

The Soviets have maintained with increasing vigour their assault on the United Nations and also on the Secretary General. Notwithstanding smiles toward Washington, there is much evidence that the Soviet Union is not preparing genuinely for a period of calm and conciliation.

Everywhere over that Conference came the shadow of Communist China, the leaders of which country show an even greater thirst for domination and influence in the uncommitted world than does the Soviet Union. The Prime Ministers were acutely conscious of these uncertainties and dangers. We dealt at some length with the current international situation, and I will deal with that on another occasion.

### Momentous Change

What I intend to do today is mainly to emphasize the momentous change that took place in the future relationship of the Union of South Africa with the Commonwealth. Some may say this is being emotional, but my mind goes back to February 1917, when for the first time I had an idea of what this Commonwealth might be. The expression was not in general use at that time, although it had been originally used some 25 years prior to that date. I saw the King going to open Parliament in the darkest days of the war escorted by three or four troops of Boer cavalry, all of whom had served against Britain only a matter of 14 or 15 years before. All of us saw, too, the contribution made by the Union of South Africa in two World Wars.

Even before the meeting it was very clear that this would be the focus of general attention. I do not think it is an overstatement to say that in the long history of these Commonwealth or Empire meetings -- we have had ten since the war -- no issue so severely strained or tested the flexible bonds of the Commonwealth association as did the one which faced this Conference.

You will recall that South Africa first raised the question of its future relationship with the Commonwealth at the meeting of the Prime Ministers in May, 1960. The Foreign Minister of that Union gave notice of the intention of his country to hold a referendum on the question of whether South Africa should adopt a republican form of government. At the same time he asked for advance approval of its continuance of membership, or readmission to the Commonwealth. At that time we gave to this problem a two-fold reaction; the Prime Ministers affirmed that the choice between a monarchy and a republic was entirely a matter for South Africa to decide, but they also agreed unanimously, and I intend to read this because it represented a change in the Commonwealth relationship which had previously existed --

"In the event of South Africa deciding to become a republic and if the desire was subsequently expressed to remain a member of the Commonwealth, the meeting suggested that the South African Government should then ask for the consent of the other