

# DIPLOMACY

## The Commonwealth: Crossed Swords in Kuala Lumpur

As usual, there were several issues on the agenda for the latest Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, this year in Malaysia, but the meeting was dominated yet again by polarized views about South Africa. The latest difference of opinion, however, was unprecedented and somewhat puzzling in that Prime Minister Mulroney and his British counterpart, Margaret Thatcher, became involved in a public scrap over the question of sanctions.

The puzzling aspect is that when the leaders of the 49-member organization issued their customary communique, Mrs. Thatcher's signature was there for all to see. She evidently had agreed, among other things, that sanctions had begun to influence policies in South Africa, that the Commonwealth should investigate ways of tightening financial sanctions and reinforcing the arms embargo, and that an independent agency should be set up to review and report on South Africa's financial links. The ink was barely dry on the communique, however, when Mrs. Thatcher issued a separate statement dissociating Britain from the aforementioned points in the joint statement. Mr. Mulroney immediately denounced the British prime minister, his anger possibly heightened by embarrassment over the fact that he had seconded Mrs. Thatcher's endorsement of the original communique. 'Where would we be ... if all 49 member nations began issuing dissenting papers,' he asked. According to British officials, their leader dismissed Mr. Mulroney's comments as 'astounding and appalling' for their suggestion that any Commonwealth member should be precluded from explaining its positions. 'We are amazed that the Commonwealth finds free speech so inconvenient', one said. However the ques-

tion remains: why did Mrs. Thatcher sign the joint communique in the first place?

Canada's basic position, as expressed by External Affairs Minister Joe Clark, was that sanctions could be tightened generally if the new state president, F. W. De Klerk, did not move further on apartheid. 'We are not interested in stopping here', Mr. Clark said. 'We are interested in stopping apartheid.' On the other hand, a mooted severance of diplomatic ties apparently has been

ruled out for the foreseeable future. Prime Minister Mulroney disclosed this during an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, saying that he had considered recalling Canada's ambassador this summer but had been dissuaded by representatives of the African National Congress. They apparently felt that by having a voice in Pretoria, Canada would be better placed to influence the De Klerk administration than if the embassy was closed. —KAP

Helen Suzman, the self-styled 'tough old bird' who was for years the lone critic of apartheid in the South African parliament, echoed Mrs. Thatcher's opposition to tighter sanctions. Speaking to the National Press Club in Ottawa, she said that sanctions were 'totally counterproductive,' pointing out that since the international arms embargo had gone into effect, her country has developed its own industry and is now one of the world's biggest arms exporters.

## Ninth Summit of The Non-Aligned Movement

The idea to create a third force in world politics was first voiced at the April 1955 conference at Bandung, Indonesia. Jawaharlal Nehru, prime minister of India and Gamal Abd-el Nasser, president of Egypt, were the moving spirits. The aim was to create an organized "third force" in the then developing East-West confrontation.

The Non-Aligned movement got its formal start at its first summit, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961. Now, the movement's 9th summit was held, again in Belgrade. It suffered again from internal controversies between the radical Non-Aligned, such as Cuba, Libya, Nicaragua, North Korea, and the pragmatists. The result was an at times heated discussion, but no progress toward an agreed policy line.

The meeting, incidentally, provided yet another indication of Canada's growing influence in world affairs. Canada was invited to attend with observer status. The Canadian government demonstrated its interest - and appreciation - when it sent as its representative the Minister of External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark.

### FOOTNOTE

The no doubt most extravagant suggestion made at the Non-Aligned summit in Belgrade came from Libya's Moammar Gadhafi: to solve the Palestinian problem by forcibly resettling the Israelis in Alsace-Lorraine, of all places.

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