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ALP Broadcast presented by Don Dunstan, Member for Norwood

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A.L.P. BROADCAST PRESENTED BY DON DUNSTANMEMBER FOR NORWOOD

Good Evening,

The current crisis in Laos and the activities of the U.S.A. both before and during the crisis afford a good illustration of the foreign policy of the Labor party as stated by its Federal conferences in recent years. At the 21st conference in Hobart the A.L.P. said:-

Read paras. 3,4,5,6, page 81.

At the 22nd Conference in Brisbane it said after re-affirming what I have just read, "paragraph 6 page 53."

The whole point is this; the peoples of Asia for the most part are but little interested in the ideological conflict between communism and capitalism. They are interested in having an effective say in their own future, in ending exploitation not only by foreigners but by their own reactionaries, in improving living standards and education.

Therefore, if we do not want the conflicts which develop within Asian countries to benefit the ultimate aims of world communism, and if we want to discharge our own moral obligation to developing Asian countries, we must be extraordinarily careful about whom we support and assist within those countries. This is not only a counsel we should heed ourselves, but one which we should urge upon our allies.

For if we or our allies see fit to lend assistance to reactionary and/or corrupt and/or anti-democratic forces within an Asian country merely because these forces are anti-Communist it will almost certainly be the best way ~~not~~ of fighting but of assisting Communists. If we ~~are~~ ^{are} our allies become associated in the minds of Asians with the forces of reaction, corruption or repression, then Asian peoples who are not Communists and should be our friends will be likely to turn to Communism as the only feasible alternative to the forces which we would be

supporting and whom these people would often regard as more evil than the Communists.

How this can happen the Labor Party illustrated in the declarations I have read.

Now let us look at the situation in Laos. The present Government in Laos is a rebel Government supported by the U.S.A. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the previous government headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma and which designed to bring a neutralist peace to Laos was not only disliked by the U.S.A., but that the U.S.A. gave material support to its opponents, the present Government which came to power by a coup d'etat. There cannot be any doubt either that the present Government represents a right wing point of view.

The reports which have come from Laos of Vietminh and Chinese intervention have been widely called in question, and it is as well for us that this attempt by the Laotian Government to embroil the SEATO powers in what could become a world war has failed. But the danger in the situation not only comes from Laotian prevarication and the U.S. sabre-rattling. We as an ally of the U.S.A. and a member of S.E.A.T.O. are becoming identified with a force in Laos with which no democrat could be satisfied and which is likely on what information is available to us only to strengthen the forces adhering to the pro-Communist Pathet Lao and to alienate from the SEATO powers those non-Communist groups inclined to support Prince Souvanna Phouma.

In other words in the name and for the avowed purpose of fighting Communism our allies may well have thrown into the arms of pro-Communist forces those people on whom we might have relied for a non-Communist settlement of the troubles in Laos.

The gay pronouncements of Mr. Menzies on this subject are as little helpful to Australia's cause in world affairs as were his previous excursions into ~~bumbling~~ ^{bumbled on} - his abortive attempt to overawe General Nasser and his hopeless flap of a speech recently before the United Nations.

What a tragedy it is that Australia's foreign policy today seems to be entirely bound up with Mr. Menzies' sense of his own theatricality, and with his failure to realise that on the world stage his kind of performance is constantly adjudged that of a ham.

Goodnight.