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### THE COMMONWEALTH

Whereas in NATO Canada is associated with a group of nations situated in a restricted geographical area and having similar Western orientations, in the Commonwealth Canada finds itself in a grouping that spans civilizations and cultures from every continent. Indeed, the main significance of the Commonwealth lies in its role as a link between nations of great diversity in origin, geographical location and interests. The Prime Minister of Malaya referred to this characteristic during his visit to Canada in October of 1960. "Though the peoples of Malaya and Canada are thousands of miles apart in distance, and completely different in race, religion and colour," he stated, "yet our countries share a mutual understanding of the ties which link our lands and our peoples in friendship as members of this association we cherish. I and my people have great faith in the fellowship of the Commonwealth as a unifying force in the world torn by conflict between opposing aims and ideas."

The value of the Commonwealth as an agency for the long-run as well as the short-run promotion of international understanding has received greater recognition as its membership has expanded. The United Nations, of course, fulfills this same function on a virtually universal basis, but the Commonwealth has special advantages for the establishment of good relations among a smaller and more intimately connected group of nations.

Many of the questions which will loom largest in the councils of the Commonwealth in the years ahead arise from the dramatic developments taking place in Africa. The United Kingdom's association with Africa has already resulted in the inclusion of two new sovereign member states in the Commonwealth and it can be expected that this process will continue.

The entry of Nigeria into membership in the Commonwealth on achieving independence on October 1 is a continuation of the process that began with the entry of Ghana into the Commonwealth on March 6, 1957. As Prime Minister Macmillan said in an address to the South African Parliament on February 3:

Today, the same thing is happening in Africa. The most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is of the strength of this African national consciousness. In different cases it may take different forms but it is happening everywhere. The wind of change is blowing through the continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact. Our national policies must take account of it.

#### Commonwealth Membership

At the conclusion of the meetings of Commonwealth prime ministers which took place in May 1960, the Commonwealth leaders paid particular attention in their *communiqué* to the questions that were expected to arise in the future with respect to membership in the Commonwealth. They took the following decision: "The ministers reviewed the constitutional development of the Commonwealth, with particular reference