

PRESS CONFERENCE

SAVOY HOTEL

18TH MAY, 1960

THE SUMMIT

Asked about his reactions to the news from Paris, Mr. Menzies said:

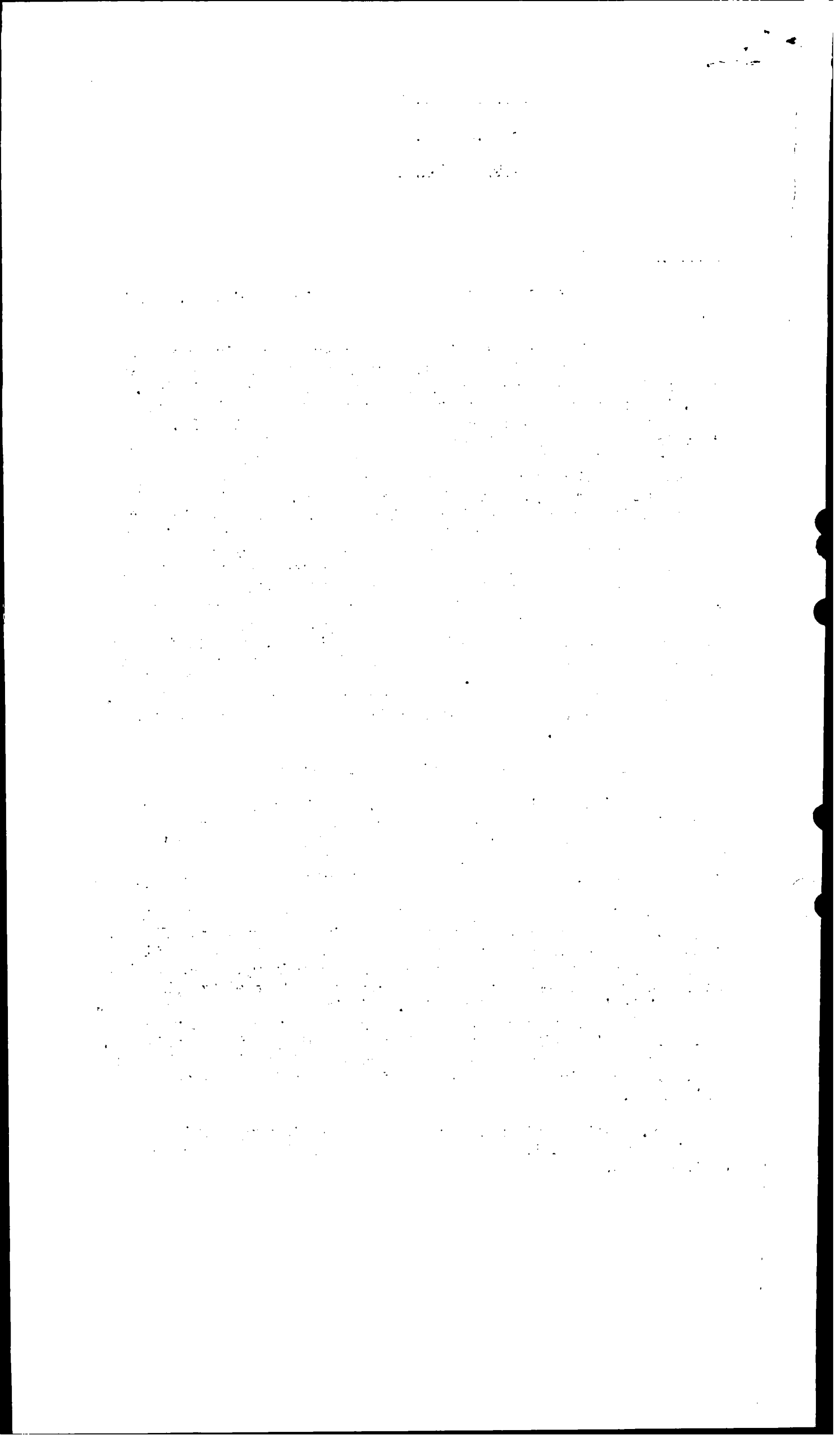
"Well, I suppose I'm like all the rest of us - it makes one feel very anxious but my first reaction to what appears on the surface of the problem so far is that it is an unparalleled piece of humbug. I mean, the greatest experts in spying in recent times asking another Power to apologise humbly seems to me to be almost unbelievable. In fact it is so absurd it can't really be the whole root of the matter. From the time this incident occurred about this aircraft the one thing that stuck in my mind is that it was near enough to a thousand miles inside Russian territory, if that's the right word. That alone of course wouldn't be very comforting to Khrushchev, because if aircraft can travel as far as that at great heights undetected, quite obviously the capacity of the Western Powers to deliver the nuclear weapon is greater than perhaps the Soviet leaders have permitted their people to believe. That will explain the real anger on his part. If there is no such explanation then it is simulated anger and I would think it is a pretty poor thing when the people of the world, who have a vested interest in peace, or a contingent interest let's say, or a great belief in it, or a wonderful desire for it, should find these negotiations just set aside for propaganda points. That I think would be unpardonable and I believe that the uncommitted portions of the world would think so. On the whole therefore I think that Khrushchev has done more harm than good to his own cause".

Asked about future prospects Mr. Menzies went on:

"Oh well, that's anybody's guess. You're thinking in terms of a Treaty with East Germany, pressure on Berlin. You see, for all we know they will meet this afternoon. How do we know? Khrushchev's nothing if he is not spectacular. I think he is the best propaganda expert in the world. He has made a slip this time, if it is propaganda".

Questioned about the possibility of pressures within Russia itself, Mr. Menzies indicated that one knows little about that. It was, however, quite conceivable that there may have been unpleasant reactions to the journey of a thousand miles over Russian territory. Mr. Menzies also referred to - "some symptoms of the rise of what we might call the new Bourgeoisie inside the Soviet Union. It is bound to happen when some people are paid a great deal more than others and live rather better than others. You can't abolish these distinctions just by act of Parliament. I think there are a few symptoms of some growth of that kind but how far it goes, how far it is vocal and how far it can exercise pressure I wouldn't know".

Mr. Menzies further said that Khrushchev is very flexible about his tactics but they don't affect the direction of the battle or the objectives of it.



Asked about the suggestion in the United States that the plane was delivered to him and not shot down, Mr. Menzies replied:

"In these fields I am the least expert of people and I have had no expert advice. But as a layman like most of us here I find it a little difficult to believe that if you shot a plane down at that enormous height by some rocket device there would be time for the pilot to bale out or that you would collect so neatly coins, wedding rings, which in the event of something of that kind must have been scattered over many square miles. Therefore, one is permitted to be skeptical and to think that the plane perhaps for other reasons had to come down and that the pilot baled out".

Asked about his own hopes from the Summit, Mr. Menzies said:

"I had hopes that some result would come out not on a wide field but for example there were two things -

- (a) the suspension of nuclear tests. They got so close to each other at Geneva on this matter that I had hopes that the four leaders sitting down together or at any rate three of them, I am omitting De Gaulle for this purpose because he might not be involved in it, I thought that leaders might be able to settle that matter by giving a broad direction to the Geneva negotiators which would produce a moratorium right down the scale; and
- (b) not to settle the Berlin question (which is still bedevilled by all sorts of juristic and military considerations) but that they might have got some standstill arrangement in relation to Berlin for a period of time even though it might not be a long period. If we could have got one of those or both of those out of the Summit Meeting it would have loosened things up and given people a good deal of hope for the future".

#### WOOMERA

In reply to a question on the future of Woomera, Mr. Menzies said:

"Woomera won't of course by any means disappear, but whether it will maintain its full range of activities I would think would depend upon the study that is being made here now on its possible use for space research. I think there is a good deal of feeling that in this space research business the United Kingdom ought to have a hand. If the result is that we are going to have space research, then the overall effect of the abandonment of Blue Streak as a weapon would be comparatively small. But I think it all has to be understood that their judgement as to whether Blue Streak should be continued must be paramount. They are the people who are in the immediate firing line. They are the people who under the present arrangements possess some share of the deterrent and it is their military advice which must be of paramount importance in determining whether you are going to have a vehicle of this kind sent from a fixed place. Sir Charles Lamb came out to Australia and he discussed this with me and with three or four Ministers directly concerned, including the Minister for Defence. We were by no means disposed to disagree with the views that they were taking".

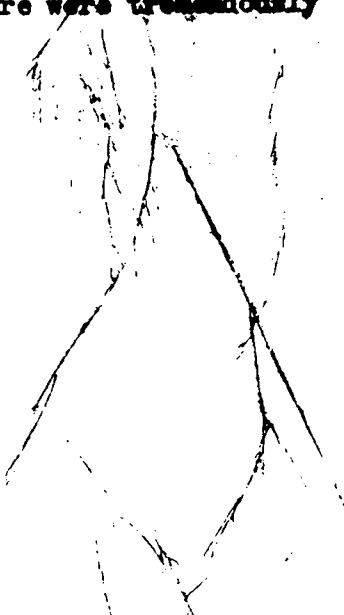
SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Menzies was asked - "Now that you have had an opportunity to get a true picture of the situation in South Africa from Mr. Louw, will you say what the Australian Government's attitude is to South Africa's racial policy".

He replied:

"I don't know that I will. I mean, whenever I say something like that it is suggested in some quarters that we are approving of their racial policy. That is not the position at all. What we have done is to adopt what the Conference in London agreed was the correct attitude. We do not interfere in the domestic policies or affairs of another member of the Commonwealth. The whole Conference here agreed with that. I don't know whether we have the complete picture yet because several of us had private talks, I suppose all of us one way or another with Mr. Louw, he has very strong views, but in the course of these private talks at least five of us of the group to which I was attached (and that includes one African and two Asian Prime Ministers) put to Mr. Louw after a good deal of to and fro and explanations by him, certain ideas which we thought would soften the asperities of this policy and perhaps make it a good deal more workable, practicable, reasonable, whatever word you care to use, and he told us that he would convey those notions to the Prime Minister. He was in a difficult position because he was representing his Prime Minister; he just couldn't speak with much authority as if he was Prime Minister. I must say that all these suggestions were made in the moderate and good tempered way. I was greatly impressed by the fact that those three colleagues (Mcrumah and Tanku) didn't seem to be making hysterical extravagant remarks or proposals at all. On the contrary they recognised the difficulty that presented the South African Government, the difficulty which so many people don't appear to realise - because they have a great difficulty - one that I am very glad we don't have to deal with in Australia. It is easy to be theoretical about what you would do if you had a multi-racial society. We don't have the problem to cope with and under those circumstances I feel that their recognition of the fact that there was that problem and that you couldn't do things in a hurry was very good.

"I didn't hear an ill-tempered remark made on the matter. In point of fact the Conference itself realised what a number of people outside do not realise, that the argument was not all Sharpeville. Sharpeville was not discussed in the Prime Minister's Conference as an incident. What was discussed was the policy, to the extent that it was not discussed in formal meeting, but what we were talking about in private meeting was the policy of Apartheid and its political, social, industrial manifestations. Of course, the incident of Sharpeville brought it into the picture because it is not to be forgotten that this policy didn't start yesterday - it is 15 or 20 years old, and as a matter of fact Louw claimed, and I think he is right, it was first stated by Smuts himself, though Smuts himself, of course, had ideas of method and degree and temper which were not necessarily those of his successors. But it has not been brought up before at the Prime Minister's Conference, but was this time, no doubt because of the world wide reaction to the to the Sharpeville incident and the undoubted fact that in all the countries of the Commonwealth outside South Africa there were tremendously strong feelings.



"I agree with the Tunku, (what the Tunku is supposed to have said) that the knowledge gained by Leuw here of the depth of feeling, none the less deep because it has been moderately expressed, must have some effect on his mind. It may very well have an effect on the mind of his Prime Minister". Mr. Menzies continued:

"I said my piece on these matters in May private talks and I think it would be very unwise of me to be reproducing publicly what the private talks that couldn't have been held under other countries".

#### AID TO AFRICA

Asked about a "Colombo plan for African countries" discussed at the Conference, Mr. Menzies said:

"I think there is reference to that in the communique but what happened in effect was this. It was raised when we were having a general discussion on regional economic problems, and the U.K. mentioned this in relation to the Colombo plan. I said that the problem of the development of Africa was tremendously important, that we had in the past, I thought, under-estimated it. Now there are 200 million people in Africa. The movement towards independence is rapid and accelerating. The fact is it is going fast. We will have a position in which politically independent communities will be in many cases economically dependent, which is an unhappy state of affairs and could easily lead to social disorders and propaganda results of a very unhappy kind and under these circumstances I believe that we have to take into immediate study the possibilities of deciding a comprehensive plan of some kind for Africa, not necessarily along exactly the same lines as the Colombo plan but one worked out.

"Nobody is agreed in principle to this thing yet but we are all attracted to the idea. When I get back home I will have my people work on these, and in fact one of the official committees already existing is going to have a look into this to examine its practicability and what sort of scheme could be worked out of a practical kind".