

capitals the world over; and their valued weekend retreat is now, perhaps, the closest the leadership of our world society ever comes to glimpsing the reality of the human family. In these intangibles, lie some of the Commonwealth's greatest strengths, and they derive from the reality of the Commonwealth's changed condition.

What are the issues that concern today's Commonwealth? Pre-eminent among those that have dominated Commonwealth attention since it began its transformation has been the process of decolonisation - the movement to freedom from colonial rule. Linked firmly, and naturally, to that has been concern with the struggle against racial oppression. Given the composition of the Commonwealth and the history of its member nations, it was entirely predictable that these should have been the overriding pre-occupations of the Commonwealth...that the Commonwealth should have accorded the highest priority to furthering the principles of self-determination and non-racialism.

Enlightened post-war British policies have greatly helped to advance the processes of decolonisation. Today, the Commonwealth's greatest concern in this area is with those remaining enclaves in southern Africa where these processes have not been allowed to advance toward their inevitable outcome, namely Rhodesia and Namibia.

In Rhodesia, the Commonwealth has striven long and strenuously for a peaceful transfer to majority rule. It needs to be remembered that these many efforts have been frustrated consistently, and with rising intransigence, by an illegal regime that never even claimed to represent more than a mere 5% of the total population. Over ten years, they have rebuffed every attempt to reinstate constitutionalism and negotiate a future based on the equal rights of all people. In doing so, they unquestionably drew strength from those outside Rhodesia who by intention or by default helped them to believe that they could build walls against the tide of history. There could have been no greater dis-service than to sustain them on so futile and disastrous an enterprise. That armed struggle in Rhodesia became a reality was a measure of that dis-service and one that Commonwealth Heads of Government at Kingston in mid 1975 foresaw an 'inevitability' if the opportunities of a negotiated installation of majority rule were once more missed.

I say this not without restraint, for we are even now at a moment of opportunity. But, even this moment can itself be missed if we lose our perspectives or allow them to be distorted by an appeal founded on misplaced conceptions of rights and wrongs.

The basic objective in Rhodesia to which all Commonwealth Governments are committed is independence on the basis of majority rule. If Dr. Kissinger's recent efforts have contributed to advancing us closer to that goal they are no less laudable because late. They deserve, and have received, Commonwealth support to the extent that they tend to the achievement of those objectives and to meeting them now and not in a precariously deferred future. And those efforts will need to be sustained and their promise fulfilled by a continuing adherence to the objective of self-determination.