

TEXT OF TELEVISION INTERVIEW

with

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE R.G. MENZIES, C.H., Q.C., M.P.,

RECORDED BY CHANNEL ATN

at

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

13th October, 1960

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Q. Mr. Prime Minister, apart from making a statement on behalf of Australia before the General Assembly, you have been a leading figure in one of the most discussed movements taken part so far in this Assembly, namely the move to have the Assembly approve the meeting of another Summit rather than the meeting of the President of the United States and Mr. Khrushchev as proposed by five neutral Nations. I would like to know from you, Sir, why did we take the initiative in such a move?

A. Well, there are various reasons for that. I saw the Five Power Resolution, as I will call it on the Friday when I arrived when it was first mentioned in President Sukarno's speech and, quite frankly, I didn't like it. I didn't like it for a variety of reasons, but perhaps the main one was that it concentrated attention on two people named as individuals and that seemed to me to lend colour to the propaganda that goes on in the world; that the whole division in the world - the whole conflict - is between the United States and the Soviet Union; that all the rest of us presumably are mere onlookers - all in a sense, all of us, neutral.

I don't believe that that is true. I think the conflict is a much wider one than that and I object very much to having a state of affairs suggested which appears to isolate the United States in the Western world. Therefore my instinctive reaction was against it and I then began to consider in my own mind whether I would try to meet the Resolution head on by speaking against it, and vote against it, which could easily have been misunderstood, or putting up an amendment. The amendment, I hasten to say, was my own amendment, drafted by me and suggested by me. I say that because I notice that some people think I have been what in Australia we call a "stogie" on this matter. On the contrary I promoted it and the United Kingdom and the United States agreed that it was a wise course to pursue and that is how I came to move my amendment.

By the time I moved the amendment on the Monday morning the Five Power Resolution, I thought, had become quite useless, because in the meantime they had communicated it to President Eisenhower and to Mr. Khrushchev, each of whom had said he would not meet the other except under conditions that were obviously not capable of being reconciled, and therefore the Five Power Resolution became, in my judgment, useless. I didn't quite like the idea of the United Nations passing a Resolution which it knew in advance would be useless. That's a pretty powerful reason for not supporting it and of course you can add to that that there is a new President going to be elected. The whole countryside is buzzing with it here. Great arguments going on - nobody yet knows who is going to be the new President,

but it would be very difficult for the retiring President to think he could solve some problem at this moment when the whole country is just within weeks of choosing his successor. That was another reason for not pointing at him in particular and therefore I moved the amendment, the effect of which I thought was perfectly clear.

The effect of it was that there should be not a meeting between two but a meeting between four, the Summit Powers who really choose themselves for this purpose because they are four Atomic Powers. This has been greatly overlooked I think by some of the Delegates at the Assembly. The four Atomic Powers. They have an enormous responsibility in the matter of war and peace. They had an abortive meeting at Paris. I want to see them meeting again and actually you know the most fascinating thing about this matter is that although my amendment was defeated very handsomely, or unhandsomely, according to the point of view, it was supported by three of the four powers - the United Kingdom, the United States and France - and was not voted against by the Soviet Union. Not one of the Four Powers concerned with the Summit voted against a Summit meeting. That, I thought, was a pretty considerable advancement.

Q. While we are on the question of the numbers on the actual amendment vote, there has been a lot made of the fact that they represented this so-called Neutral Bloc - and thus was the first example of where they had stuck together very solidly. Many people think that this is, in some ways, an omen of the future as far as the United Nations is concerned. What do you feel yourself on the question of this new Neutral Bloc or Third Force as people are now discussing it here in relation to the East and West?

A Well, look if I may speak with my usual frankness, I think that there is an awful lot of nonsense being talked about a Neutral Bloc. You first of all have to define your terms. What is neutralism for this purpose? Are you a neutral because you have no connection with the firm next door and will not conduct operations of war except in immediate defence of your own immediate frontiers? Or are you a neutral because you won't become engaged in war except under terms of the Charter, which is a very different matter? It may involve you in using troops far away from your own frontiers. Those questions have to be answered in the first place.

But in the second place this is an absurd notion that is getting currency - that because a series of Nations come from, say, Africa, they are all to be lumped together as a Bloc as if they were not all different. They have become independent Nations because they think they are different. Each of them has its own history, its own people, its own language in many cases. Why are they all to be lumped together? You may as well talk about the European Bloc, including every European nation in it, simply because they live in the same Continent.

I think we are going to find a very enriching variety of opinion coming out of these new Nations and I don't think so poorly of them as to believe that they will simply settle down on some dogma that makes them all look the same and sound the same. Anybody who listened to the speech by the Prime Minister of Nigeria, as I am sure you did, would be profoundly impressed by the fact that here is a new wise voice, a balanced mind, and I think that his contribution to this thing will not only be on the footing that he comes from an African country, but it will be on the footing that he is a citizen of the world and his country is now a considerable nation in the world. So I am not very much impressed by this easy assumption that there is a Neutralist Bloc and that something has to be done about it in toto.

Q. On the question though, Mr. Menzies, of treating these at the moment as Groups, such as we have heard a great deal ever since this Assembly started, from both sides of the field, if I may say so, of the new African Nations, they do have specific problems pretty well related to them at the moment and it does seem, don't you think, that the United Nations and others that are going to be made to assist them will have to be in a sense as treating them as a Group unit from the point of view of economic and educational assistance?

A. Well, I am not sure that I agree with that. There must be great assistance, technical aid - all sorts of things. I have no doubt as I said in my main speech this is one of the great problems - to reduce the gap between the under-developed countries and the extraordinarily highly developed industrial communities. That is a very great problem, but I think that it would be a mistake to just treat that as a global problem and say, well, what are we going to do for the African countries. Each of them is different. One of them may have resources of water which would lend themselves to hydro-electric power to considerable industrial development. Another one may need assistance in agricultural or pastoral development. Each country is different, but we must stand willing to help them all. I don't doubt but that we should try to help them all by the same methods - using, to use a rather ridiculous metaphor, the same yardstick for all of them I think would be a blunder. These are individual nations. That is the whole basis of what I am saying about them.

Q. Well, Mr. Prime Minister, you have played a big role in an attempt to get the Assembly to agree to support the question. Do you see any prospect, let's say, for the European Spring, of the Summit Powers getting together again when there will be a new President in the White House?

A. Well, don't despair of it. It is to be remembered that although my amendment was defeated, the Five Power Resolution was ultimately withdrawn so that this ground stood clear, and the one thing that emerges from all this is that of the Four Powers concerned in the Summit meeting not one voted

against my proposal. Three of them positively in favour. I emphasise that. It seemed to me to be rather a helpful result from the point of view of the Summit. Well, of course, the new President of the United States isn't sworn in until January and he is not going to, I imagine, rush off at once to a Summit Meeting. He must compose his Administration or whatever changes may have to be made, depending on who wins. He must prepare his own mind for this matter. But talking in terms of European Spring - April, May - I wouldn't despair of seeing a Summit Meeting. I don't believe that Khrushchev will resist it. I don't believe that Mr. Macmillan will resist it. He has been a very strong advocate for it. I know that President de Gaulle has a few other problems at the moment on his plate, but I should imagine that he would be willing. And the new President, I am perfectly certain without speaking with the faintest authority will be Summit minded at the right time. So I don't expect it early in the year, but I am not at all without hope that it will happen before the middle of the year.

Q. Sir, both Senator Kennedy and Vice-President Nixon have both said very very recently that they are quite prepared to attend a Summit meeting, whichever one is elected President, but each makes the point that they would like to see negotiations go on at lower levels beforehand, before they go to another meeting such as the last Paris meeting.

A. Yes, well that is I think consistent with the line that is being taken. They want some preparatory work and of course that is quite right. Before you meet at the Summit is is, to say the least of it, very useful to have Foreign Secretaries, the Secretary of State and so on meet with expert officials gathering up the relevant facts, trying to isolate if you can one or two aspects of the international problem that could be discussed at a first meeting. Nobody has ever suggested, you see, that in one Summit you will settle the problems of the world. What has always been the objective has been to relieve tension on one topic or perhaps two - nuclear tests for example. That would be I think a fruitful subject for discussion at the first Summit Meeting. But preparation - yes, I recognise that - that it why I am not putting my unauthorised prophecy early in the year, but more toward the middle of the year.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, still the big question mark around the Assembly is Nikita Khrushchev. Do you think that he has gained or lost ground during his time here at the Assembly?

A. Well of course that is anybody's guess, but I think he's lost ground. I think that he over-played his hand. His speeches were very violent, very threatening, and, you know, grown up men get a little tired of being spoken to in that way. The effect it has on my mind is to make me say well I well I won't say what I was going to say but every Australian will understand what I was going to say. And I don't see why it shouldn't have a similar

effect on other people. I felt that he did over-play his hand; he failed very badly on his attack on the Secretary General - very badly. I don't think he has come out of the Congo argument very well. Of course, he is a powerful man and he represents an enormously powerful country, but by and large I think that he has lost ground in this Assembly and of course I am prepared to say that I am very glad that I do think so - perhaps it is wishful thinking. I don't think it is.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister - I would like to thank you on behalf of our television audience for coming here to-day to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City to speak to us in Australia. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you very much. Well, in point of fact, I welcome the opportunity because for the last fortnight I haven't been able to talk to them in person.

Q. Thank you, Sir.

A. And therefore this has been, I think, a very useful chance. Thank you very much.