

NUCLEAR-FREE ZONES IN THE PACIFIC AND THE WORLD

A NUCLEAR-FREE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Ever since Mr. Calwell, the Leader of the Opposition, put forward his proposal for a nuclear-free zone in the Southern Hemisphere, discussion has raged up and down the nation.

Mr. Calwell called on the Australian Government to take the initiative in seeking an extension of the nuclear-free zone created by the Antarctic Treaty to cover the Southern Hemisphere and ultimately the world. He urged that all the Antarctic Treaty nations and all the nations bordering the Pacific, including China, come together at a conference to ensure that nuclear weapons do not enter the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr. Calwell recalled that the Antarctic Treaty, signed by twelve countries and ratified by Australia in October, 1960, guaranteed the peaceful development of a large, if isolated region in the world. It had met with the approval by both sides of the House in the Federal Parliament.

The Government rejected the Labour Party proposal, but the people welcomed it. Last year the Peace Movement of Australia launched a National Petition and received within a few weeks a 205,000 endorsement of the idea of a nuclear-free zone in the Southern Hemisphere.

WHAT IS A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE?

A nuclear-free zone is an area where nuclear weapons will be banned. The stockpiling, use, testing and manufacture of these weapons will be prohibited.

DOES IT IMPLY THAT AUSTRALIA UNILATERALLY DISARMS?

No. The proposal is that all nations in the Southern Hemisphere should meet at the conference table and decide together to create a nuclear-free zone. An agreement would be signed and all nations would promise to stand together to prevent the entry of nuclear weapons into the region.

Should such an agreement be signed it would lessen international tension and it would keep nuclear weapons and nuclear tests out of an area inhabited by more than 300 million people.

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Notes compiled by Victorian  
Peace Council  
Research and Information Centre

Victorian Peace Council  
Research and Information Centre 1962-1964 (MCA)

FROM AN ORIGINAL IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES  
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## WOULD IT LEAVE AUSTRALIA DEVENCELESS?

### ATTITUDE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Replying to the Parliamentary Opposition, Mr. Menzies said ...  
"When the Minister for External Affairs announced recently that he was not prepared to give a permanent undertaking that Australia would not have nuclear weapons on her soil, he was criticised by some people. Have we reached the very ecstasy of suicide in Australia? Are we prepared to say 'Come war, come peace or any circumstances, no one shall bring a nuclear weapon on our soil or discharge it here?'" - "Age" 16.5.63.

### LET US EXAMINE THIS ...

The Australian Government was asked by the United Nations General Secretary, along with all the non-nuclear powers, to give a pledge not to test, stockpile, manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons on its soil. Twenty-one governments, including the then Government of Canada, gave this undertaking to the U.N. General Secretary, but Australia refused to do so. This action of the Government of Australia was criticised by the Australian Labour Party, by the Peace Movement and by many prominent citizens.

The Prime Minister asks "have we reached the very ecstasy of suicide?", meaning that not to have nuclear weapons in Australia would be suicide. Most Australians who want peace, rightly think that it could be suicide to have the nuclear weapons here.

In the event of nuclear war any country used as a base for nuclear weapons would inevitably become a nuclear target.

### EFFECT ON OUR NEIGHBOURS

But does the danger only begin if nuclear war breaks out?

Let us look at the question more closely. The acquiring of nuclear weapons by Australia could only cause tension between us and our Asian neighbours.

They would see these weapons as a threat to their very existence. They might be prompted by our action to acquire nuclear weapons for themselves. We might find we had triggered off a nuclear arms race in our own region of the world.

It is generally agreed that it is a national necessity for Australia to cultivate mutual trust and friendship with the peoples of Asia amongst whom we live.

Would the possession of nuclear weapons on our part not prejudice such relations of trust and friendship? Would they not be bound to cause fear and hostility? Further -- who would own such weapons? Australia

would not be manufacturing them in the foreseeable future.

On present evidence, if nuclear weapons are stationed on our soil they would be owned and controlled by one of the present nuclear powers, almost certainly the United States of America.

What effect would this have on our national independence?

There is another question which we will deal with in a later publication, i.e. the establishment of a U.S. Naval Radio Communications Base at N.W. Cape to direct U.S. Polaris submarines in the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Will this not amount, in effect, to the same thing as having missile launching sites and nuclear weapons on our own soil?

#### THE ATTITUDE OF CHINA

Sir Garfield Barwick argues that we stand in danger of aggression from China. He said, when speaking to the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs ("Age" 30th May, 1963):

"We in the Pacific must face up to the question of what will be the limit of Chinese aims and ambitions and how soon she will be strong enough to enforce those ambitions. How soon will she, in fact become a nuclear power ..."

It was China, however, who in 1955 proposed a nuclear-free zone to cover the whole Pacific area. China has since repeated this proposal.

In 1960 Premier Chou En-Lai speaking at the Swiss National Day Reception said: "... We advocate that the countries in Asia and around the Pacific, including the U.S., conclude a peace pact of mutual non-aggression and make this whole region a nuclear weapon free area ..."

Should it not be the aim of all Australians who desire the peace and security of their country and region to seize upon this offer as an opening of the door to negotiations?

#### THE ATTITUDE OF OTHER NATIONS

##### U.S.S.R.

Mr. Khrushchov on behalf of the Soviet Government in supporting the Chinese proposal said:- "It is possible and necessary to create a Peace Zone and, in the first instance, a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Far East and throughout the Pacific region."

This proposal was immediately supported by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, by Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia and