



# Bulletin

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## PRIME MINISTER ON COMMONWEALTH LEADERS' MEETING

*On his return from the Commonwealth heads of government conference in Singapore, visits to Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Indonesia and brief stops in Iran and Germany, Prime Minister Trudeau made the following statement to the House of Commons on February 1:*

...The meeting was, as the House is aware, the first regular Commonwealth conference to take place outside of London, and the first at the head-of-government level to be sited in Asia. I think that an Asian location was most fortunate, partly because it was in Asia that momentum was first initiated for the Commonwealth to be transformed from its older, more confining structure into the widely representative association which it is today, and partly because an Asian site permitted conference delegates to live and work in a newly-independent community in which racial harmony is a necessary fact of life. The world, as we know but so often tend to forget in the immediacy of our own domestic problems, is populated to an overwhelming degree by persons who are desperately poor and whose colonial experience in many instances leads them to question the values and the sincerity of the developed countries. All too often as

well, "rich" and "white" are regarded by them as synonymous. We forget these facts at our peril.

In Singapore it quickly became apparent that the future of the world will not necessarily be determined in accordance with European conceptions. The Commonwealth, viewed from Singapore, presented challenges to the ingenuity and goodwill of its members to find ways of communicating across differences measured in many instances by thousands of miles and by centuries of experience, yet without insisting upon adherence to preconceived notions or attitudes. In the result, the value of the Singapore conference might best be described in terms of the comprehension gained by delegates, and not by the persuasion which anyone attempted to exercise.

### SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

The conference dealt with a number of important issues, foremost among them the contentious issue of arms sales to the Republic of South Africa. I am relieved, as I am sure are all here, that, following consideration of factors affecting the security of maritime trade routes, the members agreed to the formation of a committee to study these questions as they relate to the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans in hopes of resolving some of the complex variations and differences of view. I am also pleased that an amended Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, which had been presented earlier to the meeting in its basic form by President Kaunda of Zambia, received the unanimous support of the meeting. Each of these measures confirmed to a large extent the belief by most heads of government that the Commonwealth association is important; one that is capable of contributing significantly to a better understanding among men of their common ideals and aspirations, their fears and problems, and their increasing interdependence in a technologically complicated world.

The agenda at Singapore permitted wide-ranging discussions of political and economic trends in the world, of the possible consequences of the entry of

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