

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER  
(THE RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES)  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY, 11th APRIL, 1961

OVERSEAS VISIT 1961

What I am about to say will cover some of the more important matters with which I was concerned during my recent overseas journey.

On my way to London I had the advantage of meeting both President Kennedy and the new Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Rusk, in Washington. Our conversations were quite extensive, but of course private. But it is, I think, proper to say that the new President has a most alert interest in Australia and its problems. In particular, we discussed the problems of S.E.A.T.O. and LAOS, and the relations between the democratic world and the Communist powers. I told him about our policies and activities in Papua and New Guinea and about the position of West New Guinea. I naturally seized the opportunity thus presented of making a comprehensive series of remarks along lines which are familiar to members of this House.

I hope it will not be thought an impertinence if I say that nobody can fail to be impressed by the liveliness of mind, vigour of approach, energy and desire for results, and forceful personality of the new President.

The atmosphere of our meeting was warm, friendly, and helpful.

My clear belief is that Mr. Kennedy will not rush to conclusions, that he will be at pains to ascertain the facts, and that when he decides the decision will be his. I subsequently saw a good deal of Mr. Rusk in Bangkok, where, with our other colleagues, we worked in close consultation with most fruitful results. In my opinion, Australia can regard the new Secretary of State as a very able thinker and negotiator, and as a good friend to us.

I then proceeded to the Prime Ministers' Conference in London. All of the Prime Ministers who attended that Conference have now returned to their home lands, and most, if not all of them, have given their account of what went on. The Prime Minister of New Zealand and I are later, for we both attended the S.E.A.T.O. meeting in Bangkok. It is now my right, and, more importantly, my duty, to make my report in the Australian Parliament, on its first sitting day after my return.

What I have to say will fall into three parts. I will first say something about the disarmament sections of our London communique, a document which I now formally table for the information of Honourable Members.

I will then speak of the events concerning the imminent departure of South Africa from the Commonwealth; an event of great historic importance, on which I will speak quite frankly, but, I believe, with moderation.

Finally, I will briefly discuss the meeting of the S.E.A.T.O. Council of Ministers, a meeting largely concerned with the current situation in LAOS and the attempts now being made to secure a fair and peaceful settlement.

Turning to disarmament, there are several comments which I would like to make upon the statement of principles to which we agreed and which appear in the annex to the communique. But before I do so, let me say that this overshadowing problem of disarmament is of crucial and urgent importance. It touches the hearts and minds of all men and women. We therefore devoted great attention to it. Against this background, these are my comments.

First, disarmament resolutions can give rise to false hopes unless they are immediately accompanied by action, with concurrent effective inspection and control.

Second, nuclear and "conventional" armaments must be dealt with simultaneously so that at no stage will any country or group of countries obtain a significant military advantage.

Third, expert consultations must take place during the currency of political negotiations for a treaty, and should be, in their main aspects, concluded before any general treaty. To make general declarations about disarmament at a time when the techniques of inspection and check had not been worked out or agreed upon would be very dangerous. The Communist powers would retain full control of their own forces, while in democratic countries recruiting would tend to disappear, and the public support for defence expenditure would, on the general promise of disarmament, tend to weaken. There would, I imagine, be great practical difficulties in securing, by inspection, the abolition of small arms and other "conventional" weapons in a vast country with authoritarian control over the movements of people and the reporting of news. Such difficulties must be provided for as part of a treaty, and not left to subsequent negotiation.

Fourth, we must consider with care the implications of the clause "All national armed forces and armaments must be reduced to the levels agreed to be necessary for internal security." Some nations may claim that, having regard to their population, territory, and social circumstances,

comparatively large "forces and armaments" are needed for internal security. Others may need very little. Yet armed strength is relative, not absolute. The threat of war may well continue on a reduced level of armaments, unless those armaments, at that reduced level, provide a reasonable balance which will discourage aggression.

Fifth, assuming as I do that the processes of negotiation, in the full sense that I have described, will be lengthy and obviously difficult, I would wish to see a start made with one matter which, if it could be solved, would do much to create a new and hopeful atmosphere. I refer to the proposed ban upon further nuclear tests. The nuclear powers have already made some progress in this field. There is no reason why, with goodwill and good human sense, success should not be achieved. With nuclear weapons confined as they are to-day to the control of a few powers, the danger of nuclear war is reduced. Should more and more nations come into the field, the dangers of irresponsible use would be materially increased.

There are many other aspects of this vast problem which deserve the consideration of this Parliament. All I have tried to do at this stage, and in a brief compass, is to indicate a few matters of what I believe to be of singular importance.

On the question of South Africa and the Commonwealth, I am indeed sorry that I cannot be as brief as I would wish. During the proceedings in London there appeared every day, in some newspapers, so-called reports of our deliberations which were so false as to be absurd; some of them no doubt found their way to Australia and may have affected many minds. It is therefore necessary, while not attributing particular views to particular Prime Ministers, to put the record straight.

South Africa, having decided to become a Republic, formally applied for permission to remain a member of the Commonwealth. On the precedents already established in the cases of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Ghana, there could be no technical ground for refusal. But some, not all of the Prime Ministers indicated that, as Dr. Verwoerd had already indicated his willingness on this occasion to engage (under a later item) in a full discussion of South Africa's racial policies, they would prefer the question of continued membership and the question of racial policy to be discussed together. This (though Dr. Verwoerd clearly desired that the question of continued membership should be first determined) was accordingly done. The debate was full, frank, and courteous.

However wrong we thought his policies, nobody at the London conference could or did challenge Dr. Verwoerd's own sincerity.

I pause here to say that this debate having occurred, and there being now no secret about the opinions expressed by others, I feel relieved of my previous inhibitions about public statements, and will therefore, before I conclude, state my own condemnation of apartheid, and my reasons categorically.

At the end of this discussion in the conference, a communique was drafted, after considerable debate, and after various suggestions and amendments. I took an active part in the drafting. The broad nature of the draft was that we first set out that we saw no technical constitutional ground for refusing the application, but that we had debated, with Dr. Verwoerd's consent on this occasion, the matter of racial policy. We then went on to summarise the criticisms that had been made, and the nature of the replies made by Dr. Verwoerd. We then concluded that, notwithstanding those replies, we adhered to our criticisms.

There were things about the draft which Dr. Verwoerd did not like. He availed himself of an adjournment to consider whether he could accept it.

I can say for myself that I believed that if Dr. Verwoerd could accept the draft, the issue of membership would be decided in his favour. Indeed, I thought this was the reason for the adjournment. After studying the draft, Dr. Verwoerd saw Mr. Macmillan, and said that, with some possible verbal and minor amendments, he would accept the draft, thus making it a unanimous record. On our resumption, Mr. Macmillan announced this with, I thought, some natural satisfaction. I say quite confidently that both he and I thought everything was clear; that the effect of agreement upon the communique would be that South Africa stayed in.

It was at this closing stage that several of the Prime Ministers disclosed a final line of attack. Two wanted the communique to conclude with a declaration that South Africa's policies were incompatible with membership of the Commonwealth.

Another agreed, and added that he reserved the right to move for expulsion, or to withdraw his own country. Another stated quite frankly that he would attack South Africa's policies and membership at every possible opportunity. I need not elaborate. There could be no mistake about the intensity and sincerity of the views stated. As the discussions proceeded, it became clear to me that, unless South Africa changed its policies, a considerable section of the Prime Ministers wanted South Africa out. Speaking for myself, I wanted it in, for the reasons which I will state a little later.

Once more Dr. Verwoerd withdrew to consider his position. On his return he said he felt he had no option but to withdraw his application. He made a few pointed comments on policies in some other countries, but he accepted the inevitable.

Technically Dr. Verwoerd withdrew. But in substance he had to withdraw unless he was prepared to depart from policies which however criticised are the settled doctrine of his own Government.

In a section of the Australian press a great effort is being made to show that on these matters I am at loggerheads with Mr. Macmillan, and that it follows that I must be wrong. This is indeed a curious attitude for Australians, but I will devote a few minutes to dealing with it. I have now studied very carefully the Hansard record of Mr. Macmillan's speech in the House of Commons on March 22nd, in order to ascertain what differences of views there may be.

1. Mr. Macmillan said "There was no question of the expulsion of South Africa, for it became apparent to Dr. Verwoerd himself that he could not serve the Commonwealth or help its unity and coherence in any other way except by withdrawing his application."

I have myself stated the facts in their sequence, and what I regard as the inevitability of Dr. Verwoerd's withdrawal. The House will make up its own mind as to whether there is here a difference worth prolonged debate.

Indeed, I note that in a speech by Lord Home, recently circulated by the United Kingdom Information Service, Lord Home said "This week a foundation member of the Commonwealth had to leave the Commonwealth."

2. Mr. Macmillan said "There are some who think that the Commonwealth will be gravely and even fatally injured by this blow. I do not altogether share this view. I do not share it at all". This is not a difference about the facts; it is a difference of personal opinion as to the consequences of the facts.

I deeply respect my friend Mr. Macmillan's opinion, and I most sincerely hope that it turns out to be right. But, discarding the word "fatally", which is not mine, I retain my right to offer my own opinion that the Commonwealth had been injured and not strengthened by the departure of South Africa. If I had not thought so, I should not have been wasting time in efforts to keep South Africa in. Nor, I imagine, would anybody else! I would like to elaborate my reasons for my own attitude. They depend, I believe, upon a basic concept of the Commonwealth which I was not able honestly to abandon. For I believe in the Commonwealth. Despite what has happened, it has much to do for us and for mankind

But before I deal further with the Commonwealth aspect, I must somewhat abruptly turn to recent events in the United Nations, so as to clear the ground.

Having regard to the events of the last few days in the United Nations General Assembly and its Committees, and having further regard to what some regard as a "switch" of policy by Australia, I crave leave merely to state the facts, which I hope will be allowed to speak for themselves. Having stated them, I will return to the Commonwealth issue, which was the sole matter to which the apartheid debate related in London.

In the Special Political Committee, on April 4th, a week ago, there was a general discussion on apartheid. The particular resolutions to which I will refer later were cabled to us and received by us on the morning of Wednesday April 5th. Our representative, Mr. Hood, made a speech which accurately expressed our ideas. He did not (and, in view of some newspaper observations, I repeat not) say how Australia would vote on any specific resolution.

For the records of this House, I will quote what Mr. Hood said, in full.

"Although the description of this item has not changed since the last time the Committee debated the policies of apartheid in South Africa, certain events since 1959 have understandably injected an increased degree of urgency to which all of us are certainly bound to pay attention. For one thing, the procedures of the Security Council were for the first time invoked on this matter a year ago. More recently the outcome of a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London three weeks ago is fresh in the minds of everyone and the prospect that the Union of South Africa will shortly cease to be a member of the Commonwealth has been copiously referred to during this debate.

However, it is the General Assembly consideration that is relevant to this at the moment. The Commonwealth aspect is a quite separate thing. It has to be remembered also that the Security Council still has before it the question in the form in which it was submitted following the Sharpeville incident in March 1960. What then is the right way for the General Assembly to treat the item?

We have at issue here the clear disregard by the Union of South Africa of many previous strong expressions of the views of the General Assembly that the policy of apartheid is repugnant to Charter principles almost universally accepted. The provisions concerning human rights are one of the most notable objectives set out in the Charter, and any failure in their observance wherever it may occur is indeed legitimately a matter for the concern of all. The Australian Government has stated that it feels a most serious disquiet at the racial policies which have been practised in South Africa, and that it deplors the results of the application of these policies, one tragic example being the events at Sharpeville last year.

With the vast majority of world opinion, we neither support nor condone policies - that is deliberate policies - of racial discrimination and we can understand the strong feelings which have led so many delegations once again to express their condemnation of the practice of apartheid in the Union.

Furthermore, in addition to the questions of principle involved, the policy of apartheid is, as the Prime Minister of Australia has said, unworkable. We can at the very least hope that through what one speaker yesterday described as enlightened self-interest, South Africa will come to a realisation of this.

The question arises whether the General Assembly this time and in the circumstances that have arisen since 1959 should go further in stressing its repeated requests that the Union Government should revise its racial policies to remove some of the flagrant contradictions that these have brought about with some of its obligations under the Charter. It must be pointed out in this connection that the Charter does expressly set a limit to intervention by the United Nations in a field of essentially domestic jurisdiction. In addition to those limits, there are further limits set by the Charter to the powers of the General Assembly. While there may be marginal ground here, many times fought over and contested, we should still pause before embarking on any course which would in effect throw away the whole intent and purpose of the limitations specifically put into the Charter. The Australian Delegation, as in the past, will keep this consideration very closely in mind in examining proposals which are or may be put before the Committee.

Furthermore the important objective is surely to look beyond simple condemnation and to open the way for eventual improvement in racial relations in the Union.

The Security Council itself in its resolution last year clearly had such a prospect in mind. We certainly ought not now to foreclose by drastic recommendations to Member States the possibility that by patience and sustained contact, such as that already opened up by the Secretary General, the total volume of effort and opinion both outside and within South Africa may at last be concentrated to good effect. It is in the best interests of the Bantu population that this should happen and that the South African Government should not be confirmed in obduracy by an imposed isolation. The weight of world opinion against the practice of racial discrimination in South Africa is more than impressive, it is formidable. Once again the great majority of the members of the United Nations will wish to give expression to it, this time doubtless even more emphatically, but punitive measures are likely to serve no purpose, and on the contrary make it more difficult for those, especially in the Union, who believe there is still time to reverse a collision course."

On the day on which we received a report of this speech, we were informed that two Resolutions were to be moved. One, put forward by 25 Member States, recommended to Member States a series of positive sanctions against South Africa, including :-

- (i) the breaking off of diplomatic relations with South Africa;
- (ii) the closing of ports to all vessels flying the South African flag;

- (iii) the prohibiting of ships from entering South African ports;
- (iv) the boycott of all South African goods, and a refusal to export goods to South Africa;
- (v) the refusal of landing and passage facilities to all South African aircraft.

We felt, and feel, no difficulty in opposing such a resolution, for the reasons so concisely stated by Mr. Hood.

The other resolution, put forward by Ceylon, India and Malaya, was much more moderate in tone. It deplored the racial policies of South Africa and some consequences of their enforcement; it deprecated policies based on racial discrimination; it requested in paragraph 3, action by Member States, within the Charter, to bring about the abandonment of these policies; it affirmed that such policies violate the Charter and the Declaration of Human rights; it noted (in paragraph 5) that "these policies have led to international friction and that their continuance endangers international peace and security"; it called upon South Africa to bring its policies and conduct into conformity with its obligations under the Charter.

The time for decision was, as is not uncommon under United Nations procedures, very short. I consulted my senior colleagues. The resolution had been up before - in the previous Assembly in November, 1959, when Australia had abstained. In the events that had happened and were happening, we instructed the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations to vote for this resolution, having first reserved our position on paragraph 3 (as it then stood, without a reference to action being "within the Charter") and on paragraph 5.

Mr. Plimsoll, with our complete authorisation, repeated salient passages of Mr. Hood's speech and then said :-

"But, having made this clear, the Australian delegation will record its vote in favour of the Resolution. This it does so as not to have its position misinterpreted. It does not support the policy of apartheid and it joins with other countries in calling upon the Government of the Union to bring its policy and conduct into conformity with its obligations under the Charter. To achieve this result, it is, we think, necessary to vote for the resolution as a whole. But so that there will be no ambiguity deriving from the Australian vote, it is to be understood that Australia does not support all the elements of the resolution and that, in particular, it is strongly opposed to suggestions of sanctions against South Africa, and that it does not accept the idea that international peace and security are endangered, as stated in paragraph 5 of the Resolution".

It has been said that this action contradicts my attitude over South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth. Clearly therefore, the difference



between a Commonwealth matter and a United Nations matter must be cleared up.

The General Assembly of the United Nations is a deliberative, not an executive body. It offers opinions, which are of course, entitled to great weight. If it chooses to offer views upon the conduct or policy of any country, those views will be offered, with every member nation free to speak.

Resolutions are proposed, and votes are taken.

The Commonwealth is a different matter. It is, in a loose but real sense, a special organisation under the head of the Commonwealth, the Queen. Its membership grows out of a special history, and is not conditioned by rules or procedures of the United Nations. Members stand in a very special relationship one to another - a relationship quite different from that of members of the United Nations.

The Commonwealth has hitherto existed without resolutions or votes except in such a case as that which arose in 1949, when India became a Republic and when a new constitutional structure or practice was adopted unanimously. The Prime Ministers meet in private for a frank exchange of ideas and information. They have discussions of an intimacy which is quite impossible in the United Nations. They frequently exercise more influence over one another than they perhaps realise at the time. Their strength is in their very variety. In a paradoxical sense, part of their strength is in their differences - of history, of background, of traditions, of personality. They advocate their own views, but they do not sit in judgment. This year there were suggestions made by some Prime Ministers that the Commonwealth should "show what it stands for" by propounding a code of principles, or a new "Bill of Rights", observance of which would presumably become a condition of new or confirming membership. I want to state quite clearly that I most strongly opposed any such notion. I said that it would give rise to problems of interpretation under a host of changing circumstances; that it would encourage legalisms in a body previously happily free of them; that it could well lead to charges and counter-charges of breach; and that the old happy and profitable search amid differences for unities and understanding would be replaced by an emphasis upon disagreements. The British Commonwealth, I said, could not long survive such a development.

I went on to say, as I say now, that a written code of "principles" could not stop short at racial problems, which are in any event not peculiar to one Commonwealth country. It would presumably set out some of those great elements which are part of our heritage; the rule of law, the sovereignty of Parliament, no imprisonment without trial, an uncontrolled press.

The famous Balfour formula of 1926, which set out for the first time to define the Commonwealth, used three expressions which are to-day either inaccurate or not generally accepted.

practice that Commonwealth Conferences do not discuss the internal affairs of member countries Ministers availed themselves of Mr. Louw's presence in London to have informal discussions with him about the racial situation in South Africa. During these informal discussions Mr. Louw gave information and answered questions on the Union's policies, and the other Ministers conveyed to him their views on the South African problem. The Ministers emphasised that the Commonwealth itself is a multi-racial association and expressed the need to ensure good relations between all member states and peoples of the Commonwealth."

I know of nothing which has happened since May 1960 to convert the internal affair of South Africa into a matter warranting intervention by the Commonwealth, except that it has been widely debated, and the policy roundly condemned.

I hope that nobody will suggest that Dr. Verwoerd admitted that apartheid was no longer a domestic matter. What he did was to face the fact that on this occasion, with his continuation of Membership application before the chair, debate about apartheid was inevitable.

However, the departure of South Africa has happened, and I have no heart to enter into needless arguments about it. But let us, who are within the covenant of the Commonwealth, make no mistake. The issue concerns more than South Africa; it concerns the whole character and future of the greatest international partnership the world has yet seen.

One should, perhaps, hesitate to speak of J.C. Smuts, the great Commonwealth man, who, be it remembered, first expressed the policy of separate development in South Africa, but whose contribution to freedom cannot be reckoned inferior to that of any man now engaged in public affairs. But in 1960, after the Prime Ministers' Conference and on invitation by the University of Cambridge I delivered the first Smuts Memorial Lecture. My subject was "The Changing Commonwealth".

I will quote, for my present purpose, just one passage from a paper to which I devoted the thought and experience of half a life-time.

"We do not meet as a tribunal, to sit in judgment upon each other, or to ventilate intra-Commonwealth issues. We are not a super-state.

During the recent tragic episodes in South Africa there were not wanting suggestions that South Africa should be expelled - presumably by majority vote - from the Commonwealth. Any such suggestion, in my opinion, misconceived the nature of our association. We do not deal with the domestic policies of any one of us, for we know that political policies come or go with governments and that we are not concerned with Governments and their policies

so much as we are with nations and their peoples. If we ever thought of expelling a member nation of the Commonwealth it would, I hope, be because we believed that in the general interests of the Commonwealth that nation as a nation was not fit to be our associate."

These words come back to me to-day. Under inexorable pressure, South Africa is out of the Commonwealth. It is not the Verwoerd Government that is out. It is the Union of South Africa; the nation evolved by the great Liberal statesmanship of 1909; the nation of Botha and Smuts; the nation from which, in two wars, soldiers fought side by side with our own, the 1st South African Division being alongside our 9th Division at El Alamein; the nation which provided lines of supply to the Middle East at a time when the Mediterranean was an acutely dangerous sea; the nation, over 45% of the voters of which recently voted to remain within the direct allegiance to the Throne; the people, three quarters of whom, as men of colour, to whom we have a great and brotherly responsibility, might reasonably be presumed to find some of their future hopes of emancipation in the membership of the great Commonwealth.

I hope I may look to my fellow members of this Parliament to share in my sorrow at these unhappy circumstances.

I therefore now turn to a statement on apartheid, a statement now rendered both permissible and necessary. I preface it by emphasising that I was not, in London or here, concerned to defend apartheid, which, indeed, I condemn. My great object was to defend the interests of my own country.

I deeply resent the attempt that has been made in some quarters to suggest that, as I wanted to keep South Africa in the Commonwealth, I should be taken to favour or condone the shooting of natives at Sharpeville. That incident shocked the world, and me.

I am against apartheid; against some of the modern manifestations and practices because they offend the conscience; against it as a basic policy because it seems to me to be doomed to a most terrible disaster. But we are a fair-minded people, and we should try to understand how the basic policy came to be adopted, and what it was originally designed to achieve. What I will say will be by way of explanation and not by way of defence.

In 1917, while in London as a distinguished member of the War Cabinet, Smuts made a notable speech on South African problems. He said :-

"Instead of mixing up black and white in the old haphazard way, which instead of lifting up the black degraded the white, we are now trying to lay down a policy of keeping them apart as much as possible in our institutions. In land ownership, settlement and forms of government we are trying to keep them

apart, and in that way laying down in outline a general policy which it may take a hundred years to work out, but which in the end may be the solution of our native problem. Thus in South Africa you will have in the long run large areas cultivated by blacks and governed by blacks, where they will look after themselves in all their forms of living and development, while in the rest of the country you will have your white communities, which will govern themselves separately according to the accepted European principles."

In our thinking this idea is now outmoded; it is much too severely applied; humane modern political ideas are against it; it will fail disastrously.

But in every country in which there are large numbers of people of different races, millions of European stock, millions of coloured stock, the problem must arise as to whether there should be separate development, or integration, with equality of political and social rights within the same geographical area. This, to me (and I still refer to the original policy), is essentially a problem of statesmanship. It has moral aspects if, in the pursuit of one policy or the other inhumanity is practised, injustices occur, or the dignity of man is debased. But the initial judgment is one of statesmanship.

The problem exists in many countries; but it is most acute in South Africa. I am profoundly grateful that we do not have it in Australia.

It is against this background that I criticise what South Africa does about a problem which is its problem, not ours.

I think that the policy will, if it continues to be applied as it is now, end in the most frightful disaster. Dr. Verwoerd told us in London what his government is doing, in the fields of health and education in particular, for the Bantu, both in the Bantu territories or "homelands", and in the ordinary provinces. He demonstrated that South Africa was spending very much more on these purposes than any other African country. He saw the Bantu, in the territories, coming up by stages to self-government, as we see the people of Papua and New Guinea. But he saw no prospect of equal political rights for the Bantu living and working in the ordinary provinces. Nor did he seem to me to envisage (if, indeed, such a thing be practicable) a complete territorial as well as a racial division of South Africa, so that all members of each race might be completely self-governing in their own place. As he knows from what I have said to him, both in conference and out of it, I think there is a fatal flaw in this policy. The more zealously the Union builds up the minds and bodies of the Bantu, the more certain will it be that the day will come when, conscious of their own human dignity, their capacity, and their strength, they will no longer tolerate the status of

second-class citizens. And, when that day comes, they will demand their due, not in an atmosphere of evolving friendship, but with hostility and, for all we know, violence. The ultimate conflict, as I said in London, may be bloody and devastating.

There are, to us, certain astonishing things in the application of the policy which have, I think, done much to alienate world opinion. One of them I, and others, earnestly discussed with Dr. Verwoerd in London. The Union does not accredit or receive diplomatic missions to or from Commonwealth countries in Asia and Africa. This discrimination is, to me, offensive to the great countries concerned. I pointed out that there is great value in such exchanges, and that to deny them is to suggest some notion of racial superiority, intolerable in form, and utterly unjustified in fact. I did my best to point out to him that even this one diplomatic step would do something to lessen the tension which we all wanted to see relaxed. But Dr. Verwoerd was adamant on this point, as on others. He felt that there would be a grave risk of "incidents" arising from public opinion and private action. I said, in vain, that it was better to accept these risks than to incur the certainty of mounting hostility.

A phrase has been coined to the effect that I have "equated" apartheid and Australia's immigration policy. This is quite untrue. One policy relates to a discriminatory policy in respect of people already permanently resident; the other, our own, to a discrimination in the admission of persons for permanent residence. I hope I do not need to be told that the two things are quite different. I have always been grateful to my friend, the Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaya, for his warm and helpful recognition of the validity of our policy and of our right to adopt it.

But the whole point that I make is that, while I believe that our immigration policy is both wise and just, is based not upon any foolish notion of racial superiority, but upon a proper desire to preserve a homogeneous population and so avert the troubles that have bedevilled some other countries, it is a domestic policy. And the right to determine our domestic policy is part of our sovereignty as a member of the Commonwealth.

In short, what I have been saying is that the rule of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign communities in the Commonwealth, once broken, may be broken again in the future. Such a development would concern us all very deeply.

Before leaving the London Conference, I would like to say that in the course of a general review of the world situation, several of the Prime Ministers mentioned the matter of Continental China. No conclusion was either sought or arrived at, reports to the contrary in a section of the press being quite untrue.

But I think it my duty to the House to put it in possession of the views presented by me.

I said that I thought there was much loose talk about "recognising" Continental China as if the problem admitted of a simple answer. I pointed out that we have here a complete nest of questions. Diplomatic recognition, for example, was a bi-lateral matter. Some nation might be unwilling to "recognise" in this sense, while being willing to admit Continental China to the United Nations. But then there were further considerations. Was Continental China to include Formosa? Were the inhabitants of that country to be handed over to the control of the Communists?

And then, supposing that Continental China accepted, as a condition of admission to the United Nations, the exclusion of Formosa (the "two Chinas" solution) was Formosa, as an independent nation, to be cast into outer darkness, or was she to become herself a member of U.N.? Who was, in any such events, to have the permanent seat on the Security Council, with its right of veto? And, supposing that, as many nations feel, the Security Council should be broadened by the addition of further permanent and temporary members (I have heard countries like India, Pakistan and Brazil mentioned), should the new permanent members be permanent in the sense of not needing to be re-elected, or should they also have the veto?

I have re-stated these points to the House as a warning against over simplification, and not as containing any suggestion that Australia's policy on the matter is in process of change. It was stated fully in this House by Mr. Casey (as he then was) and that statement stands.

After the Conference, I attended a meeting with Mr. Heath, the Lord Privy Seal, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Soames, the Minister for Agriculture, on the problem of the European Common Market, and its relation to the Free Trade area, i.e. the problem of "the seven" and "the six".

As Honourable Members know, our position is that, so far from complaining about the 6-power treaty we have seen in it great political as well as economic value. But we believe that some wider association which would include Great Britain is desirable if Western European unity is to be achieved and maintained.

But we have our special interests to protect, particularly our exports of primary products both to Great Britain and Europe. I made it clear to the United Kingdom Ministers that before any negotiation calculated to lead to an offer or "agreement in principle" took place, Australia expected the fullest consultation.

In that sense, I said, consultation was essential when ideas were in process of formulation, and not after they had become either fixed or presented. I received an explicit assurance that this rule should be observed. There was also agreement to my suggestion that our officials should meet to examine whatever specific proposals might be put forward within a month or two.

Subsequently, I was able to have a talk with Mr. Lloyd about the possibilities of Australian entry to the London loan market during 1961. As Honourable Members know, Treasury approval is needed in such matters. Mr. Lloyd was most helpful and favourable, subject of course to amounts and details which always have to be worked out near the chosen time for an issue. Incidentally, I found that our London stocks were strong in the market; and our credit good.

Finally, I speak of the SEATO Meeting at Bangkok. Among those present were the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, the U.S.A. Secretary of State, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, and the foreign ministers of France, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines. The principal subject was LAOS. That country's future - in or out of the Communist orbit - is very important. It is one of the countries covered by the South-East Asian Treaty. It has a long common frontier with Thailand, a member of SEATO. It is vulnerable to aggression from North Vietnam and Communist China. The civil conflict is conducted by relatively small forces, and, in its own way, life goes on. In such circumstances, Communism has a happy hunting-ground.

But for SEATO, Laos is important in terms of defence. It provides a test of the significance and effectiveness of a treaty organisation created to resist Communist aggression. For, if Laos passes into Communist hands, where does the process end? There are grim thoughts in this for Australia.

The conference proved to be both understanding and invigorating. All representatives went away feeling and saying that SEATO had been given new significance and force. We finally evolved a Resolution which was, in spite of some anticipations of differences and difficulties, unanimously approved. I had the satisfaction of playing an active part in its drafting and acceptance.

It has been published, but I table it formally for the information of Honourable Members.

At this stage, I will content myself with a few observations :-

1. We all agreed with the proposals made by the United Kingdom to the Soviet Union that there should be a cease fire, a revival of the I.C.C. to supervise the Cease Fire and the stabilisation of the local scene, and an International Conference of the kind which gave rise to the Geneva Accords in 1954.
2. We all felt that there should be created in Laos a more broadly based government which could, by commanding wide support in Laos, eliminate avoidable causes of international strife.
3. We made it clear that we did not wish Laos to become a "satellite" of either the Communist or the non-Communist Powers. We desired it to be independent, united, sovereign and neutral. We felt that if Laos were unaligned with any power or group of powers, no good excuse would arise for further Communist intervention.
4. We had, and I now more than ever have, great hopes that the Soviet Union would accept the United Kingdom proposals. But we affirmed that, should there continue to be an active military attempt to obtain control of Laos, members of SEATO, are prepared, collectively and in the terms of the Treaty, to take whatever action may be appropriate in the circumstances. We all hope and believe that no military intervention will be necessary. There can be no actual commitment of forces except by the decisions of governments. I say this because I would wish to dispose of any idea that SEATO is either truculent or aggressive. But it is necessary to say that if, unhappily, collective SEATO action is forced upon us, we will need to act together or find SEATO weakened and destroyed.

I must not dwell on these possibilities. At present, we have high hopes of a peaceful settlement and should concentrate our efforts upon it.

Before I conclude, I would like to say two things.

The first is that this statement of mine, though inevitably expressed very largely in the first person - since I have been actively and personally concerned in these matters, and have no desire to escape my great personal responsibilities - expresses the views of Cabinet, which has taken a full share in its preparation.



The second is that I have had no desire to rehearse differences, or merely to criticise decisions already taken. But over a period of a quarter of a century, it has been my privilege to have something to do, or say, or write, about the Commonwealth. It is something dear to our hearts. It means and will mean much for sanity and tolerance in a grievously troubled world.

We shall play our part with as much vigour and determination as in the past. We maintain our faith in the Commonwealth, in its value to its member nations, and in its ability to make constant and notable contributions to the peace and prosperity of the world and of all its peoples. Controversies have arisen about my own attitude towards recent events. It is, if I may say so, only just that my reasons for my views should be plainly stated to the Australian Parliament, which has given me its generous confidence for so many years, and to the Commonwealth of which I have tried to be a loyal servant.

## MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS

FINAL COMMUNIQUE - MARCH 17th, 1961

The Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers was concluded to-day. Pakistan, Ghana and Cyprus were represented by their Presidents. The other Commonwealth countries were represented by their Prime Ministers.

It had been agreed that on this occasion the Prime Ministers would concentrate their main attention on a limited number of specified problems which are currently of common concern to them all - namely, disarmament, the structure of the United Nations and certain constitutional problems affecting the Commonwealth itself. At the outset of the Meeting, however, the Prime Ministers held a general review of the international situation as a whole, in order to set these particular problems in the perspective of current world events. They also considered, in the course of their Meeting, recent developments in the Congo and in South East Asia.

The Prime Ministers re-affirmed the support of their Governments for the efforts of the United Nations to restore order in the Congo and to secure the independence and integrity of the Republic. They deplored outside intervention in the Congo and recognised that many of the problems which had arisen were due to such intervention. They considered that the United Nations forces in the Congo should be strengthened and that the Security Council resolution of 21st February should be fully implemented.

The Prime Ministers noted with concern the situation which had developed in Laos. They expressed the hope that the parties would be able to reconcile their differences, that intervention from outside would cease, and that Laos would be enabled to enjoy an independent, neutral and peaceful existence.

The Prime Ministers held a full discussion on the problem of disarmament. They recognised that this was the most important question facing the world to-day and considered that a favourable opportunity was now at hand for a fresh initiative towards a settlement of it. They agreed that the aim should be to achieve general and complete disarmament, subject to effective inspection and control, on the general lines indicated in the statement in Annex 1 of this communique. They recalled the resolution on general and complete disarmament which was adopted unanimously at the 14th session of the General Assembly. They agreed that every effort should be made to implement this resolution by agreement between the major powers, and that further negotiations for this purpose were necessary. Certain proposals designed to promote such negotiations have been put by various countries before the United Nations.

The Prime Ministers expressed their hope that the negotiations on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, which were due to re-open at Geneva on 21st March, would lead to the early conclusion of an agreement on this subject. Such an agreement, apart from its importance in itself, would provide a powerful impetus towards agreement on disarmament generally.

The Prime Ministers considered the various proposals which have recently been put forward for changes in the structure of the United Nations - including, in particular, the structure of its Councils, the position of the Secretary-General and the organisation of the Secretariat. They recognised that such changes could only be made with general consent. They agreed that, whatever adjustments might be made, it remained vitally important to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to preserve the international and independent character of the Secretariat. They further agreed that members of the Commonwealth shared with all nations a fundamental common interest in maintaining the integrity of the United Nations as a force for orderly political, economic and social progress throughout the world.

The Prime Ministers also discussed certain constitutional questions relating to Commonwealth membership. The conclusions reached were announced in communiques issued on 13th, 15th, and 16th March relating, respectively, to Cyprus, South Africa, and Sierra Leone. The text of these communiques is reproduced in Annex 11.

## STATEMENT ON DISARMAMENT

### Aim

1. The aim must be to achieve total world-wide disarmament, subject to effective inspection and control.
2. In view of the slaughter and destruction experienced in so-called "conventional" wars and of the difficulty of preventing a conventional war, once started, from developing into a nuclear war, our aim must be nothing less than the complete abolition of the means of waging war of any kind.

### Principles

3. An agreement for this purpose should be negotiated as soon as possible, on the basis of the following principles -
  - (a) All national armed forces and armaments must be reduced to the levels agreed to be necessary for internal security.
  - (b) Once started, the process of disarmament should be continued without interruption until it is completed, subject to verification at each stage that all parties are duly carrying out their undertaking.
  - (c) The elimination of nuclear and conventional armaments must be so phased that at no stage will any country or group of countries obtain a significant military advantage.
  - (d) In respect of each phase there should be established, by agreement, effective machinery of inspection, which should come into operation simultaneously with the phase of disarmament to which it relates.
  - (e) Disarmament should be carried out as rapidly as possible in progressive stages, within specified periods of time.
  - (f) At the appropriate stage, a substantial and adequately armed military force should be established, to prevent aggression and enforce observance of the disarmament agreement; and an international authority should be created, in association with the United Nations, to control this force and to ensure that it is not used for any purpose inconsistent with the Charter.

4. On the basis of the above principles, it should be possible, given goodwill on both sides, to reconcile the present differences of approach between the different plans put forward.

#### Negotiations

5. The principal military powers should resume direct negotiations without delay in close contact with the United Nations, which is responsible for disarmament under the Charter. Since peace is the concern of the whole world, other nations should also be associated with the disarmament negotiations, either directly or through some special machinery to be set up by the United Nations, or by both means.

6. Side by side with the political negotiations, experts should start working out the details of the inspection systems required for the measures of disarmament applicable to each stage, in accordance with the practice adopted at the Geneva Nuclear Tests Conference.

7. Every effort should be made to secure rapid agreement to the permanent banning of nuclear weapons tests by all nations and to arrangements for verifying the observance of the agreement. Such an agreement is urgent, since otherwise further countries may soon become nuclear powers, which would increase the danger of war and further complicate the problem of disarmament. Moreover, an agreement on nuclear tests, apart from its direct advantages, would provide a powerful psychological impetus to agreement over the wider field of disarmament.

8. Disarmament without inspection would be as unacceptable as inspection without disarmament. Disarmament and inspection are integral parts of the same question and must be negotiated together; and both must be made as complete and effective as is humanly possible. It must, however, be recognised that no safeguards can provide one hundred per cent protection against error or treachery. Nevertheless, the risks involved in the process of disarmament must be balanced against the risks involved in the continuance of the arms race.

9. It is arguable whether the arms race is the cause or the result of distrust between nations. But it is clear that the problems of disarmament and international confidence are closely linked. Therefore, while striving for the abolition of armaments, all nations must actively endeavour to reduce tension by helping to remove other causes of friction and suspicion.

CYPRUS

Communique issued on 13th March, 1961

At their meeting this morning the Commonwealth Prime Ministers accepted a request from the Republic of Cyprus for admission to Commonwealth membership. They invited the President of the Republic to join the Meeting.

SOUTH AFRICA

Communique issued on 15th March, 1961

At their meetings this week the Commonwealth Prime Ministers have discussed questions affecting South Africa.

On 13th March the Prime Minister of South Africa informed the Meeting that, following the plebiscite in October, 1960, the appropriate constitutional steps were now being taken to introduce a republican form of constitution in the Union, and that it was the desire of the Union Government that South Africa should remain within the Commonwealth as a republic.

In connection with this application the meeting also discussed, with the consent of the Prime Minister of South Africa, the racial policy followed by the Union Government. The Prime Minister of South Africa informed the other Prime Ministers this evening that in the light of the views expressed on behalf of other member Governments and the indications of their future intentions regarding the racial policy of the Union Government, he had decided to withdraw his application for South Africa's continuing membership of the Commonwealth as a republic.

SIERRA LEONE

Communique issued on 16th March, 1961

The Prime Ministers noted that Sierra Leone would attain independence on 27th April, 1961.

They looked forward to welcoming Sierra Leone as a member of the Commonwealth on the completion of the necessary constitutional processes.

THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF SEATO,  
BANGKOK, MARCH 29th, 1961

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R E S O L U T I O N

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Having examined the situation in Laos and the Republic of Vietnam, the Council unanimously approved the following resolution :-

1. Consulting together as provided in the Manila Pact, the SEATO Council has noted with grave concern the continued offensive by rebel elements in Laos who are continuing to be supplied and assisted by Communist powers in flagrant disregard of the Geneva Accords.
2. The Council once more makes it clear that SEATO is a defensive organization with no aggressive intentions and reiterates, in the words of the Treaty "its desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments".
3. The Council desires a united, independent and sovereign Laos, free to achieve advancement in ways of its own choosing and not subordinate to any nation or group of nations.
4. It is believed that these results ought to be achieved through negotiations and cannot be hoped for if the present fighting continues.
5. The Council notes with approval the present efforts for a cessation of hostilities and for peaceful negotiations to achieve an unaligned and independent Laos.
6. If those efforts fail, however, and there continues to be an active military attempt to obtain control of Laos, members of SEATO are prepared, within the terms of the Treaty, to take whatever action may be appropriate in the circumstances.
7. The Council also noted with concern the efforts of an armed minority, again supported from outside in violation of the Geneva Accords, to destroy the Government of Vietnam and declared its firm resolve not to acquiesce in any such takeover of that country.
8. Finally, the Council records its view that the Organization should continue to keep developments in Laos and Vietnam under urgent and constant review in the light of this resolution.