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ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance—

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Thought for the Week: "With T.V., the image is everything. And the image of the man need have no relation to the real man. The candidate (for political office) becomes a product to be peddled like soap, or instant mashed potatoes. The bright-coloured box may belie what is within."

-- Gary Allen, in "Richard Nixon: The Man Behind the Mask".

RHODESIAN FRONT HOLDING: Mr. Eric Butler filed this report from Salisbury, Rhodesia, at the end of an intensive fact-finding tour:-

"The dramatic raid by African terrorists on the St. Albert's Roman Catholic Mission School, on Rhodesia's North-Eastern border, recalls how the Communists have in the past taken children for the purpose of conditioning them as highly dedicated Communists before using them years later, against their own people. The manner in which the kidnap squad walked into the class-rooms and ordered the children and teachers out, indicated that the terrorists were familiar with the operation of the school. One hundred and ninety one children were taken, 80 women, the domestic staff, and 23 men, including one of the Jesuit Fathers. The terrorists then moved their captives towards the Mozambique border. The Jesuit Father who ran a long distance to give the alarm about the mass kidnapping has said that one of the terrorists stated that the children were to be trained in either the Soviet Union or China.

"This most ambitious mass-kidnapping operation suffered a major set-back when the Rhodesian armed forces were able to drop flares on the kidnappers and their victims in the early hours of the morning; this operation from the air scattering the terrorists and permitting the majority of their victims to escape. Anyone who has seen at first hand the type of country in which the Rhodesians are operating against terrorist activities must be impressed with the calibre, efficiency and dedication of the Rhodesians. Black Rhodesians are operating alongside White Rhodesians. As I write this report only seventeen of those taken from the St. Albert's Mission are missing; the rest having progressively eluded their captors. By an ironic twist of fate, the only casualty to date amongst the kidnapped, is one student; killed when a Rhodesian soldier accidentally discharged his rifle. I have no doubt that anti-Rhodesian propagandists will make the most of this unfortunate incident. But I am wondering if they will mention that the Rhodesian soldier was an African!

"After visiting the North-Eastern border areas of Rhodesia and talking with officials, farmers, and Africans, I have not the slightest doubt that while the Communist-backed terrorists are being credited with great successes by their friends in the news media around the world, they are scoring few real successes in Rhodesia. It is true that a number of brutal killings have taken place, and that on the eve of my arrival a land-mine had blown up an African truck; but I found the morale of the farmers high. They report excellent co-operation from their African workers. In one instance,

Africans in a compound had the presence of mind to keep three terrorists who had got into the compound, talking and provided with food while a message was quickly got out to the police. The Communists are relying on terror tactics, similar to those used in Vietnam, to bring the Africans onto their side, but so long as the Rhodesian armed forces demonstrate that they are capable of hitting back hard at terrorist groups, the Africans are confident that they have nothing to fear. Those Africans who are being brought back from areas close to the frontier, and re-settled behind security fences, with their tribal structures being left intact, are obviously highly pleased. They, for some time, have had to take the brunt of terrorist threats and many acts of violence. The anti-Rhodesian propagandists close their eyes to the truth that it is the Africans, not the Europeans, who have suffered the most at the hands of the terrorists.

"I have now been visiting Rhodesia annually every year since the declaration of complete independence in 1965, and every year I have made it my business to look at the economy, which the anti-Rhodesians have regularly insisted is about to collapse under sanctions. I have found this year that the building boom was continuing, new secondary industries are still being established, while the shops contain a wide variety of goods, many of them manufactured in the United Kingdom! I spoke to tobacco growers who are very happy about the state of their industry. For several reasons they confidently anticipate even greater tobacco exports in the near future. In spite of severe drought in many parts of Rhodesia, stock are in excellent condition, and Rhodesia is exporting large quantities of meat. The Communist press will not report that, just as the Communists were at one time buying Rhodesian chrome, now they are keenly interested in buying Rhodesian meat! The Rhodesian view is that so long as they can obtain foreign credits with which to pay for necessary imports, they are prepared to accept them from their enemies as well as from their friends! Some of the foreign credits are provided by the British, via Zambia! For example, Europeans in Zambia all send their children to Rhodesian schools. The Rhodesians insist that the fees must be lodged in acceptable foreign credit - most of the credits being sterling - with their banks before the students are accepted.

"There is, of course, the same endless speculation about a settlement with the British, and this speculation continues to dominate Rhodesian internal politics. My own view is that the British are no longer particularly interested in pressing for a formal settlement; and that they will continue to go through the motions of opposing Rhodesian independence primarily for the purpose of attempting to placate the African States like Nigeria, now highly regarded by the British because of its vital oil supplies. If Rhodesia could become a major oil-producing nation, its international status would improve overnight! The Rhodesian front is still holding, but as I will report later, there is disturbing evidence that the international campaign against the whole of Southern Africa is about to be intensified."

THE TARIFF CUTS: "The Federal Government last night slashed all tariffs by 25% to combat Australia's soaring inflation."
-- The Age (Melbourne), July 19th.

As we predicted over and over again in these pages, the rate of inflation is continuing to quicken, primarily as a result of Mr. Snedden's "save-our-skins" Budget (which didn't) of August 1972, and the "Labor" Government's additional spending spree in its first seven months of office. Mr. Snedden's Budget created a \$600-odd million deficit, and even the Canberra watchers are divided as to the exact volume of Government spending under Mr. Whitlam: amounts of up to \$1800 million are seen in print in the dailies. Under the rules of our accepted "Money Game" deficit Budgets are highly inflationary; and the bigger the deficit, the bigger is the inflationary "spin-off". Mr. Whitlam has
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now "got the message".

The heady days of electoral euphoria are now back in the distance, and the harsh days of political and economic reality are right in front. Some of Mr. Whitlam's Ministers have had their little spending spree, and after promising all and sundry the moon, are now confronted with the bill! The more down-to-earth Mr. Frank Crean has been doing some delicate monetary axe-work, but even this does not constitute a palliative.

The Liberal spokesmen are still yapping about unreasonable wage demands, and these, they assure us, are a prime cause of inflation. Others are already calling for increases in income tax, restriction of bank lending, higher interest rates, tighter hire-purchase, and all those measures which have been used in the past, and which have failed every time; and which will fail again. Wage increases are NOT a prime cause of inflation at all; they merely maintain the momentum of inflation. Fiscal measures such as those listed above, will temporarily check inflation, but at the price of sharply developing unemployment; a grave political risk! What to do?

Mr. Whitlam's little five minute appearance on Australian T.V. was slick and clever, as becomes the man. We noticed that he put in more than one plug for broader Commonwealth powers: "... it is not constitutionally possible for the Australian Government (no longer Commonwealth, please note) to introduce a prices freeze in peacetime, although the State Governments could." The inference is that we should have a prices freeze, which the State Governments should implement but won't; so that when the Australian or National Government (please, don't use the word Commonwealth anymore!) ask for more powers to "deal" with the inflationary menace, we electors should turn against those wretched States and gleefully fling all powers asked for to Big Brother, who loves us! Price control does not prevent inflation: it has been tried, and proved ineffective.

An unsettling feature of Mr. Whitlam's address is the call to Australians to become snoopers on behalf of our "National" leaders by asking the country's shoppers to report cases where the Government's 25% tariff cuts are not passed on to consumers. (How would they know?..Ed.) Mr. Snedden quite rightly, drew attention to this: - "Apart from not knowing what items are subject to tariffs, women of Australia cannot be enlisted as a reporting service for the Government, and certainly not as police."

We forecast again now, that the tariff cuts will not curb inflation, as such measures do not get anywhere near the prime causes of inflation, which are part and parcel of the present financial system itself - but merely toy with the effects of inflation.

We believe that Mr. Snedden is quite accurate when he says that "Labor" is caught between two poles - with a weather eye to the electorate, and one on the economy and that a harsh Budget is in the of fmg. The rub is that Mr. Snedden's stated "remedies" would again produce the unemployment in 1974 which levered his Government from office in 1972. The coming months are particularly crucial for the Canberra Socialists, as obviously the economic temperature will continue to rise, whilst the Senate elections, and a probable referendum on powers, swing into view.

THINK-TANK FOR LIBS: "The son of the millionaire property entrepreneur, Sir Paul Strasser, is in process of forming a high powered policy for the Liberal Party... The Strasser think-tank would be based in Sydney and will prepare submissions and policy ideas for the full-scale national review of Liberal policy that the Party Leader, Mr. Snedden, announced some time ago. Mr. Strasser, hopes to collect a number of bright young Sydney fellows who would act in a similar way to the research organisation the Federal Party is forming in Melbourne." -- The Australian Financial Review, 27/6/73

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The first thought which all Opposition parties should develop concerns philosophy. Sir Charles Court, leader of the Opposition in Western Australia, recently called on the Liberals to continue their traditional advocacy of the Federal system. There is no more connection between a man like the former Prime Minister, John Gorton, who is a declared centralist, and a Liberal, who believes in a three-tiered system of Government, with sovereign States, than there is between a camel and a kangaroo. Until there is basic agreement on fundamental principles in the Opposition, all the new think-tanks and all the young men with bright ideas can do nothing to bring health to a very sick patient. Until that moment occurs, it looks as though Australia will have to do without an Opposition in the proper sense of the word.

PARTY POLITICAL UNDERWORLD: Mr. Doug Anthony and the Country Party are greatly upset by the decision of the Liberal Party in Victoria to relegate Senator Jim Webster to third place on the Senate ticket at the next Senate elections. This means the almost certain defeat of Senator Webster, who previously occupied second position on the ticket in those halcyon days when the Lib.-C.P. coalition enjoyed the fruits of office. Now the long knives are out as each seeks to gain advantage at the expense of the other.

A recent report in the Wimmera Mail-Times (July 6th) of a speech by Senator Webster to the Horsham East Rotary Club is another indication of the disease in party politics, the readiness to depart from fundamental principle, which may eliminate Senator Webster from the parliamentary scene.

Senator Webster told the Horsham East Rotary club that he had voted for Bills in the past session of Parliament to which he was opposed, and to which a majority of Senators were opposed. He and other Senators had voted for the States Grants Bill, designed to find money for Local Government, but designed also to weaken the States and regionalise control over local government; probably the deadliest blow at State self-government initiated by the Labor Socialists at Canberra; weakly agreed to by the Liberal-C.P.; but on Senator Webster's admission, with a full understanding that in doing so they were betraying their principles. As Senator Webster himself made clear to his audience:- "It is the first step in the abolition of your municipalities." The whole process incidentally destroying Senator Webster has been going on for years. The Labor Party's Bill was not the first step. It started under his own party coalition government. It is not many years ago that a former Horsham Mayor warned the time was coming when Local Government would have to go cap in hand to the Canberra Government to obtain enough money to build a toilet block in the main street.

The Senate, designed to protect the States, who are responsible for Local Government has continuously betrayed that trust. Passing the States Grants Bill was just a question of putting the finishing touches to the process of destroying the States and Local Government initiated by those who with Senator Webster, decided the party was greater than principle. The same sort of conspiring is now eliminating Senator Webster.

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