

*Commonwealth Conference*

put forward at the meeting. I agreed that conditions should be such that the government of mainland China should be in the United Nations; but I pointed out to those who held this view without qualification that for many years communist China was an aggressor in Korea, which was an obstacle to this kind of recognition and admission, and at the present time there is another and important obstacle to this recognition and admission—this formal admission—to the United Nations in that there are many governments, including our own, that could not accept the extension of communist rule from mainland China to Formosa without the approval and consent of the people of that island, and until that difficulty in some form was removed it was not going to be easy to recognize the right of a government in Peking to be the government of China in the United Nations and extend its authority over the island of Formosa.

The meeting of the prime ministers received a very full report from the prime minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, on the difficulty between Malaysia and Indonesia and the efforts his country had made to end the fighting, through discussion with the government of Indonesia and other governments. In that connection—and I think this is a very useful paragraph in the communiqué—the prime ministers expressed not only their hope for an early termination of a totally unnecessary contest forced on Malaysia by a larger country but gave their support to the prime minister and the government and people of Malaysia in their effort to preserve and maintain their own independence against that kind of pressure. This was subscribed to by all 18 members of the conference. We will be welcoming the prime minister of Malaysia to Canada in a very few days, and I am sure we will then have an opportunity to express to him the admiration we feel for the strength and patience of his government in the face of the very difficult situation which confronts them.

With seven of the 18 commonwealth countries now on the continent of Africa, it was to be expected that a good deal of attention would be directed to that vast and important part of the globe, as indeed was the case at the last commonwealth conference. The main concern of the leaders of the African countries, as expressed at this conference, was with two things; first, the attainment of independence for those areas in Africa which still remain under colonial regimes; and second, the achievement of racial equality.

The discussion accordingly concentrated on three areas where independence has not been achieved, or where racial equality is not permitted, or both; the Republic of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. The African commonwealth leaders at the conference argued very strongly—indeed forcefully—and very emotionally for the imposition of economic sanctions against the Republic of South Africa in order to bring pressure on its government to end the policy of apartheid. The communiqué states the reaffirmation, in which all members of the conference joined, of condemnation by the commonwealth governments of that policy, a condemnation which was given at the last commonwealth conference. However, the communiqué also reflects the doubts of some as to whether a program of sanctions would be effective and whether, indeed, it might not have adverse results through hardening still further the attitude of the present government and the white element of South Africa against the racial equality that the African leaders want to see achieved in that country and in Africa as a whole.

As far as our own position, which was put to the conference, is concerned, we do agree that there should be sanctions in respect of military equipment and supplies. So far as total economic sanctions are concerned, this matter is now before the United Nations. A committee has been set up to investigate the effectiveness of sanctions, and we will certainly wait until we get the report of that committee.

As far as the expulsion, as a form of sanction, of South Africa from the United Nations and from international agencies under the United Nations is concerned, we felt that this was not a very helpful procedure to adopt from the point of view of those who deplore most vigorously the policy of South Africa. We felt it is better to have them in these international agencies, where they can be exposed to public opinion and where their policies can be attacked, than to have them outside of the international agencies, including technical international agencies.

As far as the Portuguese colonies are concerned, the view of the African leaders was clear. They want to see independence for those areas as for the rest of the continent; and in the communiqué there is an expression of regret—not a very strong expression but a little stronger than it may seem in a diplomatic communiqué covering 18 countries—