuclear tests". And a few weeks later when the disarmament conference resumes in Geneva and the free world is on the very point of tabling concrete proposals in that great field, the Soviet representative, on instruction, walks out and brings the conference to an end.

Now, this is not to be overlooked. 'We are not going to have talks about Berlin; we are not going to have talks about nuclear tests; we are not going to have talks about disarmament. We who wanted to talk now no longer want to talk.' This is one of the climacteric events in modern history. And the next thing that happens is that, pursuing the same technique, stirring up something here or there, the probing operations of what has been called the Cold War, we open our papers one day and we see that Fidel Castro of Cuba - I would not have thought him one of the world's great statesmen, but impudent and greatly encouraged by what happened in the case of Colonel Nasser, for example - a little matter of which I know something - cocks a snook at the United States of America, steals hundreds of millions of pounds worth of other people's property and

the next thing that happens is: "It is all right; we, the Soviet Union, will look after you: we will provide you with oil: we will get our hand in. We will produce what we will describe as "economic aid" and by encouraging you to say unspeakable things against the great free nations of the world, we will bind you to us.

These are pretty serious considerations. Pretty serious: that is the understatement of all time.

Now I just turn from that to say one more thing, to go back a little, about China.

You know some of us have been regarded by some others in the Commonwealth as attaching undue importance to the Communist threat. I think that my very good friend, Mr. Nehru, has, though he has not said it - he is much too courteous to do that - but I think that more than once he has thought that I had too fixed a mind on the question of the Soviet Union for example. But I do not think he would say that today about China. I am sure that he would not. He of all the great leaders in Asia, has been the one who has sought to interpret fairly and generously what has gone on inside Communist China. He has maintained his full diplomatic relations with Communist China. He has had a lot of direct personal contact with the leaders, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai and all of them. I would have thought that they would regard him as a man who had been, so to speak, an honest broker, in these matters. And what has happened? His own Chinese frontier has been violated, following on the incidences of Tibet. All the disturbances along his frontier: Scores of thousands of refugees from Tibet driven into his own country; all the surging troubles around the North of Nepal and the province of Ladakh and those other places on the ultimate north, north east of India. He has been made to understand something, by hard experience, of the arrogance and aggressiveness of the Communist, whether he is in the Soviet Union or in China or in one of the score of countries which have been taken into captivity by them.

Now, Sir, why do I occupy your time talking about those things? Well: I talk about them, of course, because they are vastly

important to us. There might have been a time in the history of Australia when people thought that we could live by ourselves and to ourselves. Nobody believes that today. Does anybody believe that, wrapped in our own virtue and isolated in our own splendour, we can just go along untouched by hostile hands? Of course not. The very thought of it is unreal and ridiculous.

We have our security involved in the security of the entire free world, in that of the United States and of Canada and our other comrade countries of the Commonwealth: Great Britain, right there in the very cockpit of any conflict; the whole of the west of Europe. Our security is bound up with theirs. This is no day for narrow conceptions, for narrow-mindedness, for parochialism on these things. This is the day for the broad and sweeping conception of where we stand in the world. And in case you think that perhaps that is blowing a little hard on behalf of Australia, let me tell you with great pride, that our voice, in spite of the limits to our numbers, our voice is a very respectable and respected voice in the councils of the free nations of the world. (Applause)

Now before I conclude I would just like to say something about how all that has its counterpart inside Australia. I have never pretended, nor would anybody else, that as a political party, the Australian Communists amount to very much. They have contributed a pretty high number of lost deposits to the revenues of the country. Of course the people of Australia won't put them into parliament. Of course the people of Australia will never consciously, in large numbers support a collection of people whose actions are treasonable in the highest degree. Of course they won't. We are decent, honest, sensible people in Australia.

Therefore they do a little shop window stuff on running a candidate - that's only shop window and it is a little chance for a bit of propaganda. Where they do their work is elsewhere. And the whole history of the industrial movement in Australia in recent years has been the history of an attempt, sometimes successful and sometimes unsuccessful, by the Communists to get control of Union offices. Everybody knows about this. Even my friend Arthur Calwell, who, I think - I think I must have been away at the time - denied

that there was a Unity Ticket problem, has been brought to believe that there might be one. (Laughter).

But I am not interested in the convolutions in the mind of these apologists for Unity Tickets. All I want to point out to you is that whatever the technique is that is to be employed, the Communist significance in Australia rests upon their chance of securing control, or an effective voice, in key trade unions. It does not require very much imagination to know that if the Communists achieved the position of leadership in the electric power generation field in the State of Victoria, equal to that which Jim Healy has achieved in the Waterside Workers' Federation, then a Communist decision could black out this State just as well as sealing up the ports of the State. This is what they are after. Do not run away with the idea that these are amiable theorists. These people are, and always have been, the Fifth Column for Communist aggression proceeding from the great countries. They go there; they do their refresher courses; they have their instructions. And the whole idea is: Let us insert ourselves into Union office.

Now we, some little time back, knowing that the rank and file Trade Unionist in Australia is a patriot and will not have anything to do with Fifth Columns or people of this kind, instituted a vastly improved secret ballot law which enabled small groups - the industrial groups themselves were able to play a great part in it - to get a secret ballot where the ordinary Union ballot looked as if it had been fixed or rigged. And as a result of that legislation designed to free people from these Communist manoeuvres and give them an opportunity of challenging elections that were improperly conducted, was voted against by every member of the Labour party at Canberra. But when it went into operation the results of it were astonishingly good. Communist official after Communist official found himself rejected at the polls. And then the Australian Labour Party, or what is left of it, said: "This will not do", - this was under its previous leadership - "This will not do. Of course we hate the Communists but we do not want to fall out with them too much". And so they started inside their own ranks, not a pro-Communist

movement but a violent movement against the industrial groups. Because they know that if they could destroy them or their influence, then some of these eminent Communists would begin to come back - as they have begun to come back - into Union office.

That is the whole point about Unity tickets: the shabby statements that have been made, these miserable unconvincing denials are all exploded if you look at a Unity ticket. But that is only a symptom. The true disease is that the Australian Labour Party is utterly unaware of the Communist infiltration techniques or, being aware, is quite indifferent as to whether they succeed or not.

Ladies and Gentlemen I could stand up here and talk to you for a couple of hours about many of the problems of the world and perhaps, with a bit of luck, I might interest you on them because I have seen a good deal in relation to them, as you know, in recent times. But really at a time like this, at a period in the world's history when I think there are great dangers - Cuba is a symptom of a danger; it is a symptom of how people like that can think they can disregard the ancient homes of freedom, the great powers of the world, disregard them, fly in their faces, treat them with contempt. That kind of state of affairs in the world is explosive. A big dog may take an awful lot from a little dog, but not for always. This is explosive matter. It is a matter in which we must, ourselves, be prepared to give the greatest moral and other support to those nations whose stand in the world and whose strength in the world are vital to our security. And, in the same way, this is the time when we must realise, as always I think, that if our own Government has been able to stand firmly, to be recognised around the free world as being worthy of trust and co-operation, then this by-election presents you with an opportunity of saying: "At any rate we have confidence in this Government. We will not weaken it by any vote of ours".
