

Commonwealth obviously depends to some extent on the right kind of relations with each other. It depends even more on our relations with other nations outside the Commonwealth, particularly with the United States.

This freedom to enter into defence arrangements outside the Commonwealth is of greater importance than any precise set of obligations which could be drawn up - and agreed - on an exclusive Commonwealth basis. Recent developments prove this.

For the defence of North America, Canada and the United States have, for instance, joined their efforts and their resources since 1940. Two members of the Commonwealth, Canada and the United Kingdom, are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and share with the United States in the defence of the North Atlantic area. In the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand have recently joined with the United States in the Anzus pact. In the Middle East, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have been participating with other states in the planning for a Middle East defence organization. And in the United Nations action in Korea, a number of Commonwealth countries are sharing with the United States and other United Nations governments the task of resisting aggression. If it is true, then, that the Commonwealth is not in itself a closely-knit defence organization, it is also true that adequate defences cannot be built in any area without the participation and the support of at least some of the countries of the Commonwealth.

Another sphere - a new sphere - in which it seems to me that the Commonwealth is an instrument of great potential value is in the complicated and delicate matter of relations between free Asia, on the one hand, and North America and Western Europe on the other.

The new Commonwealth ideal is one of helpful and practical co-operation between Western and Asian nations. It is based upon recognition of the contribution which the three Asian members of the Commonwealth can make to the strength and stability of the free world.

India, Pakistan and Ceylon are over-populated, under-developed countries with political, social and economic problems of a magnitude which would stagger any Western statesman if he were suddenly confronted with them. These countries may be old in the arts of civilization and steeped in ancient culture and philosophy, but as political entities, they are new and are faced with the problem of building in a few years cohesive and stable national societies which will provide a good life for hundreds of millions who have known little but distress and want in the past.

We should remember this when we tend to get impatient at what we consider to be the "neutrality" of a country like India in what is to us a desperate struggle between the forces of Communist imperialism and free democracy. The struggle may not present itself in those simple terms to people who have only recently emerged from colonialism; millions of whom live under the recurring threat of starvation and who may be pardoned for thinking that hunger and want and servitude are a worse enemy than Marxism and the Kremlin.