

I should like to lay special emphasis upon the value I find in having the Prime Ministers of the Asian members of the Commonwealth at our conference table. The histories and cultures, the people and problems of these nations, are so different from our own that it is of great value in dealing with major international affairs to have the benefit of discussions with their leaders

The development of Asian nationalism is one of the great historic movements of our time. Indeed, in some ways it is more comprehensive and significant than the rise of militant communism. The wise counsel of the outstanding Commonwealth Asian leaders of this great movement is something I find most helpful in trying to understand the perplexities of this complicated world in which we must now accept our share of responsibilities.

The London communiqué indicated the main subjects we discussed. They include our relations with Soviet Russia, the problem of security and stability in Europe, the current situation in the Middle East, the developments in South-East Asia, our relations with China, the economic position of the countries in the sterling area and the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In addition, there were many private talks on a variety of subjects, and those members of the Commonwealth who are linked by special defence agreements, such as NATO, met to consider certain aspects of defence policy.

I cannot, of course, give a detailed account of the discussions which were held in confidence and on which we issued this agreed statement. I should like to take a minute or two, however, to say a little from my own point of view about several of the matters we discussed.

First, on relations with Soviet Russia, the communiqué makes clear that we all felt that the changes that have been taking place in the Soviet Government, and its attitudes and policies, may have more than merely a feigned or superficial significance. Events will tell. This situation offers opportunities for improvement in our relations with Russia and perhaps opportunities for the settlement of outstanding difficulties between Russia and the Western nations. All Commonwealth governments plan to seek and use such opportunities and will welcome any improvement in relations with Russia which they may make possible. But the changes that have taken place are not such that we can have confidence that the danger of war has been removed. In view of this and of the tremendous Russian military power, and the evidence we have had in the past of the possibility of aggressive intentions, I believe we must continue to maintain an effective modern armed strength, primarily of course as a deterrent against attack. Such preparedness, however, need not prejudice an improvement in our relations and the development of a greater degree of mutual confidence which would be a more secure foundation for a lasting peace.

In the discussions on China we exchanged views, of course, on the recognition of the government on the mainland. While the views of most of us are already fairly well known, I found the discussions both informative and helpful. I recognise the force of the arguments about the importance to Asia of having its largest country fully participating in the