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AUSTRALIA CLUB SPEECH.

Describing the Summit meeting next week as "one of the great climactic events in the world", the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Robert Gordon Menzies, surveyed the Commonwealth in relation to the current international scene. Mr. Menzies was addressing members of the Australia Club at a dinner given in his honour at the Savoy Hotel on Monday, May 9, 1960. In the course of his speech, he said:-

"I would like to begin by saying that, as the Prime Minister of Australia, I "dip my lid" to Harold Macmillan, who, after all, began this pioneering and exploratory work. There were people who, when he went to Moscow, said - "Oh no, no, no, you mustn't do that kind of thing - there is no precedent for that. To hell -- I'm sorry -- to hell with those people. As a matter of fact, Harold Macmillan made the adventure - he opened up the door; he said "Well, I shall go", and as he said the other day to two or three of us - it has now become rather fashionable -- not fissionable, I don't want to open up any troubles in the Labour Party -- but fashionable for people to go around.

I think that that is a wonderful thing. Not because I am silly enough to believe that in one blow at the Summit all the great problems of the world can be resolved, but because I hope I am sensible enough to believe that when human beings can meet each other and sit down and talk and go to some trouble to understand each other, there you have the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, I am all for the Summit, and when I say I am all for the Summit -- I won't be there -- I mean I am all for the Summit meeting. Not because I believe that at the Summit meeting there will be 15 problems all neatly disposed of by the rules of Euclid - is Euclid still presentable? I don't know -- but because I believe that it is the first step that counts. And if, at this Summit meeting, one matter not yet determined is determined, then I think the whole world will say -- "Well, at least this is the beginning of the new age of common sense."

Who am I to say that the problem of Germany will be resolved, or the problem of Berlin; but nuclear tests -- why not? -- just on the edge of agreement. And suppose that were resolved, suppose you had one matter, two matters resolved; this would blow round the world like fresh air. People would say -- "Well, at any rate the great men of the great countries are hoping for settlement."

But the second thing that I want to say to you is this: We are -- and in this respect I want to say to the people of Great Britain what I would say to the people of Australia, because we are very much of a kind -- we are a little bit disposed to think that the burning question of the moment is the determining question of the future. But it isn't. To be rid of nuclear tests, to have some temporary agreement about Berlin, to lay a foundation for discussions about the future of Germany - these are very important things. But I happen to belong to the school of thought that says, or believes -- I am saying it now -- that armaments, the pressure of armaments, the whole terror of a world standing to arms; these things are not causes, they are results. And they are results of tension, hostility, bitterness, and therefore, we must go below the surface of the armament arguments and say -- "What is it that keeps the world standing at arms?" And when we put that question, we ought to think about the answer.

What are the causes of the world's unease?.....Let us go back 15 years to the end of the war and say to ourselves - "What has happened to bedevil the world, which was going to be a world of peace and co-existence and prosperity in which we would all devote our talents and resources to the greatest thing in life, which is to make ordinary men and women happier and more peaceful and give their children a more lovely future?"

What has happened? Because the things that have happened are the causes of offence in the world today. We needn't too much concentrate on the results. Let us go back to the causes. And here we have the causes - the Soviet Union spreading round Middle Europe. Look at Poland and East Germany and Czechoslovakia and Roumania. Gentlemen, we are too easily persuaded to forget about these things. These countries were among the great homes of freedom in the world; marvellous countries with great men, great democracies, great hopes for the future; the homes of scholarship and tradition and freedom. And they have now become -- let's face it -- colonies, colonies of the one great colonial power left in the world.

I don't myself believe that you can pacify the world if, at the very moment at which the British colonies -- look around the world; I have been sitting with them at No. 10 -- if at the very moment when the British colonies have been marching to freedom and independence and self-government and membership of the Commonwealth, we shut our eyes to the fact that there are more ancient democracies, more ancient politically speaking, more ancient countries lying athwart Europe who are the colonies of the new imperialism. These are tremendous things - they are terrible things. I think that we all ought to know before we persuade ourselves that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds, that there is no longer a propaganda instrument which is designed to reduce to slavery our people in Australia - people all around the world.

This is not to mean that we deny other people their rights, but it is to mean this - that we would be perfect fools if we believed that by settling one point here or there we would remove the causes of these grievous discontents of the world. In short, we must never lose our courage. We must stand for those things that relate to human beings in which we believe and for which we will live and die. This is of the vastest importance, but we must at the same time be prepared to make a beginning.

All I have been saying to you is that I think that the Summit meeting is to be looked at as the promising beginning, but not as a definite end. You may all perhaps, be disposed to agree with that. There are certain things in the world; there are great symptoms, great results, there are deep-lying causes, but before you can begin to discuss the causes, before you can begin to get down to discuss with these great nations in the world those basic matters which produce the differences, it is essential to remove those more superficial matters which prevent you, so popular are they, from getting at the causes.

Now that is one thing that I really want to say to you. We are a little bedevilled in the world by popular campaigns, by newspaper campaigns, by looking at the "hot news" circumstance of the moment so that we don't talk about political philosophies in South Africa, we talk about Sharpeville. This is more attractive; this is more newsworthy. We don't talk about the great causes of difference between the Soviet world or the Chinese world and our own free world, but we talk about nuclear tests, nuclear weapons.

Now all these things are vastly important, but I do beg of all of you not to suppose that by dealing with one of these - the resultant factors - you have got at the root cause of the trouble. There will be no peace in the world, no peace whatever in the world, until we have all got to understand that no country is to be overthrown by propaganda, by subversion; that every country has the right to run its own life in its own way.

Whether it is our way or not doesn't matter so much - some of us think so occasionally, but it doesn't. Every country must run its life in its own way. It must get up in the morning and go to bed at night feeling that it isn't being pressed and hammered by the propaganda of some other nation or some other body of Government. This is tremendously important. The one thing that so many people don't understand is that if a man wants to loaf he ought to be allowed to loaf. That if a man wants to think in a funny, silly way, he ought to be allowed to think in a funny, silly way. It is only when we become so virtuous that we want to tell people how they ought to think, how they ought to live, what they ought to do, that we become involved in this deplorable mischief which bedevils the world.

Now here we are all tonight - we are all British people and thank God we understand something about liberty and we have never supposed that liberty is a freedom to do what somebody else tells you. Do let us understand that liberty is liberty.....these things are vastly important, and when our distinguished representative goes to the Summit don't let us be like people standing around saying we asked for a miracle. There are no miracles to be got nowadays. As a matter of fact, Krushchev is the best public relations man in the world. He changes his tactics every day and conceals the fact that his strategy remains identical with what went before.

But so many people can be deceived by this kind of thing. Don't let us be deceived - this is the Australia Club, but we are all British, we are all of the same strains of blood - not devoted to reasoning out very closely what we have in our minds, but with a deep instinct down in our guts as to what is right. Don't let us be led away from it. Don't let us be beguiled by transient events. Let us always come back to the basic truth that there are certain great things about the world that we have understood - that we have practised as nobody else in the history of man has practised.

I have been sitting at No. 10 with people who couldn't have been there unless we had these beliefs and practices. When we talk about that let us think about it without apology and say - "We are not being led off by false gods". We know what are the basic things that make for the peace and content of mankind and not for the first time in our history we will stand to them and battle for them."

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