

In its name, the United Nations, for instance, has decided that a former colony like Italian Somaliland, weak and poor and primitive, is to be given the privilege and the responsibility of governing itself as a sovereign state. It may well prove to be unequal to the responsibility. The national urge, however, cannot be stopped. Nor should it be, although it might, with advantage, accept some guidance and develop some appreciation of the inevitability, and the permanence, of gradualness!

This fragmentation of political society, resulting from the triumph of the national idea, must presumably run its course before the opposite trend towards closer international political association can make general headway. One example of what I mean is to be found in the British Commonwealth of Nations. That association rests firmly in 1952 on the only basis which would be accepted by its members, their complete national independence. Now that this has been achieved, however, there is less constitutional and political sensitiveness than formerly about the closest possible co-operation between those members. Yet such co-operation does not express itself in organizational forms so much as in the practice of consultation, and in the desire to work together, a desire which cannot always be realized because of the differing interests and circumstances of the member-states. These differences make any centralized formal organization of the Commonwealth extremely difficult, if not impossible, but they do not prevent a close, almost a family, relationship. That relationship, and other things, now provides a very important link between East and West, as three of the independent members of the new Commonwealth are India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

At present, then, movements towards national independence and towards international organization run side by side throughout the world.

The latter movement, whether it finds expression in the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or the European Council or Defence Community - and I propose to say a few words about all three - is, of course, bound to have an effect on the traditional concept of national sovereignty.

As a principle of international law national sovereignty has meant that states will not brook any interference with their domestic jurisdiction by other states or by international organizations, through decisions which they have not themselves accepted. The more developed and politically mature countries have, however, gradually been coming to realize as a result of their actual political, military and economic experiences, that their security, indeed their very existence, may require some modification of this doctrine of exclusive national sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction, which was once considered sacrosanct.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the Soviet Union, which calls itself a progressive people's democracy and is based on a supra-national ideology, now often poses as a determined adherent and defender of the doctrine of full national sovereignty and opponent of international intervention or supervision. The Soviet has, in fact, an almost pathological concern for national sovereignty and the equality and independence of states, whenever any form of international action is proposed which would lay its own territory or its own domestic activities open to examination by others. On other