

ON TARGET

A WEEKLY COMMENTARY ON THE COLD WAR

"We will bury you . . . your children will grow up under Communism . . ." Krushchev.

FALSEHOODS

DISTORTIONS

SUPPRESSION

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SPECIAL 1969 FEDERAL ELECTION ISSUE

Thought for the week:

"A people may prefer a free government, but if from indolence or carelessness . . . they are unequal to the exertions necessary for preserving it . . . and can be induced to lay their liberties even at the feet of a great man . . . they are more or less unfit for liberty."

—John Stuart Mill, the famous British political philosopher.

PRIME MINISTER GORTON'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES MUST BE REJECTED

Whatever the relative merits of the welfare proposals being put before the Australian electors by Mr. Gough Whitlam on behalf of the A.L.P., and by Prime Minister Gorton on behalf of the Liberal-Country Party coalition Government, responsible electors must not permit controversy about these proposals to obscure much more far-reaching questions. These concern foreign and defence policies, inflationary financial policies which have a most destructive effect, particularly on Australia's rural communities, and centralist policies which threaten what remains of the Federal, decentralised system of Government.

Since becoming Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton has made it clear that he is determined to depart from declared traditional Liberal foreign and domestic policy. His behaviour can only be described as erratic. He appointed as his Minister for External Affairs a man who has admitted that for 17 years he never participated once in a debate on international affairs. Mr. Freeth shocked large numbers of Australians, including many of his Government colleagues, when he said in a Foreign Affairs statement at Canberra on August 14 that his Government was interested in the Soviet's proposal to help foster regional security in South-East Asia. Only the Prime Minister saw this astonishing statement before Mr. Freeth presented it to the Federal Parliament. As if by a pre-arranged signal, the Soviet Ambassador in Canberra responded immediately by calling a press conference. The Soviet Ambassador said:

"We think that the realistic approach of the Australian Government towards the Soviet Union will open up good opportunities for the further development of our bilateral relations and co-operation of the two countries in preserving and strengthening international peace and security."

Reaction to the Freeth statement on August 14 forced both Mr. Freeth and the Prime Minister to make a number of "explanations". A close examination of these reveals either an appalling ignorance concerning Soviet Strategy and tactics, or a willingness to gamble with Australia's future for the sake of short-term political expediency. Mr. Freeth followed up his Foreign Policy speech with a defence of it in the Estimates debate. He claimed that after "a look at the scale of this (Soviet) presence" in the Indian Ocean, the conclusion was **"that this does not constitute an immediate threat to Australia."** The Prime Minister said that there would be no threat to Australia within ten years. Returning to Australia from his recent visit to the UN, Mr. Freeth said, **"Australia should not condemn Russia out of hand."** This must cheer the Soviet strategists thrusting towards World Domination. They are quite definite about their intentions:

On February 16, 1968, Soviet Chief of Staff, Marshal Zakharov said: "The time when Russia could be kept out of the world's oceans has gone forever . . . We shall sail all the world's seas; no force on earth can prevent us." Much more bluntly, Admiral Gorshkov, head of the Soviet Navy, stated in 1967: "Now we must be prepared for broad offensive operations against sea and ground troops of the imperialists on any point of the world's oceans and adjacent territories."

At the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1967, the Soviet had practically no naval force in the Mediterranean. Today it has a massive force with secured bases. What

APPALLING IGNORANCE OF SOVIET'S INDIAN OCEAN OBJECTIVES

"I think there is evidence of a growing Russian influence in the Indian Ocean and in the countries bordering it. What motivates it is a matter of interpretation even for our External Affairs Department." — Prime Minister Gorton in interview with Brisbane *Truth*, December 22, 1968.

"There was a welcome to signs of increasing willingness of the part of the Russians to co-operate." — External Affairs Minister Freeth in radio interview on 6VA, Albany, W.A., September 3, 1969.

"Australia and the Soviet Union have begun talks on Asian security." — Mr. Freeth at Canberra on August 14, 1969.

"Explaining" Mr. Freeth's August 14 statement, Prime Minister Gorton said, "nothing but good would flow to Australia if Soviet influence was used to give economic aid to Asian countries."

The November, 1968, issue of the official Soviet journal, *Kommunist*, stated: **"The task has been set of providing practical training for armed struggle against the Suharto (Indonesian) Government."** MOSCOW RADIO REPEATED THIS STATEMENT ON APRIL 5 OF THIS YEAR.

To promote armed struggles in Asian countries, the Soviet requires adequate naval power in the Indian Ocean.

the Soviet has done in the Mediterranean, it is easily capable of doing in the Indian Ocean. Within a few short years — not ten years — the Soviet could be dominant. In a Paper, "The Changing Strategic Balance U.S.S.R. v. U.S.A.", published in December, 1968, by the U.S.A. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, it is stated: "The Indian Ocean presents a broad spectrum of opportunities for the use of naval power to achieve political goals. Bordering the Indian Ocean are a number of nations that are

potential targets of Soviet aggression." The American Paper also states that "The pace of Soviet oceanic enterprise is quickening", and that "the naval forces of the U.S.S.R. are engaged in bold politico military moves."

Today the Soviet Navy is almost twice the size of the United States Navy.

At a time when the Soviet is openly engaged in forward planning in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, the Gorton Government brings down a Budget **IN WHICH DEFENCE SPENDING IS REDUCED BY 5 PER CENT.**

According to the Gorton-Freeth doctrine, Australia waits a few years, doing nothing in the meantime, to see what the Soviet's intentions are in the Indian Ocean area. Then when the Soviet acts in Indonesia, as it says it will, or elsewhere in Asia, Australia presumably decides to take action. But then it would be too late. It takes many years to

PRIME MINISTER GORTON ADANDONS TRADITIONAL LIBERAL PARTY POLICY

"The Prime Minister, Mr. Gorton, said yesterday that Australia had reached a watershed in its development. Liberal Party policy had changed and would have to change further . . . The party would have to re-examine some of the basic tenets it had held since 1949." — *The Age*, Melbourne, October 15, 1968.

"I have abandoned it (Liberal Party policy on Federalism) myself and I have abandoned it on behalf of the Liberal Party." — Prime Minister Gorton at Mornington, Victoria, October, 1968.

If Mr. John Gorton has taken it upon himself to abandon traditional Liberal Party policy, then it is obvious that an unqualified vote for Mr. Gorton on October 25, providing him with a substantial majority, would be an endorsement of his clear intention to destroy the Federal system of decentralised democratic government.

build ships, to develop naval bases, to obtain the planes required. Australians might recall that the F-111 plane was ordered in 1963. It still has to be delivered.

Not only must a start be made NOW to counter-balance Soviet strategy, but Australia must accept the offer of co-operation from South Africa in the Indian Ocean. Mr. Freeth says Australia must be prepared to talk and negotiate with the Soviet Union. **Why then not adopt a much more sensible attitude towards Rhodesia and South Africa, holding one of the vital strategic areas in the whole world against Communist global strategy?**

With the British retreat from "East of Suez" nearly completed — the end in Singapore takes place in 1971 — and the Americans determined to disengage on the Asian mainland, Australia is faced with the most perilous years in its history. In the face of this situation, and the developing strategy of the Soviet Union, the Gorton-Freeth foreign and defence policies are inadequate, defeatist, and dangerously misleading. An unqualified endorsement of the Gorton Government's foreign and domestic policies would be a major disaster for Australia.

LEFTISTS WANT A GORTON VICTORY

Melbourne *Age* Canberra correspondent Allan Barnes revealed on August 27 that the Labor Left would like to see Mr. Gorton score an effective election victory, to strengthen his personal position. "This attitude was summed up this week by one Left-wing intellectual at a private dinner in Canberra. The best thing that could happen at the elections, he argued, would be a strong vote for Mr. Gorton. A vote for Mr. Whitlam would . . . push the A.L.P. towards the Right. It would kill traditional concepts of socialism. At the same time, he argued, a vote against Mr. Gorton would end the reform of the Liberal Party. It would bring a return to conservatism and strengthen the hand of the D.L.P."

This is the same theme of most of the Left-wing press columnists. It reflects the almost pathological hatred which the Left-wing intellectuals have of hard-line anti-Communism. The press intellectuals have been urging Mr. Gorton to "stand up" to the D.L.P. and the "extremists" in his own ranks.

DECENTRALISATION ESSENTIAL FOR DEMOCRACY

"We believe that decentralisation of authority through States and local government is the best guarantee of democracy . . . We re-assert that restoration of the financial responsibility of the States will in no way conflict with the national interest, but on the contrary, will promote it." — Resolution carried unanimously by the Victoria Parliamentary Liberal Party on October 1, 1968.

"Mr. G. Frendestein, the C.P. Minister assisting the Premier and Treasurer, Mr. Askin, said that the Country Party can no longer tolerate centralism either by force under Whitlam or suffocation under Gorton." — *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 16, 1969.

LIBERAL PREMIER'S SOUND ADVICE

"The Victorian Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, believes a 'pretty evenly divided' House of Representatives in Canberra is the only way the States can get financial justice." — *The Herald*, Melbourne, February 3, 1969.

Traditional Liberal and Country Party supporters are charged with the grave responsibility on October 25 of putting the nation's best long-term interests ahead of party politics. A blind party loyalty vote would be an endorsement of Prime Minister Gorton's slap-dash approach to defence and foreign affairs, and of his intention to "reform" Liberal Party policy by progressively centralising power at Canberra. **It would be a vote endorsing the long-term tactics of the Left-wing intellectuals.** Only a severe reduction of Mr. Gorton's present majority will help to produce the necessary type of Government Australia needs at this critical time. Even within the severe limitations of present party politics, Liberal and Country Party supporters have some alternatives for corrective action. A few D.L.P. members of the calibre of Senator Frank McManus would help to improve the House of Representatives. Acceptable Independents can be given first preference votes. Liberal and Country Party supporters can effectively censure Mr. Gorton's policies on October 25 without any fear of making Mr. Gough Whitlam Prime Minister. But we record that there are some objective political observers who suggest that Mr. Whitlam with a small majority and a hostile Senate, could hardly be much more dangerous than an uncritical endorsement of Mr. John Gorton. Our own view is that the best possible result would be a Liberal-Country Party Government with a new Prime Minister, and a small group of D.L.P. or conservative Independents holding the balance of power.

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