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BROADCAST NO. 3

BROADCAST BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.  
SIR ROBERT MENZIES, OVER ABC NATIONAL STATIONS  
AT 7.15 PM ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1963

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Where does Labour stand on Australia's alliances and mutual security arrangements? This is a tremendously important question, for we are living in a very dangerous world, and we need friends if we are to survive.

The Labour Party's policy - and I must keep on emphasising this - is not made by Mr. Calwell and his Parliamentary colleagues. It is made for them by an outside group - six from each State - not elected by the people, and not responsible to them. Yet what a majority of the 36 decide to be Labour policy absolutely binds Mr. Calwell and his colleagues, whatever they say or promise during an election. Cast your minds back only a few months to the time when the 36 were meeting behind closed doors at Canberra to decide whether Labour should oppose the establishment of an American Naval Communications Station at North West Cape; a station whose work could be absolutely vital to Australia's security in the event of war.

You remember the picture: Mr. Calwell and Mr. Whitlam, the aspiring Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, waiting outside in the cold, waiting for their orders. The left-wingers inside, no lovers of America, were just beaten by the narrowest of majorities (which could of course quite easily be reversed next time!) and an instruction came out to these so-called leaders that they could approve, on unacceptable terms!

Neither my colleagues nor I, speaking for Australia at international conferences and in direct discussions with Prime Ministers and Presidents, have ever had to cable for instructions from a body of men, not in Cabinet or Parliament, to whom we owed obedience.

Do you think that the new order would strengthen Australia's voice and authority abroad? Do you think that it will strengthen our alliances, our understandings and our security?

Labour's outside law-making body has a curious history, in practice. Only a few years ago it was opposed to increased defence, it was demanding the recall of our troops from Malaya, it was following the very left-wing line internationally. Recently, and quite obviously for purposes of this election, it switched; but in a curiously ambiguous way. It will support Malaysia, but only on terms which it knows to be impossible. It will support defence, but only at the expense of setting aside the modern conception of very mobile and heavily armed forces available where they are needed, and reverting to a curious and antiquated notion of defending Australia along its coastline; a sort of Maginot line conception.

At the same time, it wishes to deprive our nuclear allies of any right to defend us with nuclear weapons South of the Equator against a Communist nuclear attack from North of the Equator!

The truth is that the A.L.P., though Mr. Calwell is no more a Communist than I am, must compromise with the left wing to survive.

I can't discover that the Labour Party has plans to make any new friends internationally, unless it is by voting to install Communist China in the Security Council and give it a crushing diplomatic victory all over South-East Asia. But I have observed that Mr. Calwell is pledged to do two things in relation to the United States. One is to "re-negotiate" the North West Cape Agreement, which has already been signed and ratified. The other is (if I understand him) to cancel our most valuable agreement about the TFX bomber!

Is this what you want in the voice of Australia, a nation which, to live, must command the respect and confidence of the outside free world?

You will make your answer on November 30th. There will be no useful second thoughts thereafter.

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