

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

SPEECH

BY

The Rt Hon. HAROLD HOLT, C.H., M.P.,

ON

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

[From the 'Parliamentary Debates', 17 August 1967]

Mr HAROLD HOLT (Higgins—Prime Minister) [8.20]—This debate was initiated by the Minister for External Affairs (Mr Hasluck) who, I think it will be agreed by all sections of the House, gave to this chamber one of the most thoughtful, informative, articulate and valuable statements on the foreign affairs of this country that has ever been presented to the chamber. It is to me deplorable that it was followed by such an incredible speech from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Whitlam). I use the term 'incredible' in two senses. It was incredible in the sense that anybody who had any knowledge of the facts about which the Leader of the Opposition spoke could place no validity on the comments which he made in relation to those facts. It was also incredible in the sense that a man holding himself out to be the leader of an alternative government should have such a disregard for the facts and make such reckless and loose use of them as he did during the debate. I shall give some instances of that as I proceed.

The Leader of the Opposition has put to the House what purports to be the views of the Australian Labor Party on a variety of important issues. I say 'purports' because nobody in this country can be sure of the views of the Australian Labor Party, taken as a whole. I shall deal with that, too, in a little more detail as I go along. He holds himself and his colleagues out as the source of an alternative government for this country.

There is, of course, a very direct link between the welfare, security and economic progress of a nation and the Government that leads it. So it becomes an obligation of citizenship in a democratic society to examine closely the policies offered by those who aspire to national leadership. And there is an obligation on the part of the public and of the Press of Australia to bring the same strong searchlight of scrutiny to the policies of the Australian Labor Party which they direct so penetratingly and persistently to the policies of the present Government.

I stress that because there has been for so long a disposition on the part of some sections of the Press and some members of the public to say: 'There is no effective Opposition, so we are the Opposition.' If they are going to alter that role and look to honourable members opposite led by the present Leader of the Opposition as an alternative government, then they have a responsibility to probe as closely as they would the policies of this Government what is put forward by honourable gentlemen opposite.

It is not easy to pin down in any precise form the policies offered by the Australian Labor Party under its present leadership, either on foreign affairs or on domestic affairs. In this respect, the Leader of the Opposition has already revealed himself as something of a political chameleon. At



times, we find him assuming the guise of a Christian crusader charging down against the infidels of the Victorian executive of the Australian Labor Party. But when he speaks to an audience consisting predominantly of Liberal sympathisers, as when he talked to the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Victoria the other day, we find him uttering honeyed words about the Socialist objective, an objective, incidentally, to the implementation of which he has pledged himself.

**Mr Uren**—I rise to order. This is a discussion of a statement delivered by the Minister for External Affairs. When discussing a previous statement made by the Minister for External Affairs I was called to order by the Chair for not speaking to the statement. My point now is that on this occasion the Prime Minister is not speaking to the statement delivered by the Minister for External Affairs.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! There is no substance in the point raised by the honourable member.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—I can understand the concern of honourable gentlemen opposite at any analysis which challenges the credibility of their spokesman. But, Sir, this is tremendously relevant to the policies of an alternative government in Australia. Unless there can be faith and trust in the policies of those who offer themselves as an alternative government, then the country is put at peril if those people take over the Government of the country. I want to question tonight whether honourable gentleman opposite have a valid claim to govern this country.

I repeat that the Leader of the Opposition is committed to the implementation of this policy. But at times he is to be found tilting, like Don Quixote against imaginary Liberal windmills. I can quote instance after instance of that. Many of them occurred during the recent Corio campaign. On that occasion he alleged that I had made some sort of deal with the former member for Corio (Mr Opperman) before the last general election. That was a completely false allegation which I shall deal with in more detail later. He also made the false allegation that by advocating a continuance of the bombing of North Vietnam I was seriously

embarrassing the American Administration. Then he made the completely false allegation that I had openly advocated an extension of the formal hours of working in Australia. Not only was that allegation made by the Leader of the Opposition but it was repeated by the newly elected member for Corio (Mr Scholes). Yet he quoted from a Press release of mine that clearly indicated that I had specifically said in answer to a question on this matter that I was not advocating a longer working week in that sense.

As I have said, these are just imaginary Liberal windmills that the honourable gentleman has created for himself. But then, after emerging from the throes of his Federal Executive discussions, he publicly expounds, admittedly not very enthusiastically, policy decisions that have taken him significant strides leftwards. He is not so much a man for all seasons as a man for all policies. The essence of his approach is: If you want it I have got it. What the honourable gentleman will discover as he proceeds in this course of leadership is that what he has said on earlier occasions will come up to haunt him in the statements which he will be making thereafter.

Some of these allegations I shall document as I proceed. I apologise in advance to the House for having to quote so extensively in what remains for me to say. But when you have loose and reckless assertions I believe the most effective answer is a carefully documented reply on the facts as they can be presented.

Let me return now to one or two of the matters to which I have referred. I spoke of his attack on the Victorian Executive. This is significant because of the bearing it has on the foreign policies which were subsequently produced. Speaking to the Victorian Labor Party conference on 9th June, the Leader of the Opposition said:

The Victorian Executive included an influential handful of men who had flouted ALP policy on unity tickets, organised or led political strikes in defiance of the ACTU, disregarded and repudiated party and ACTU policy on the manning of ships to Vietnam—

**Mr Hayden**—I rise to a point of order.

**Mr Uren**—I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order!

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—Cannot honourable members opposite take it? We gave the Leader of the Opposition unlimited time.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The House will come to order. The honourable member for Oxley has taken a point of order.

**Mr Hayden**—Mr Speaker, I direct attention to the inconsistency with which the rules of the House are being applied.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The honourable member will withdraw that remark. He is reflecting on the Chair.

**Mr Uren**—I too rise to a point of order. The matter before the House is the statement that was made by the Minister for External Affairs. The Prime Minister is not discussing that statement.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! There is no substance in the point of order. The honourable member will resume his seat.

**Mr Bryant**—Mr Speaker, I take a point of order. At an earlier hour the Leader of the House moved that standing orders be suspended so that the Prime Minister could speak without limitation of time on the subject before the House. As a matter of courtesy, no opposition came from this side of the House.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The honourable member for Wills cannot debate the matter. What is the point of order?

**Mr Bryant**—My point of order is that the Prime Minister is trespassing upon the decision of the House.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The point of order is without substance.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—This has a wide bearing on the foreign policy decisions which emerged from the Labor Party's Federal Conference in Adelaide. The comments of the Leader of the Opposition from which I am quoting go on to show that these men whom he now condemns could be in a position to exercise influence on the policies of the Australian Labor Party at the forthcoming conference. Let me proceed with the quotation:

It is disgraceful that these men should be on the ALP Executive which can appear to influence Federal policies and selections.

He is quite right. He continued:

I will exercise my right to repudiate such men as I believe disloyal to the ALP, disruptive of its electoral prospects and destructive of all the ALP stands for.

As I shall show in greater elaboration later this has considerable relevance to what emerged in Adelaide. Mr W. Brown, the State President of the Australian Labor Party, commenting on the Conference, is reported as follows:

The Labor Party throughout Australia was moving further to the Left, the State ALP president Mr W. Brown, said yesterday.

This had been shown at the party's Federal Conference in Adelaide two weeks ago.

'The trend at the Federal Conference was Leftwards,' Mr Brown said.

Mr Brown was speaking on the 3KZ Labor Hour.

He said the conference had 'strengthened' policy on the Vietnam war.

It attached a meaningful set of objectives to what basically was and remains a 'troops out' policy,' he said.

'Possibly we could say now that it is a policy of "troops out unless".'

**Mr Uren**—I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. What has the ALP Federal Conference got to do with the statement made by the Minister for External Affairs?

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! Honourable members will cease interjecting. The House will come to order.

**Mr Uren**—Mr Speaker, I respect the Chair. I respectfully point out to you that we are discussing the statement made this afternoon by the Minister for External Affairs, not the ALP Federal Conference and not what Mr Brown or anybody else has said.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! There is no substance in the point of order.

**Mr Uren**—We were discussing the statement made by the Minister for External Affairs.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. There is no substance in his point of order. It has always been the practice of the House to acknowledge that foreign affairs statements have a broad base. The policies that are now being referred to are related to the foreign affairs policies of members of this Parliament.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—May I point out to the honourable gentleman, if the fact has escaped his attention, that the foreign policy that he will be required to advance publicly if he is not to forfeit his preselection at the next election is the foreign policy that was worked out at the Adelaide Conference at which those condemned by the Leader of the Opposition were present and in which they participated. I do not need to rely on authorities from this side of the House as to what occurred and the significance of the policies declared there. The honourable member for Yarra (Dr J. F. Cairns) himself has been vocal on this matter, as I hope I will be able to show shortly.

The former Leader of the Australian Labor Party, the honorable member for Melbourne (Mr Calwell), at least had this virtue in our eyes: However much we disagreed with him, we knew where he stood and what he stood for and we could challenge fairly and honestly the views that he put to us. In an article in the Melbourne 'Herald' on 8th August of this year which he headed 'My stand on Vietnam vindicated', the former Leader of the Opposition said:

Decisions on Vietnam at the ALP Federal conference in Adelaide show there has been no weakening of Labor opposition to the continuation of the war and Australia's part in it.

I will not read the whole article but it is available if anybody wishes to read it. He went on to say:

The conference refused to be stampeded by all sorts of people—

No doubt, including the present Leader of the Opposition:

and influences, and the policy in all its essentials is the same as it was in November last, and as it will be when the 1969 election is held.

I feel that my stand before the last election and since has been vindicated.

If I may bring the honourable member for Yarra in as further support for my comment, I take the Australian Broadcasting Commission's news bulletin of Monday, 7th August, which reported an Hiroshima Day rally held in Melbourne under the auspices of the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament at the Princess Theatre. I quote directly from the ABC news bulletin. It reads:

Dr Cairns told the rally that unless the United States stopped the bombing of North Vietnam and recognised the National Liberation Front, a Labor Government would have no alternative to withdrawing Australian armed forces. Dr Cairns said the ALP now had a precise policy on Vietnam which condemned and opposed the war. He said it did not matter what the ALP leader, Mr Whitlam, or the Deputy Leader, Mr Barnard, said on Vietnam. It was the Federal Conference which had decided the policy.

So, we have Mr Brown saying that they have been taken to the left and we have Dr Cairns, the honourable member for Yarra, saying: 'It does not matter what interpretation the Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition puts on it.' We have the precise policy now which the former Leader of the Opposition says was fully in line with the policy he advocated at the last election and which will be the policy of the Australian Labor Party at the election in 1969. I believe that these matters are relevant.

**Mr Uren**—Was that a newspaper clipping?

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—No.

**Mr Uren**—The Prime Minister was not very happy about a newspaper clipping this morning.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—Which one was that?

**Mr Uren**—During question time I asked the Prime Minister a question about an interview with him at London Airport.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—The honourable member for Yarra will be speaking in this debate. If the honourable member for Yarra tells the House that he was misreported by the Australian Broadcasting Commission—

**Mr Whitlam**—Which he will do.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—We will be glad to hear it.

**Mr Whitlam**—It was not repeated in later news items.

**Mr Wentworth**—I do not wonder.

**Mr Whitlam**—It was not repeated because the ABC checked with the honourable member for Yarra.

**Dr J. F. Cairns**—Mr Speaker, I claim that I have been misrepresented.

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The honourable member will resume his seat.

**Mr Bryant**—You are spoiling Harold's speech.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—It is not spoiling it for me. Let me turn now to one or two other statements made by the Leader of the Opposition and I do not think an attempt will be made to interrupt my remarks now, because these statements to which I will refer were made in the course of the honourable gentleman's speech this afternoon. I quote first from a report which appeared in the Melbourne 'Sun' at the time of the Corio by-election. Under the headline 'PM embarrassed U.S. says Mr Whitlam' the following statement appeared:

The Prime Minister, Mr Holt, had embarrassed the U.S. Administration by his recent support for the bombing of North Vietnam . . .

Mr Whitlam claimed the bombing had to go on for 'a bit longer' because it had been supported by Mr Holt and the King of Thailand.

That, surely, is one of the most audacious and fantastic propositions ever advanced by a political leader in this country. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying in effect is that the President of the United States, in order to humour me and the King of Thailand and not embarrass us, would sacrifice American lives and aircraft. This is the purport of what he has not only seriously and solemnly put in the heat of a by-election but has repeated here in a considered speech in this House. He aggravated the offence by saying that I constituted myself as the spokesman for Admiral Sharp. It is true that as I passed through Honolulu I had a very thorough briefing, as did others in the official party, with Admiral Sharp and senior colleagues of the Pacific Command. They were quite convinced in their minds of the effectiveness of the bombing. They were convinced also that any lull in the bombing merely presented the North Vietnamese with an opportunity to build up rapidly supplies which could be used against American, Vietnamese, Australian and other allied troops in South Vietnam.

In Honolulu I saw films taken over one North Vietnamese port. In the film taken on the day before the lull in the bombing there was scarcely a ship to be seen in the port but on the day afterwards the port

was seen to be crowded with shipping of one kind or another, rushing in to take advantage of the lull. Every time there has been a lull in the bombing that is what has happened. This fact has been made public repeatedly but this does not prevent honourable gentlemen opposite from urging that the bombing be stopped, notwithstanding the cost in lives, as well as in terms of security, to the American, Vietnamese, Australian and other allied forces in South Vietnam.

When I spoke in Los Angeles it was not merely with the knowledge of views or facts presented to me in Honolulu by Admiral Sharp and his colleagues. This Government is in virtually daily contact with the American Administration. We know its views intimately, as it knows ours. I knew with complete confidence that the views which I expressed in Los Angeles would certainly not be unpalatable views to the United States Administration. I do not have to go into confidential discussions, as the honourable gentleman sought to do this afternoon, in order to prove my point. I make that assertion and I do not purport to quote anybody in relation to it.

I will summarise the reasons for a continuation of the bombing, as I stated them in Los Angeles: It has consistently been the view of the Australian Government that North Vietnam must not be permitted to remain a haven immune from military risk from which military aggression against the south can be mounted with impunity. The case for controlled bombing is strong and the bombing has been conducted with great care and precision. The principal reasons are that the bombing upsets the flow of men and materials to the fighting zones; it damages the transport systems through which that flow goes forward; it helps to destroy the enemy's base areas, thereby weakening his capacity to fight and so saving the lives of allied fighting men; it ties up hundreds of thousands of the North Vietnamese work force in repair and reconstruction; it demonstrates to the fighting forces of South Vietnam that America and her allies are giving them full support; it demonstrates to the people of South Vietnam as a whole that we do not expect them to suffer and to fight the aggressor only where he chooses to fight; and it has the political and psychological effect of

reminding the North Vietnamese that they cannot hope to win this conflict.

The United States Government has not accepted arguments in favour of cessation of the bombing. Indeed, if anything, in recent times it has increased the tempo and the scale of bombing. The Australian Government has not accepted the arguments against the bombing. I make the reasons for that abundantly plain here tonight.

The next matter which the Leader of the Opposition chose to throw at me was what had developed in respect of the British position east of Suez and in particular in the Malaysia-Singapore area. He said that we should have known for the best part of the last two years that the United Kingdom intended to withdraw in the Singapore-Malaysia area. Do I quote the honourable gentleman correctly?

**Mr Whitlam**—Yes.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—The honourable gentleman says that we should have known. In other words, as I will demonstrate, he is saying that I should have placed no reliance whatever on the firm, publicly stated assurances of a British Labor Government. I will quote the assurances—not private assurances or anything of that sort, but publicly stated assurances by spokesmen for the British Government in the relevant period. I do not do this in any spirit of recrimination. I have reason to believe that there has been an appreciation in the United Kingdom of the temperate way in which I have addressed myself to this matter in this country. I say that not ill-advisedly. But when I am taunted by the Leader of the Opposition that we should have known what the British were going to do, I say: 'Here is the record on this matter. What would he, as head of a Labor Government in this country, have felt about assurances given to him by the head of a Labor Government in the United Kingdom, and chief spokesman for that Government?'

I cite first the defence review made by the United Kingdom Minister for Defence, Mr Healey, in the House of Commons in February 1966. He said:

It is in the Far East and Southern Asia that the greatest danger to peace may lie in the next decade and some of our partners in the Commonwealth may be directly threatened. We believe it is right that Britain should maintain a military presence in

this area. Its effectiveness will turn largely on the arrangements we can make with our Commonwealth partners and other allies in the coming years.

I hasten to add that there has been no factor of that kind which has led to the ultimate decision. I have never heard it suggested by any spokesman for the British Government that its decision has related to any failure on the part of ourselves or any of the other countries in the region. Mr Healey continued:

As soon as conditions permit we shall make some reductions in the forces which we keep in the area. We have important military facilities in Malaysia and Singapore as have our Australian and New Zealand partners. These we plan to retain for as long as the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore agree that we should do so on acceptable conditions.

Nobody has imposed unacceptable conditions. The review continued:

Against the day when it may no longer be possible for us to use these facilities freely, we have begun to discuss with the Government of Australia the practical possibilities of our having military facilities in that country if necessary.

Anyone who was party to the discussions knows that what the United Kingdom meant by the expression 'against the day when it may no longer be possible' was some action on the part of one or other of the countries in the area which would make it impracticable for the United Kingdom to continue to use the facilities in Malaysia and Singapore.

I pass over the statements made by Mr Healey in Canberra in that year and turn to Mr Wilson's speech to the British Parliamentary Labor Party in London on 15th June 1966. He said:

Our policy is based on full support for the United Nations, not just with words but with the ability to be able to act for and with the United Nations.

What we have to ask is whether it is or should be the policy of this Party to pull out of all influence in Asia except the very limited influence we shall be able to exert in United Nations debates, telling other people what they ought to do. If this is the policy the result will be our inability to intervene whether in a United Nations or Commonwealth context to stop a small conflagration becoming a big one.

It will mean this as well, that you will be leaving Asia to three main powers, China, the United States and the Soviet Union with a small peripheral influence exerted by Australia and New Zealand, but Japan coming up fast on the rails.

It is really said that we have nothing to contribute except speeches that no-one will listen to. I believe that Britain through history, through geography and Commonwealth connections has

a vital contribution to make—I believe a Socialist Britain has even more.

Perhaps there are some members who would like to contract out and leave it to the Americans and Chinese eyeball to eyeball to face this thing out. The world is too small for that kind of attitude today. It is the surest prescription for a nuclear holocaust I could think of.

Do we want to force countries like India to choose between the power blocs? Or go nuclear herself? Our presence in Asia gives us a chance to prevent polarisation. Do we really believe the only way to world peace is world polarisation?

I believe Britain has a role, and not at prohibitive cost, in preventing polarisation. We have a role in influencing America.

My final quotation is from the last statement made before the announcement of withdrawal, and that is in the Defence White Paper of February of this year. Mr Healey said:

We are continuing to study the scope that exists for reducing our foreign exchange expenditure throughout the world always with a proper regard to the interests of our allies and our ability to meet our commitments . . . there is much to learn from the arduous three years' campaign against confrontation . . . it was a fine example of what British forces can do outside Europe to maintain international stability. Without their contribution to the Commonwealth effort much of South East Asia might have collapsed into disorder perhaps inviting competitive intervention by other powers with the consequent risk of general war.

. . . But provided that they are needed and welcome, the continuing presence of British forces can help to create an environment in which local governments are able to establish the political and economic basis for peace and stability. There can also be no certainty—so long as threats to stability remain—that those forces will not be required to give help to friendly Governments, or to play a part in the United Nations peace-keeping force as they have done in recent years.

**Mr Stokes**—When did he say that?

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—That was in February of this year. I have not quoted the passages as a means of criticising the United Kingdom Government. I believe that it is a measure of the difficulties that the United Kingdom Government has found itself compelled to face that, despite these assurances which I believe were given by the men who uttered them in good faith and with good intention, it had to depart so radically from the assurances in the final statement it made. We continued our discussions with representatives of the United Kingdom Government until the time of that announcement. We have not sought to rake over the embers of the past. As my colleague pointed out,

we are devoting ourselves to the problems of the future and we hope to have co-operation with the United Kingdom and other countries in the area.

Perhaps having made a passing reference to co-operation with other countries in the area, it is interesting to note that one passage in my colleague's speech that attracted some commendation from the Leader of the Opposition was the passage in which he spoke of the development of regional co-operation for security and other purposes. But this comes from the man who recently told the world publicly on television that Australia is the only respectable ally that the United States has. That is not a very good way to encourage regionalism amongst the free countries with whom Australia is co-operating in a military, economic and civil sense. This is the man who demands a process of regionalism.

There is another statement that I wish to correct. The honourable member stated quite directly that this Government was bent on securing a military victory in Vietnam regardless of all else and that we had given no thought or support to a political settlement. Since I became Prime Minister I do not think I have made a statement in which I spoke about military consequences without having commented that a military result of itself will not be sufficient to meet the situation; there must also be a political settlement. I have said that with the full knowledge of the problems we had in Malaya, as it then was, over many years. I know that if the military effort of our opponent is defeated without a political settlement having been reached, in the kind of country with which we are dealing guerilla activity can go on indefinitely. This happened in Malaya. So we must work for a political settlement, but we do not include in that the kind of recognition that the honourable gentleman and his colleagues want to give to the Communist instrument of the Government of North Vietnam. We will negotiate with the Government of North Vietnam, but he is demanding that the Government of South Vietnam and the Government of the United States recognise the Communist organ of the Government of North Vietnam in South Vietnam. This is one of the points that the North Vietnamese seek to have fulfilled before they will negotiate.

Before I left the aspect of the bombing, I should have said that this Government has as much access to information as any other government has, almost without exception. We have almost as much information as the United States possesses on this matter. Nothing has come to our knowledge that would warrant us holding the belief that there would be a reasonable prospect of negotiation if only the bombing were to cease. If the North Vietnamese want a negotiated settlement, there are many ways for them to make their wishes known. All possible avenues have been explored by us. The honourable member for Brisbane (Mr Cross) said that there have been many occasions in recent years when the United States could have sought a peaceful settlement. I think he said that some forty countries in all have sought to achieve some sort of peaceful negotiation. So the avenues for negotiation are there if the North Vietnamese want to follow them. I know of nothing that has emerged during the period of the dispute that would suggest that the North Vietnamese are ready to negotiate.

Now let me come to the present policy on Vietnam of the Australian Labor Party, if we can find it. I introduce my remarks on this point by quoting from the policy speech made by the honourable member for Batman (Mr Benson) during the course of the last election campaign. It reveals the background to developments inside the Australian Labor Party in its decisions on foreign policy since then. I quote him as having said:

The Labor Party's Federal Conference last year removed the clause from the Party platform which said Labor would honour all existing treaties. The Labor Party now did not recognise international security treaties. This is not the time for Australia to break her treaty ties but it is the time to strengthen them and to stand by any nation wishing to remain free.

I have quoted that passage because I have in my hand the text of the decisions taken at the recent conference of the Australian Labor Party as they were handed out to the Press. Without going through the full document, I take the summary that appears at page 2 of the roneoed copy. I do not think anybody opposite will challenge its accuracy. The report states:

Satisfied that the war in Vietnam does not involve any obligations for Australia under ANZUS, SEATO or the United Nations charter—

I pause there to remind the House that South Vietnam was one of the protocol States mentioned in SEATO. I concede that the legal point could be taken that there was no obligation, but it was not so remote from the consideration of the SEATO powers as this statement would imply. Secondly, I point out that under ANZUS we are linked with the United States of America and with New Zealand. Can it be seriously argued that the policies that I shall be outlining here as they appear in this document have no bearing on the strength of our alliance with the Americans under ANZUS? For example, could an Australian government which withdrew its troops, having virtually served an ultimatum on the United States, look with the same sense of security to ANZUS in the future as we feel we are able to do today? Having interpolated to make that comment I go on to read from the document:

and does not assist the Vietnamese people to determine their own affairs—

Apparently they are to be determined for them by the Government of North Vietnam: and that no threat to Australian security from China is involved—

My colleague dealt with that in his own paper, as I did briefly during question time today:

the ALP seeks primarily to bring the war to a conclusion. To do so, the ALP on achieving office will submit to our allies that they should immediately

- (a) cease bombing North Vietnam,
- (b) recognise the National Liberation Front as a principal party to negotiations,
- (c) transform operations in South Vietnam into holding operations thereby to avoid the involvement of civilians in the war, cease the use of napalm and other objectionable materials of war and provide sanctuary for anyone seeking it.

Should our allies fail to take this action, the Australian Government would then consider that it had no alternative other than to withdraw our armed forces.

No wonder the former Leader of the Opposition said that this was in essence what he put to the electors on the last occasion, but here it is put more strongly in the form of an ultimatum to the United States. Just as in the North West Cape matter the policy of the Labor Party was to serve up a set of conditions which it knew would be unacceptable to the United States, this is its policy again. Time will not permit me to



go at any great length into these particular matters, but let me, without speaking at too much length on the situation of Vietnam, remind the House of this.

The fighting primarily involves the Vietnamese, of course, but this is no civil war. In 1954 a fourteen-nation conference at Geneva agreed that newly independent Vietnam should be separated into two parts—North Vietnam for followers of Communist leaders and South Vietnam for those who wanted another way of life. Since then the two parts have gone their own ways—North Vietnam as a typical Communist dictatorship. The war against South Vietnam is directed from Hanoi. The National Liberation Front is a creature of Hanoi. After partition the Vietnamese were given an opportunity to move north or south, and so select the type of government they wanted. Less than 100,000 went north, to become subjects of the Hanoi Communist regime. Ten times as many—almost one million—fled from the Communist dictatorship to South Vietnam. Yet we are now told that this is a nationalist movement, that all we are doing is interfering with the normal nationalist processes inside this particular country.

Those who heard the honourable gentleman will recall that he made a great deal of the state of Congressional and Senate opinion in the United States. Again I can give some facts which I think will be rather more persuasive to this House. I suggest that it would be difficult to obtain more convincing evidence of Congressional support for the President's policies than the votes taken in March this year in both the Senate and the House of Representatives in Washington on the supplementary Bill on the military budget relating to the war in Vietnam. In the Senate the voting was 77 in favour of the Bill and 3 against. In the House of Representatives the voting was 385 in favour of the Bill and 11 against. We are parliamentarians. We know the significance of voting figures. When I am told that half the senators and a great proportion of the Representatives of the United States are against what the present administration is doing, I throw those figures in the teeth of the honourable gentleman. Unfortunately, in the United States as in this country, minorities can be very vocal and the mass of people can be much less

vocal if they are in support of the Government's policy. Some of those vocal minorities will form part of what I have to say now before I conclude.

Yesterday when we were dealing with a question in relation to the collection of funds for the Vietcong or the National Liberation Front I said that there was a species of psychological warfare being waged in this country, as indeed it is being waged in the United States, and that I thought we should be made much more publicly aware of this than we are at the present time. I want to give the House a few manifestations of this. I start with a reference to the Association for International Co-operation and Disarmament. I do not need to go into detail about this organisation. Our colleague who was then Attorney-General, the present Minister for Immigration (Mr Snedden), mentioned it in this House on 3rd September 1964. But it is rather interesting to recall that in March this year the executive of the New South Wales Branch of the ALP decided that:

ALP members can no longer associate with the AICD and directs all ALP members of this organisation to resign . . . .

But the Federal Executive of the ALP, chaired by Senator Keeffe, who, I understand, was unanimously re-elected recently President of the Party, ruled on 30th March 1967 in Canberra that the NSW Branch had exceeded its authority in proscribing the AICD. I understand that in July Senator Keeffe and the honourable member for Yarra (Dr J. F. Cairns) spoke at a protest meeting organised outside the United States Consulate in Melbourne under the auspices of this organisation, a meeting which has been described as an all night vigil. It was the Victorian arm of the AICD which sponsored this meeting.

The August mobilisation committee was set up by the Association's New South Wales' division to conduct the annual Hiroshima Day celebrations. The committee was obviously carefully selected to involve as many groups as it could in the Vietnam protest movement. It would appear to me that as a tactical move Communists were exclude from the committee but were active in organisational matters. August mobilisation includes certain members of the clergy, academic students, Youth women, professionals and trade unionists. A new feature

of the demonstration this year was a short religious service before the march.

There was an overseas speaker at this demonstration, a Dr Takman. Let us consider Dr Takman. He is the chief medical officer of the Child Welfare Board of Stockholm city. He is a member of the Swedish Communist Party and is currently on its central committee. In 1950 he was refused admittance to the United Kingdom to attend the Sheffield Peace Congress. Early this year he visited North Vietnam to gather medical evidence for use at the Russell tribunal which, as honourable members will be aware, sat in Stockholm in May. He has also attended various other Communist Party conferences and has participated in other activities concerned with Vietnam. Since September 1966 he has been a Communist Party member of the Stockholm City Council. These facts are all ascertainable. I am surprised that honourable gentlemen opposite have not asked me why we admitted him to this country. A business visa was issued to him on 3rd August. In his application he explained that the object of his visit was mainly scientific and that he was engaged in a social and medical study of Swedish gypsy minorities for Upsala University. He said that for this purpose he needed direct information about aboriginals and other minorities, particularly in Australia and Japan.

I referred a little earlier to a meeting at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne which was addressed by the honourable member for Yarra. The meeting was held after an Hiroshima Day march under the auspices of the same body. A number of organisations connected with the peace movement joined in the march and the subsequent meeting. A television programme showed the march. I did not see it but I have been informed—I think reliably—that the representatives of the Victorian Branch of the ALP carried a large banner and that several members of the Monash University Labor Club carried Vietcong flags. That was one occasion on which members of the ALP apparently were not too unhappy to associate with members of the Monash University Labor Club.

It may be felt that many people associated with the bodies to which I have

referred are well meaning people. I have no doubt that many of them are. I am sure that at least some of them have no knowledge of the use to which they are being put by background influences. In order to give the House an idea of the nature of the organisation to which I am referring, I have in my hand a quite scurrilous sheet issued—it is so endorsed—by the Queensland Peace Committee for International Co-operation and Disarmament, 608 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland. It is an attempt to poison the minds of Australian people in relation to the proposed visit by American servicemen to this country under the rest and recreation programme. As honourable members can see, it has on its cover a picture of a young lady partly clad. The text alongside the picture refers to the worry that Australians will have about their womenfolk on the arrival here of United States servicemen. On the other side of the sheet is what purports to be a genuine report but I question very much its authenticity because it bears no authentication, no date and no source reference. It purports to be an account of a rape committed on a twenty year old Vietnamese girl by four United States servicemen. This sheet has been circulated as poisonous literature by an organisation which has an aura of respectability and attracts to it the eminently worthy people to whom I have referred.

I place in a rather different category the activity here in Canberra today of the International Committee of Conscience on Vietnam. I make no allegation in relation to the background or the attitude of mind of the people associated with it. I have no doubt that they are well meaning people. I suppose that many members of this Parliament were given a copy of the little pamphlet that they were distributing. The emotional quality of the pamphlet I think can be illustrated by this quotation from it:

We, who in various ways have assumed the terrible responsibility of articulating the human conscience, must speak or, literally, we should expect the very stones to cry out.

I would like to say that there are people who have a conscience in relation to Vietnam; who have a conscience in relation to aggression, terrorism, oppression subversion and the other crimes that have been com-

mitted in the name of a national liberation front. By way of antidote I shall quote, with the full authority of the writer, a letter I have received from the Reverend Colin McLean.

**Mr James**—Why did the Prime Minister refuse to see the church leaders?

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The honourable member for Hunter will cease interjecting.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—I wrote very politely, I can assure the honourable gentleman, to the Reverend Alan Walker who had asked me to receive representatives of the organisation. I explained the reasons why I could not do so.

**Mr James**—Why did you refuse to see them?

**Mr SPEAKER**—Order! The honourable member for Hunter will restrain himself.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—I said in effect that I had carefully read their pamphlet and that it was evident to me that a very different interpretation was placed by the sponsors of the movement on events in Vietnam and the courses which should be followed in relation to them. I said that while I had studied their views it was quite impracticable for me, or for that matter, any senior Minister to see all the people who had views to express in relation to Vietnam. However, I paid them the courtesy of studying what they had to say and of writing to them.

**Mr James**—But you refused to see them?

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—Did the Leader of the Opposition see them?

**Mr James**—Yes.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—That would not surprise me. I wish now to quote from a letter I have received from the Reverend Colin McLean, who is the minister of the Hughesdale Congregational Church at Oakleigh in Victoria. He writes:

I write to disassociate myself from that vocal group of clergy who are opposed to your Government's policy in Vietnam.

Lately I received a letter from an 'International Committee of Conscience on Vietnam', inviting me to take part in a demonstration outside Parliament House on Thursday, 17th August. I deplore this demonstration.

The growing number of rallies and demonstrations of a semi religious nature, in our country, which play into the hands of International Communism is alarming and is not representative of the majority of Christian people.

The letter referred to 'an amazing consensus among Christian leadership around the world in opposition to the Vietnam war'. This simply is not true: many of us realise that if Godless Communism is not halted, the ensuing bloodshed and suffering in the world will be far greater than that being inflicted by our forces in Vietnam. We too, want peace, but only peace with honour and justice, and which guarantees the great freedoms and Christian heritage we enjoy.

You have our prayers and support.

I have quoted that letter to show that other views are held around this country than those to which we have had to listen.

**Mr James**—Did he sign the letter?

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—Yes, and the honourable member may read it if he wishes to do so. Not only did he sign it but he authorised me, when I asked if I might do so, to give it full publication. The final reference I make is to the document 'Ramparts', which no doubt has reached many honourable members. I will not discuss it in detail because its bona fides have been attacked, I think convincingly, by others.

**Mr James**—Is it a Communist paper?

**Mr SPEAKER**—I warn the honourable member for Hunter.

**Mr HAROLD HOLT**—It was released in thousands during the Corio by-election campaign by the Liberal Reform Group, so styled. I mention it, not in association with any other organisation, but as an illustration of the processes of psychological warfare which are designed to confuse and perplex the people of this country and to destroy support for the policies of the democratically elected Government of this country. Unlike the Labor Opposition, I am in the happy state of being able to stand here tonight knowing that there is not one member of the two Government Parties which provide a record majority behind me who does not support the Government in its policy on Vietnam. I feel it my duty in those circumstances to bring home to the Australian people that these processes which are poisoning the minds of the people and creating disquiet in their minds are processes which are designed to weaken Australian support for policies which the people at a democratic election have endorsed in their Government. I believe that we have heard the Leader of the Opposition today give expression to policies which I suspect are by no means entirely

tasteful to him, but which have merged from a conference which senior members of the Party have described either as an endorsement of what they presented at the last general election or as a move leftwards from where they were before. I say that

these things, too, can only confuse and perplex the Australian people, and it is a responsibility of the Australian community as a whole to have a clear and plain understanding of what is put to them by spokesmen of the Opposition.

