

STATEMENT AT S.E.A.T.O.

The following is a summary of a statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, at the opening public session of S.E.A.T.O. Council on March 27th -

SEATO is meeting at a very important time in the world's history. For some time global war has been restrained by the balancing of military power and feeling has grown that a great war is improbable, except through an act of lunacy or error of judgment. But absence of major war does not reflect a Communist change of heart. They are deterred from major war by what the free world possesses. They are more likely to move in other channels.

Peaceful co-existence is a rather agreeable expression if your neighbour understands it as you do. Apparently Chinese Communist conception of the term involves retention of the faculty of physical aggression to enforce their political aims. Whether that is so or not, it is still true that the absence of major war may increase the risk of minor conflicts. It certainly increases risks of internal subversion, infiltration and overthrowing of Governments and institutions. The danger is even greater now than a few years ago.

It is a very good thing that in relation to South East Asia all of us meeting today, determined to resist Communism, should have the opportunity of putting our heads together and considering how we are to meet those threats, not merely on the great and spectacular scale, but in relation to these new methods and these new risks.

The following is verbatim:

Mr. Menzies said: "Of course, that is not the only thing. Communism is to be resisted not only by force of arms, though we must not shrink from that. It is also to be resisted by the developed character of people, by the building up of their own genuine belief in their own freedom, by the improvement in their own economy. It is to be resisted, as I said last year at a Council Meeting in Washington, by developing a sense of community which will translate the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation into a genuine community of self-interest, of self-reliance, and of mutual trust.

We meet here not only as countries that have signed a Treaty with each other. I believe that we meet here as people who are friends, who have courage, who have vision, who recognise that on matters of detail they may have differences and must have differences, but that in total, and in the upshot, they will be found of one voice and of one mind and, above all other things, of one stout heart."

CANBERRA,

29th March, 1961.