

Lookout

INDO-CHINA AND US

THE United States Government has asked us to join in a solemn warning to Communist China. . . It's not easy for us to realise that we've reached the stage in our national development where we can go round issuing ultimatums—the stage, indeed, where we are asked to do so. We've been a little smug about our status recently, but it seems to have been a shock to a good many to find that grown-up countries—like grown-up people—have heavier responsibilities to carry and harder decisions to make than colonies and children. The shock has been all the greater, hasn't it, because we have also been brought up sharply against another hard fact—that we're really quite closely interested in what goes on in Indo-China. . .

It's been said, often enough, that if the United States had given Hitler a plain warning, there wouldn't have been an *anschluss* . . . the rape of Czechoslovakia . . . the march across the Polish Corridor . . . and a second world war. That may be so. What can't be doubted is that the Parliamentary democracies thought so, and would have been delighted with an American ultimatum in the thirties. Today no one's quite so sure about the efficiency of an American warning. No, that's an under-statement. Thailand excepted, they are extremely doubtful whether it wouldn't be worse than anything. . . But isn't the real question what effect an ultimatum would have on the Geneva Conference? . . .

If a reasonable compromise does come out of Geneva there won't be any more civil war in Indo-China, and there won't be any occasion for Chinese military intervention. On the other hand, Chinese abstinence from active intervention wouldn't end the civil war. The French-backed Vietnam Government controls most of the important areas of the country, but there are Viet Minh pockets, some of them very big pockets, right through Vietnam. Without any help at all from China, Viet Minh could keep a guerrilla struggle going for years. Unfortunately, after Geneva we may not be able to avoid making up our minds about the American proposal, which will then be much more relevant. And it won't be easy to reach a settlement. The independence of Indo-China isn't the real issue. I don't think there need be any trouble over that. But what sort of an independent Indo-China?

It would suit the Chinese to hand Vietnam and probably all Indo-China over to Ho [Chi Minh], who could probably hold on to office with Chinese backing. It would suit the West to have truly independent governments in all three States, but these States would probably have to be economically helped by France or someone. The third party is the people of the Indo-China States. They wouldn't be human if they didn't want the maximum of help with the minimum of interference.

Can these conflicting interests be harmonised? If they can be there'll have to be some form of international guarantee for the agreement. New Zealand may have to accept some sort of responsibility there. So we probably can't avoid eventually having to make some difficult decisions about Indo-China, either before or after the conference.

—JOHN FOX,
April 10, 1954

Extracts from recent commentaries on the international news, broadcast from the Main National Stations of the NZBS

THE anti-Communist Powers are not without some effective bargaining counters. One piece of news must give heart to the peoples of the free world: it is that a merger of Pakistan and Afghanistan is near completion. The plan has confederation as its object, with a jointly administered foreign policy.

BARGAINING COUNTER

In February last Pakistan announced the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance with Turkey. Anti-Communist alliances now stretch from Northern Europe through France, Italy and Greece to Turkey; then there is a regrettable gap in Iraq and Iran. But a link between Afghanistan, which has a common frontier of 700 miles with Russia, and Pakistan, could go some way towards repairing that deficiency.

Afghanistan is a poor country, not very advanced socially, but its situation and natural strength give it great political importance. Its strategical position can exercise a permanent influence over the great sub-continent of India.

From the beginning of history all Asiatic invaders of India have made their entry from the west and north-west. On no other side is it possible to traverse the lofty mountain ranges which separate the northern plains of India from Central Asia; they can only reach India by a few passes through the highlands. But for the conquest of India it is not sufficient to bring an army successfully through the passes. It is also essential that the invader should be able to keep them open behind him. And for this purpose it is necessary to secure a base in Afghanistan.

Since the days of Alexander, the Afghan tribes have always risen on an enemy's flanks and rear, have intercepted convoys and attempted to cut off communications. No invader by land has found it possible to establish himself in India without keeping strong garrisons in Afghanistan. Hence the strategic importance of bringing Afghanistan into some sort of anti-Communist defence community. The proposed merger with Pakistan is a welcome step towards that end.

But all these matters deal with the enemy outside the gates. What about the enemy within? I am sure we have all been shocked by the news from Australia that a diplomat from the Soviet Embassy had sought and been granted asylum in Australia and that his disclosures are likely to implicate some well-known people in that country. Of course, we have read of similar incidents in the United States, and there was a similar sensational case in Canada some years ago. But in Australia! Why, that is right next door to us. It gives a feeling of deeper interest and deeper concern . . . it does make us wonder whether the comforting, if ostrich-like reflection that "It can't happen here" does apply to New Zealand. Doubtless we shall learn the answer before long.

—A. G. DAVIS,
April 17, 1954

HOME TREATMENT FOR "YOUNG SKIN" TROUBLES

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clears off...
tones...
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Cover face, except eyes, with a lavish "Magic Minute Mask" of Pond's Vanishing Cream. Leave on one minute. The Cream's "keratolytic" action loosens stubborn, dead skin cells — dissolves them off! Frees the tiny skin gland openings so they can function normally again. Now — after 60 seconds — tissue off. See how tingling-fresh your skin feels. How much smoother, clearer, it looks.

Give yourself a "Magic Minute Mask" with Pond's Vanishing Cream two or three times a week to help keep your skin at its loveliest. Pond's Vanishing Cream is available everywhere in jars and convenient tubes.

For the skin that rebels against a heavy make-up:

Before powder, smooth on a greaseless film of Pond's Vanishing Cream for a smoother, fresher looking make-up.

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