

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.
R.G. MENZIES, C.H. , Q.C., M.P. AT THE
STATE LIBERAL CONFERENCE, HOBART, 15TH JULY, 1960

Mr. President and ladies and gentlemen:

I think I will follow my usual prudent course and declare the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the State Council Open. I was told to do it at the finish, but I know if I don't do it now I may forget to do it later on.

I was very very interested to find that Mr. Pitchford's mind was running back over a long period now since this Party began, and as that rather relates to my theme this morning, I will make a further reference to it myself.

Back in 1943 our predecessor parties had the biggest defeat, I think, in their political history. In 1944 I had become, once more, Leader of the Party and Leader of the Opposition and I determined that there must be a tremendous effort made to produce something new and vigorous and united. Many of you may have forgotten that at that time in 1944, one could find in Australia no less than fourteen different organisations, all of them professing, more or less, our own point of view - fourteen different bodies. Disunity of that kind was one of the reasons for our defeat. And the unity that was produced by the work of 1944 and 1945 in welding all these bodies into one and creating the Liberal Party is one of the great factors that has kept us in office in the Commonwealth for the last ten or eleven years. It is worthwhile recalling that in disunity we found our greatest disaster; and in unity we found our greatest and most continuous success. The history of politics is full of that.

I can remember and no doubt many of you can, in 1929 - I wasn't in the Federal Parliament, that had nothing to do with it - the Bruce Government went down to the greatest defeat that it could have encountered. It was forced into an election twelve months after the election of 1928, which it had won, and it was forced into an election by disunity in its own ranks. And Labour came in at the end of 1929 with a majority that induced the usual faint-hearted among us to say: "Oh, they'll be there for ten years". It is wonderful how quickly some people abandon all hope. They were going to be there for ten years. And inside 18 months they had fallen to pieces. They had encountered difficulties of policy and of character in their own ranks, and in the result they fell to pieces and by the end of 1931, they were gone. The Lyons' Government came in and we had from the beginning of 1932 to the beginning, or the middle, of 1941, an unbroken period of Government by people of our side of politics.

Do you see how it works out? Every time there is disunity, disaster may be looked for. Every time there is unity victory is three parts achieved.

I had, I think, some illustration of the value of this kind of thing this year in London. We had a Prime Ministers' Conference. The Conference met under very, very difficult circumstances. There had been an incident at Sharpeville in South Africa and all round the world there were denunciations of the South African racial policy - not that that policy was a policy of shooting people, but the policy of apartheid, the policy of separate development of the black and the white races. And this was under tremendous attack. Fortunately the matter came up for the first time in any wide discussion at the Prime Ministers' Conference.

And there we were - quite different people: Mr. Macmillan as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Diefen-

baker from Canada, Mr. Nash from New Zealand, Tunku Abdul Rahman from Malaya, President Ayub from Pakistan, a representative of Ceylon and the Prime Minister of Ghana, Dr. Nkrumah. Well, we are all different people. And, particularly in the case of some of our colleagues from Asia and Africa, feelings were very, very high and they had stated their views and offered them with considerable force in their own countries. In the result we sat down together: there is a strange, illusive unity about the British Commonwealth. If you look at it as a matter of paper you say, "Well, what is it?" I have encountered people who say it doesn't exist. What is the relation between these countries? There are republics; and there are monarchies, like Australia. What does hold these people together? What is it that induces a country like Ghana, when it gets independent self-government, to apply at once that it may be a member of the Commonwealth? And what induces it, when it votes to become a republic, to apply at once, as it did, for approval to remain in the Commonwealth as a republic? Why is it that this happens? And the answer is that we meet. We are not like any other body on earth. We have no slight resemblance to the Security Council of the United Nations or the General Assembly. We are not meeting on the stage of the theatre; we are not conducting public debates; we are not taking votes; we don't have people running around the lobbies trying to persuade somebody else to support this amendment if I support yours. All this kind of thing which is inseparable from great assemblies doesn't exist when we enter No. 10 Downing Street.

And down upon us in that room - I know because I have had a long experience of it, longer now than anybody else - down upon us there settles a particular sense of intimacy, a particular sense of friendly understanding, a particular realisation that if we can remain a united body for the things that we believe in, a great good will come to the world. And there we were, sitting around the table, sitting in various rooms, talking as occasion offered with the representative of South Africa, the South African problem: courteously, quietly, no passions displayed, an earnest desire to get to understand and to make sensible suggestions. And in the result, after 10 days of that conference, we were able to issue a communique which referred to the problem of South Africa, referred to the existence of a multi-racial society in the Commonwealth, and which was the unanimous product of all those present - including South Africa.

You see the point that I am getting at? There are plenty of debating societies in the world - I take a hand in one at Canberra from time to time, myself, (Laughter) in a small way. But the Prime Ministers' Conference is one of the great proofs that people who disagree, perhaps profoundly, on a number of matters, can find a great sense of unity about the important things about which, underneath it all, they find themselves agreeing.

Now, Sir, we can carry that further on to the world stage. The world is going through a pretty bad period, a very worrying period. Khrushchev has two things, perhaps, in his favour: one is that he knows his own mind and he is the master of his own time table, just as Hitler was. The other is that he is acting, so to speak, on internal lines of communication: he's got this great country behind him, an enormous aggregation of people behind him, whether willingly or otherwise, and he can press out, probe out on to the rest of the world at his own choice. While the free world, being the free world, will argue, one country with the other, conduct all the disputes in public, have all the differences magnified in the headlines though they may be quite trivial. Superficially it is an example of unity versus a certain amount of disunity.

When the disunity becomes too prevalent, the Cold War by the Soviet Union succeeds. When the great nations of the West really get together and begin to act and think together, then the Cold War begins to fail. But the Cold War has had a considerable amount of success of late.

I was in London, of course, at the time when the Summit Conference occurred, or didn't occur as the case may be. And when Mr. Macmillan came back from Paris I had a long private discussion with him about it in order to get some of the background of it. He was, of course, bitterly disappointed. No man had done so much as he had to bring it about. He had with a bold stroke of moral leadership, as I will always regard it, gone to Moscow himself, urged the holding of a Meeting at the Summit, and had finally persuaded President Eisenhower and General De Gaulle that it ought to occur. And so, everything was set for it. Khrushchev had himself proposed it, do you remember, at least a year before.

Well, what were we all expecting? It know that it is a very human frailty always to expect too much and I daresay there might have been some who expected that out of the Summit we would get an era of peace. Well that was never quite, I think, on the board.

But there were two things that I, for one, had hopes about. One was that they might have agreed to some sort of a moratorium about Berlin. This wretched nagging problem of Berlin which bordered very close to armed conflict only a few years back, until the whole thing was broken by the famous airlift to Berlin, this nagging problem which goes on and on with threats on the Eastern side, threats of separate treaties with East Germany and of closing Berlin out to the Western world and to Western influence. And so most of us had hoped that when four men of responsible posts got together they would have said: "Well there is plenty of time to settle all these allegedly legal arguments about Berlin; let's have a moratorium on that".

And in the second place that we might have seen some answer to the problem of nuclear tests. Because at Geneva they had been discussing with each other for a long time the problem of suspending nuclear tests on both sides, with an adequate system of inspection. They had got so close together that I thought myself that all it needed was a good nudge by the four people meeting together at the Summit, to close the gap and bring about at least that measure of relief from tension.

And so it was a tragedy for the world, a tragedy for ordinary men and women all over the world, people who have a vested interest in being kept out of the horrors of another war. It was a tragedy that this one man, on the feeblest excuse in the world, should have wiped the Summit Meeting out before it began.

We must beware of the propagandists, because the propagandists, the Communist propagandists, would have you believe that the reason why he did that was the Americans had had a plane over Russia taking photographs.

Well I'm bound to say two things, ladies and gentlemen: one is: it may have been very unwise to have a plane at that time, but at some time or another, I think a very good idea. Let us just reason together a little about this matter, this famous U2. Did he complain about the U2 because he was shocked at the idea that somebody was spying on his country? - a strange kind of shock for a Communist to suffer from, the strangest in the world. Of course he wasn't. He regarded it in the first place as rather a nice trick that he had taken. This plane had come down, or had been brought down, he had the pilot, and I can

almost imagine him saying, "Ah, I've taken the first trick in this game; now I'll have them in trouble". But all in a sense good clean fun, you know. (Laughter) Until, of course, he suddenly realised, and so did the famous Marshal Malenovsky, that this plane was 1,000 miles inside the Russian frontier - a thousand miles. And that as it could be guessed pretty safely it was by no means the first, but it was the first to be detected and brought down, this was a little embarrassing: this meant that without intercontinental ballistic missiles - these wretched things that some day, let's say, will be capable of being popped up and dropped on to the precise spot in another continent - even in the absence of those, quite clearly, aircraft, flying at a suitable height, could deliver nuclear weapons deep into the Soviet Union. In other words, the nuclear deterrent was disclosed in one flash as being immeasurably more powerful than Khrushchev had ever been prepared to admit. And all his protestations to his own people that the counter-attack was an absurdity, just fell to the ground. And that, I am sure, with suitable complaints in his headquarters, induced in him this fit of rage which may have begun by being synthetic but ended up by being very real, in which he just blew the whole thing out.

Well I don't suppose that that is the end of it, because you remember that very shortly afterwards he said that we might perhaps have a Summit in another six or seven months' time, meaning by that after the American Presidential election. And I don't myself despair of that being the case: I think that very well might turn out to be the case.

I don't quite know what the famous Khrushchev has in his mind on that point because that was, I thought, just about as good an indication as anything could be, that he would wait until he could deal with a Democratic President. And if I had been a Democrat in the United States of America I would have thought that was very dubious assistance to have my Party told that it would be more likely to be agreeable to Mr. Khrushchev than the Republican Party. I don't think for one moment that that is true, but they have strange ideas in their minds occasionally about the Western psychology. I hope, and believe, that after the Presidential election he will get an unpleasant surprise - whichever candidate wins.

Now, Sir, the other thing that I want to mention to you is this - I was talking about this Cold War. We have seen two things of dramatic importance in the Middle East and in the West in our recent lives: the first of them was Suez, where, in the result Colonel Nasser got away with it, had a great success, developed immense prestige in the Middle East, with the result that the Middle East has been in this place and that in a state of foment ever since. And the second one is the incidents in Cuba.

You know we have fed so well on sensations in our lifetimes, in this century of sensations, that we have almost lost our capacity for surprise - everything just seems to be another incident, and what of it.

But this performance by Fidel Castro in Cuba is on all fours with the performances of Nasser. And as you haven't failed to observe, not only has he been treating the United States, his near neighbour, with open contempt, but he has been getting away with it, getting away with their investments, getting away with their money, getting away with their interests, calling in aid, the Soviet Union, getting large and positive help from Khrushchev, doing all that he can to convert Cuba into a Soviet base right off the shores of the United States. That to me is one of the great crucial things that has happened of late. It indicates something that you and I have to give a lot of thought to. What it illustrates is that small

countries today are not unwilling to treat with contumely the large powers of the world. They will turn to them for protection; but they will use their own voice, and the voice of an aggregation of other small countries, to defeat and humiliate them if they can.

I hope that the United States of America, with its passionate belief in the United Nations, as the saviour, won't be too disillusioned if Castro rallies in the United Nations a few score of countries, small in themselves, all willing to "have a go" at the big fellow.

This is a very disturbing state of affairs and it will require two things: it will require immense strength and readiness and determination in the great powers - in the United States of America, in the United Kingdom, in France, which is recovering rapidly - in modern terms - great strength and determination on their part, great unity between them so that they are not divided and conquered. And for us, who are of the free world, it reminds that we should be increasingly conscious of what is going on outside, of our duty to our friends, of our readiness ourselves to play our part in the affairs of the free world, and in our capacity, because of character and determination, to earn the respect and friendship of these great countries upon whom the security of the world depends.

These are vitally important considerations. I know that there are some people who say: "Oh, what has that got to do with Australia?" Some fellow, the other day in Melbourne, I noticed, talked about Foreign Affairs, "What has that got to do with Australia?". Well if that state of mind prevailed in this country we would be finished. We are an adult nation. We are ten million people - it's quite true - but believe me, we are listened to in the rest of the world - in a Prime Ministers' Conference, in a meeting of the South-East Asian Treaty, in a meeting of ANZUS with the United States of America. In all these things - in Whitehall and in Washington - Australia is listened to and, I'm proud to say, listened to with sympathy and respect. (Applause). We are not to underestimate ourselves.

And because of that I believe we must look forward to a period in front of us when Australia will increasingly become known as a country with international outlook and international ideas.

These very matters that I have mentioned - and these are only a few out of many - are the best proof that these matters on the world stage are immeasurably more important than any of the things that we argue about of a domestic kind inside our own country. And they have a great habit of coming home. Twice in this century they have come home. Does anybody suppose that if the world fell into nuclear war or indeed a global war of any kind, we would be innocent bystanders? Not at all. And the contribution that a country can make to the solution of the world's problems is not measured by the population of the country. There are some very large countries in the world that have contributed mighty little to the solving of the world's problems - one or two of them not far away from us, like Communist China. And yet on the other hand there are smaller countries which make a contribution. I venture to say that under Mr. Harold Macmillan, Great Britain is more and more restoring herself to a position of intellectual and moral leadership in the world. (Applause)

Now, Sir, Cuba may seem a long way away. That phrase reminds me, if I may interrupt myself, that back in 1935 I think it was, I had a conversation with President Roosevelt in Washington at the Whitehouse and I asked him a highly hypothetical question about what the attitude of America would be if Australia

got into any kind of trouble. And with that characteristic smile of his, he said: "Well you know what my mind is on that, but what my people would say I wouldn't know. You know they might say: 'It's a long ways away'." I couldn't object to that, because that's just what we say, isn't it, about some of the events of the world.

Today that attitude has entirely disappeared. One never meets an American who doesn't know about Australia and Australians, and very seldom does one meet one who hasn't either himself or by a brother, or a cousin, or an uncle, been in Australia either during the war or after it. And therefore we are on close easy friendly terms with them.

But, despite all that, you may say: "Well Cuba is a long way from us". But Communist China isn't. If we look up north: Indonesia is not far from us; Singapore is not far from us. I only realised the other day how short a distance it is to Singapore, because if you leave Darwin by plane today you are in Singapore in about three hours' time. North of Singapore, you have Malaya and you have Thailand; you have South Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia and all around them on the top and at the sides you have the Communist forces - whether they are the forces of North Viet Nam, or the forces of Continental China itself.

And there is in all these places a constant pressure. Communist China, they estimate, will have by the turn of the century a thousand million people. And they won't be untrained or ill-informed. That is a long way off - it's forty years hence - and in 40 years enormous strides can be made in industrial development, in the organisation of military activities - enormous strides. A thousand million people.

My friend, Mr. Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, ought to be the last man to be under attack by Chou En-lai, of China, because sometimes, at the risk of unpopularity with some of us, he has sought to explain their point of view, has maintained diplomatic relations with them - he is no Communist himself, of course - but he has always tried to act as a sort of moderating and interpreting element between Communist China and the rest of the free world. And for his reward he finds that Tibet is dealt with by Communist China in a most violent fashion, refugees are streaming over the frontier and the frontiers of India have been violated and are at this moment, violated by Communist China. A pretty poor reward for honourable conduct. And the result of it, of course, is that India, now, is in a state of mind of feeling apprehensive about the thrust of these arrogant people.

We have the South East Asia Treaty Organisation. It was my own Government that played a leading hand in organising it. We have the ANZUS pact with the United States and New Zealand of which we were certainly the promoters. These are of great potential value. In the South East Asian Treaty we have Pakistan, and we have two or three of the Asian countries plus Great Britain and France, and the United States and New Zealand and ourselves. And there we are. We had a meeting in Washington. There is, I think, a growing sense of community. But there again I had occasion to point out that all the organisational arrangements, all the military planning in the world, wouldn't make our Organisation effective if there were internal disputes inside our own frontiers, so to speak.

And to take an example: Cambodia, which is one of the protected countries under this Treaty, has a quarrel with Thailand and it gets very heated. It is over something that I would have regarded as quite trivial, but it goes on. Then another country has another argument with somebody over a couple

of islands of no great intrinsic value except as a matter of prestige. And, as I pointed out to them, unless you can settle these irritating points of difference, you will find that the Communists are not fools - they love to intervene where there are private disputes, they like to exaggerate them, they like to fish in troubled waters. And so long as they can fish in troubled waters - our side of their frontier - then we are weakening our own position and exposing ourselves to great risk.

Well I hope that those things will be solved because - and here again is my point - it is only by the utmost unity, not only by treaty, but by the spirit between the nations in the South East Asian Treaty Organisation, that we have any chance of ultimate salvation. Unity, unity, unity must be the thing to be achieved all over the free world, whether it is in our own Party or in our own nation or in the international field. Disunity means disaster.

Our opponents, to go down to the political field, in Canberra have an expert knowledge of that truth.

Now, Sir, I have spoken a long time about those matters, but I have spoken about them because I believe that we are going through a tough, rough, international period. That doesn't mean that I believe that Khrushchev wants to start a war. As always, he will go as far as he can, as boldly as he can, as bullishly as he can, up to the point at which he sees a strong prospect that this will be resisted by force. And in the meantime they go on, probing here, probing there - sometimes it is a relatively small matter; sometimes it is a relatively great matter. But every time there is a probe of that kind - and it succeeds, and we simply fall back on vague generalisations and arguments with each other - every time that happens another step has been taken in the march of Communism in the world - a march which, of course, is welcomed by the Communist Fifth Columnists inside Australia; and apparently not entirely disfavoured by those who are willing to ally themselves with them, but a march of the greatest gravity for all of us.

I would just like to add to that that there is going to be a Presidential election in America; there is going to be an election in Ceylon shortly: "What though the tropic breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle". Some of us have been there - a lovely place, marvellous place, happy people. They have two Communist Parties in their Parliament and those Parties, in this election, are active and make no secret of the fact that if they can secure an alliance - what you might call a unity ticket - with one of the major opposition parties, then they will be inside that Party if it wins and they will ultimately get command of it. I am most unhappy - and you would be too - at the very thought that it might be possible for Ceylon to come under Communist influence.

But it is not the only place. Before I finish, let me say this to you: people have talked so much about South Africa that they have, perhaps, forgotten that that is only a small portion of Africa. There are 200 million people in Africa and all moving with tremendous speed towards self-government. People have a great itch for political self-government - it is understandable. Very few of them worry about economic self-government. It is rather, to people like ourselves, - a little astonishing to find that there is no recognition that there is a distinction between political independence and economic dependence on the rest of the world. But there it is. And it has this effect: political independence they are going to have, willy-nilly. Sometimes, as in the case of Ghana, with great goodwill; as in the case of Nigeria very soon, with great goodwill; sometimes, as in the case of the Congo, with the absolute certainty, as most of us believed, of riot and bloodshed which is now going on because circumstances were

different. Great Britain is the one power, in my opinion, in the world that understands or has understood the colonial problem, and how to bring people up to a stage of governing themselves.

But there is one remarkable truth, greatly forgotten I fear, and that is that if these nations in Africa achieve their political independence at a time when they are not economically capable of survival, and therefore need great help, economically, they will either get it from the free world or they will get it from the Soviet Union. And if they get it from the Soviet Union, which is busy today examining Africa, then before long they will find that they have fallen into the hands of the Soviet Union, that they are mere catspaws for the Soviet Union. And therefore, from that point of view, there is an enormous task in front of the Western world not to diminish its help to other countries, but to increase its help to other countries. Unless we of the Western world, we in our small way and other great countries in their large way, face up to the duty of doing something about these emergent African States we may wake up, or our children may wake up some day, to find that there is a great Communist Continent. That would be, I think, more than Australia could survive.

There is another aspect of it and it is a very humane one, and as we are a humane Party with, I am happy to say, a magnificent record of humanity in legislation and provision, we might think about it. One of the ironies of the world is that the highly developed industrial countries are developing more and more rapidly every year, as technology, technical skills, scientific efforts and the progress of an industrial country improves. It is remarkable. But in these under-developed countries, like these emergent nations in Africa and in Asia, progress is nothing like so fast - it can't be: they do not have the technical resources; they do not have the technicians. And therefore their rate of progress is slow, while our rate of progress is rapid. And that means - and this is a simple truth, easily to be overlooked - that the gap between their standards of living and ours, instead of diminishing, is increasing. Now that, I think, is something which must make us all furiously think that in spite of what goes on, the gap increases. And as the gap increases, so will the inevitable resentment and frustration of these people grow more and more strong. And in that atmosphere, the Communists, the overthrowers, have a great opportunity. And therefore so far as all the free world is concerned, it will have to divert more and more time, and thought, and money and sacrifice to helping other human beings in the world to raise their standards of living, to get into that condition of life in which Communism will not interest them, will have no appeal to them and in which by their very realisation that there has been a warm and friendly atmosphere in the world, they may themselves powerfully contribute to the peace of mankind.
