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The Commonwealth in a Changing World

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The Commonwealth in a Changing World

MARGARET DOXEY

For more than forty years following World War II the relatively stable parameters of the Cold War defined East-West relations in terms of ideological and strategic rivalry. These parameters also permitted the emergence of non-alignment as a foreign policy orientation, a choice of client regimes to each superpower and, in some cases, a choice of patrons to leaders of Third World states. In the last few years, however, the international landscape has altered dramatically and with astonishing speed. Familiar landmarks have been swept away in a tidal wave of change. A divided Germany and Soviet control of eastern Europe are now history; indeed the former Soviet Union has vanished, replaced by independent republics, held by tenuous bonds in a Commonwealth of Independent States. Russia, the dominant republic, has succeeded to the Soviet seat on the United Nations Security Council. The three Baltic states have regained their independence, and governments there, as in eastern Europe, are struggling to achieve political and economic viability with democratic, free market regimes. Communism as an ideology and as an economic system is discredited, and market forces are blowing through doors and windows which for decades were tightly closed. But the transition from command economies to prosperous market economies is fraught with difficulty, and massive injections of Western aid are now being sought by former communist states. West-East relations now bear some resemblance to North-South relations in that inequality has replaced the 'balance' which characterized the Cold War years.

Inevitably, North-South relations have also changed. Not only is the West the sole source of military and economic assistance for developing countries, but Western attention is concentrated on the political

and economic problems of countries close at hand. Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and the former Soviet republics preoccupy the United States and members of the European Community (Ec), and the problems of more remote and less threatening areas, such as Africa and South Asia, carry much lower priority.

All international organizations, not only those like NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization for which the Cold War was the *raison d'être*, are directly affected by this transformation of the international landscape. The United Nations, with virtually universal membership, has been a considerable beneficiary, assuming a new centrality in world affairs. After decades of stalemate, consensus among the permanent members has enabled the Security Council to act decisively on a number of important issues – not only in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, but also in the final stages of Namibian independence, in sundry peacekeeping operations, and in attempts to bring political stability to Cambodia. The United Nations secretary-general is being encouraged to adopt a higher profile in peace and security matters. There is also an improved atmosphere in the General Assembly where the United States has regained some of the influence it enjoyed in the first fifteen years of the United Nations' existence.

The Commonwealth, which grew out of the former British Empire, must also respond and adapt to this altered world. It was not caught up in East-West confrontation, but as an association linking four developed states with a rapidly growing number of newly independent developing states, its major concerns from the 1960s onwards reflected those of the Third World: decolonization and the eradication of white minority rule in southern Africa; economic development and the redress of global economic inequality. These same themes featured prominently in the work of the United Nations and its agencies; they were also in the forefront of concern for the non-aligned movement and the Organization of African Unity. In the 1990s the international agenda looks different. The Middle East still presents intractable problems but decolonization is no longer an issue. White minority rule ended in Zimbabwe in 1980 and negotiations within South Africa for a new and democratic political dispensation have already begun. On the economic front North-South inequalities persist, compounded by heavy burdens of external debt, but there is no longer talk of a new international economic order. Multilateral development assistance is linked to restructuring of economies under World Bank and International Monetary Fund scrutiny, while bilateral aid has to be shared among an expanded group of recipients which now includes states which used to be a significant source of aid for the Third World. In addition, a new set of issues urgently needs international attention, particularly environmental degradation, the spread of AIDS, and the

control of drug-trafficking across international boundaries.

The collapse of communist regimes has also brought a new emphasis on democracy and human rights. Intense concentration on South Africa's inhumane apartheid system in United Nations and Commonwealth forums was accompanied by an uncritical tolerance of many other regimes whose record in the field of civil and political rights was less than satisfactory. Such regimes are now coming under much closer scrutiny, with implications for their continuing eligibility for Western aid and for the credibility of an association like the Commonwealth which claims to support principles of tolerance and justice and aspires to serve as an exemplar of co-operation.

In the light of all these developments, a review of Commonwealth priorities and structure was obviously needed. Heads of government meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989 decided that this review should not be conducted by officials, as in 1981, but should be dealt with at a higher level. A High-Level Appraisal Group of ten heads of government, assisted by a working group of senior officials, was mandated to identify possible roles which the Commonwealth could play in the 1990s and beyond, and to examine whether its institutions, including the secretariat, were adequately equipped for the task.¹ The outcome of this process will be discussed later in this essay, but first it is useful to outline briefly the character of the Commonwealth as it has evolved over the last three decades.

Recent History

The Commonwealth was able to survive and expand in the second half of the 20th century as a result of the formula set out in the 1949 Declaration of London which allows members to have a republican form of government while continuing to acknowledge the British monarch as the symbolic head of the Commonwealth.¹ But the association's modern structure dates from 1965 when the Commonwealth secretariat, headed by a Commonwealth secretary-general, was set up to act as the central agency handling Commonwealth business. The first secretary-general served for ten years and the second for fifteen. Their terms of office provide a convenient time-frame for a review of recent Commonwealth history.¹

1965-1975

Arnold Smith, a senior Canadian diplomat who was elected by Commonwealth governments in 1965 to head the secretariat, served two five-year terms. Under his capable and imaginative leadership the

secretariat had a smooth launch and managed to prove its seaworthiness in very troubled waters. The Rhodesian crisis which erupted in November 1965 with the white regime's illegal and unilateral declaration of independence (um) threatened to sink the Commonwealth (and the secretariat). In succeeding years Arnold Smith had his work cut out, striving to hold the association together while at the same time building an effective team at Marlborough House in London to tackle tasks formerly performed in Whitehall and to develop new areas of activity.

The Commonwealth weathered the Rhodesian storm and, although the crisis was not satisfactorily resolved until Rhodesia became independent as Zimbabwe in 1980, tensions eased within the association once United Nations sanctions were imposed in 1967. But there were other acute political crises during these years: civil war in Nigeria from 1966 to 1970; in 1971 war between India and Pakistan led to the break-up of Pakistan and the admission of Bangladesh to the Commonwealth, which prompted Pakistan to leave the association'; in 1971 too there was a tremendous row over British arms sales to South Africa; in 1974 Turkey invaded and effectively partitioned Cyprus, a Commonwealth country. In 1973 Britain joined the EC, but this was not such a controversial issue for intra-Commonwealth relations as it had been at the time of Britain's first application to join in the early 1960s. In welcome contrast to the stormy meetings in London in the late 1960s and in Singapore in 1971, the Ottawa Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 1973 ushered in a series of less highly charged biennial summits. 'Club' norms of informality and the free exchange of views were reasserted, and it was not until the question of sanctions against South Africa came to the fore in the mid 1980s that the atmosphere again deteriorated.

Arnold Smith recognized the importance of functional co-operation in underpinning Commonwealth relationships, and in particular the need for a multilateral agency to assist the growing number of new members to acquire much needed manpower skills. An important step was taken in 1971 with the establishment of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), a small-scale but efficient operation, financed by voluntary contributions from all Commonwealth members, with Canada and Britain contributing over 50 per cent of its total funds. From an initial budget of \$1 million, the CFTC steadily expanded its activities until in 1991 its annual expenditure was \$44.8 million. The CFTC provides general technical assistance and specific help with industrial and export market development. It finances fellowships and training and supports a small in-house task force for specialized consultancies.

During Smith's term of office two other institutions were established: the Commonwealth Youth Programme (1973) funded by voluntary contributions and the Commonwealth Science Council (1975) funded by assessed contributions.' As with the CFTC, the secretariat provides administrative services to both.

1975-1990

Arnold Smith's successor, Shridath (Sonny) Ramphal, was elected by heads of government meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1975 and was re-appointed for two further five-year terms. Ramphal inherited an office which had achieved credibility in the eyes of new Commonwealth members as being responsive to their interests without sacrificing the support of the older members, although British official attitudes to the secretariat — as indeed to the Commonwealth as a whole — remained cool, and the usual wariness about expensive and expansive international bureaucracies prevailed in Canberra and Ottawa as well as in London.

Ramphal had a different background from his predecessor. As attorney-general and foreign minister of Guyana, he was prominent in the non-aligned movement and a champion of Third World causes. Predictably, he sought a heightened political profile for the Commonwealth and the secretariat. The themes he emphasized in 1975 were dominant throughout his term of office: the eradication of white minority rule in Southern Africa on the one hand and the redress of global economic inequalities on the other. At the same time Commonwealth functional co-operation in economic and social fields continued to expand.

The long drawn out Rhodesian crisis finally ended 15 years after UDI. Guerrilla warfare and external pressure had undermined the illegal regime and at the Lancaster House conference representatives of the regime and of the liberation movements agreed on a cease-fire and a peaceful transition to independence with majority rule. A Commonwealth observer group monitored the elections, and Zimbabwe became independent in April 1980, an achievement for which the Commonwealth could take some credit.

South Africa was to prove far more intractable. Forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth in 1961, the South African government showed little readiness to make significant concessions to the black population — or to world opinion. Serious internal unrest flared up in 1975-6 (prompting a mandatory arms embargo imposed by the Security Council in 1977) and again in 1985-6, following the introduction of a tricameral parliamentary system which gave some representation

to Indian and Coloured people but none to blacks. Ruthless repression ensued, bringing widespread international condemnation. In the last five years of Ramphal's secretary-generalship, the Commonwealth became centrally involved in the anti-apartheid campaign, taking a high-profile stance on the need for comprehensive sanctions. The failure of the mission undertaken by the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons in 1986 to persuade the South African government to initiate a meaningful dialogue with representatives of the majority of South Africans was followed by a sharp policy split over sanctions between Britain and all other members of the association. Despite heavy pressure which included lobbying by heads of government, public statements by Ramphal and others, and wholesale cancellations of attendance at the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government refused to accept the sanctions recommended by the rest of the Commonwealth, agreeing only to the limited measures adopted by members of the EC. In fact the United States went beyond Britain and the EC: the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act passed by Congress in 1986 over President Reagan's veto imposed a set of sanctions which corresponded closely to those recommended by the Commonwealth.

The isolation of Britain on this issue dominated media coverage at the CHOGMS in Nassau in 1985, at the 1986 London mini-summit, in Vancouver in 1987 and Kuala Lumpur in 1989. Thatcher's confrontational style and obvious disdain for the opinions of fellow Commonwealth leaders[^] did not help to smooth over their differences. The split also produced a political coalition of leading Commonwealth members, notably Australia, Canada, India, and Nigeria, and a standing committee of foreign ministers, chaired by Canada, was established by the Vancouver CHOGM to oversee proposals to widen, tighten, and intensify sanctions. The work of this Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa (CCFMSA)['] was mainly directed to commissioning studies of the effectiveness of various kinds of sanctions, particularly financial sanctions, and of ensuring that the issue continued to receive international attention. But the situation changed dramatically in 1990 when South African President EW. de Klerk released Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, legalized the African National Congress (ANC) and other opposition groups, and set in train the repeal of apartheid legislation. By the time Ramphal left office in mid-1990 it was clear that Commonwealth policies towards the whole southern African region required rethinking. A constructive approach to South Africa could mean Commonwealth assistance in negotiations for a peaceful transition to democracy in that country, while support for neighboring states would no longer have the specific objectives of reducing their economic dependence

on South Africa and resisting its policy of destabilization.

The other major thrust of Commonwealth activity in the Ramphal years, particularly between 1975-80, was in North-South relations. In 1975 the General Assembly adopted the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, with enthusiastic support from the Third World majority but abstentions on the part of Western powers. The Commonwealth was eloquently projected by Ramphal as a possible catalyst for negotiations at the global level, and a number of sound and useful economic studies were commissioned by the secretariat with this objective. Generally, however, the new international economic order proved to be a non-starter, and by 1981 it was clear that there was no disposition on the part of developed countries to enter into global negotiations.

In the 1980s attention focussed on the political and economic problems of small states, of which the Commonwealth contains a large number. Twenty-seven members have a population of less than one million. These states have been helped in negotiations with multilateral international institutions and in many other ways." A particularly useful and practical initiative, sponsored and initially financed by Australia, led to the establishment of an office in New York from which nine small states conduct their United Nations representation and other government business.

Between 1975 and 1990 Commonwealth functional co-operation expanded considerably. The secretariat added new divisions and programmes to address food production and rural development, women and development, and industrial development, while the work of existing divisions and programmes in education, law, health, youth affairs, and scientific co-operation continued to grow. Education, particularly the training of those who can then train others, has been at the heart of many programmes sponsored by the secretariat and financed by the CFTC, and wherever possible experts and consultants are drawn from developing countries. To meet the special needs of exiled Zimbabweans, Namibians, and South Africans, the Commonwealth offered scholarships and distance education facilities. Funds from member governments were supplemented by contributions from United Nations and other sources.

The potential value of distance education throughout the Commonwealth was recognized towards the end of this period when a new agency, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), began work in Vancouver in 1988. Its mandate is to promote human resource development through distance education and the sharing of information services and skills. The COL is separate from the secretariat and like the CFTC is financed by voluntary contributions.⁹

The Harare Heads Of : Government Meeting

The Commonwealth began the last decade of the 20th century with a new secretary-general. Chief Emeka Anyaoku took over from Shridath Ramphal in July 1990, having been elected the previous October at the Kuala Lumpur CHOGM over Malcolm Fraser, a former prime minister of Australia. Chief Anyaoku, a Nigerian diplomat, was appointed to the secretariat by Arnold Smith in 1966 and served as assistant director and then director of the International Affairs Division and as assistant secretary-general. In 1977 he was elected deputy secretary-general (political), a post to which he returned after a brief spell as foreign minister of Nigeria in 1983.

The Commonwealth summit in Harare in October 1991 – Anyaoku's first as secretary-general – differed from previous meetings in focus and tone. South Africa was still on the agenda, with Nelson Mandela attending as guest of the Zimbabwean president, but developments in South Africa had reduced the prominence of the sanctions issue. The United States, the EC, and Japan had either lifted sanctions or were in the process of doing so, and Commonwealth leaders, although unwilling to part company with the pro-sanctions policy of the ANC, accepted the CCFMSA's recommendations for a programmed approach to sanctions removal. The first step was approved: people-to-people sanctions on sport and travel were lifted, and a South African cricket team visited India shortly after the end of the conference. The need for constructive policies, and particularly for foreign investment to enable South Africa to begin tackling pressing social and economic problems, was stressed by the British prime minister, John Major. His conciliatory style was much in evidence at the conference – contrasting favourably with the confrontational approach of his predecessor – but the importance of Britain as an interlocutor in the G-7 and EC, and as a major donor in its own right, no doubt helped to make the Harare CHOGM notable for the absence of anti-British rancour. Both the Australian and Canadian prime ministers were beset with political difficulties at home, which may have militated against strong stands, while other stalwarts of the anti-apartheid campaign were similarly affected. President Kaunda of Zambia did not stay beyond the opening ceremonies, while the prime minister of India, like Prime Minister Mulroney, left before the weekend retreat.

The conference renewed the mandate of the CCFMSA, which will recommend further moves on sanctions as and when appropriate, but a new unity in respect of southern Africa, with stress on constructive initiatives, began to take shape. The CHOGM despatched the Commonwealth secretary-general to South Africa to explore possibilities of

Commonwealth help in hastening political change, requesting him to report not to the CCFMSA but to the members of the High-Level Appraisal Group, augmented by the President of Zimbabwe. This group includes Britain, which the CCFMSA does not. It is also worth noting that the former British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, was one of a group of Commonwealth observers attending the first meeting of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991.

The major item of business at the Harare CHOGM was not South Africa but the adoption of a new statement of mission for the Commonwealth for the 1990s and beyond, based on the work of the High-Level Appraisal Group. In fact, the ten designated heads of government did not meet in January or June 1991, as planned, because of the onset of fighting in the Gulf and a variety of domestic difficulties. They finally convened in Harare on 15 October, one day before the full CHOGM. In the meantime a working group of senior officials which included Lord Armstrong, the former British cabinet secretary, had prepared a report for their consideration. This report formed the basis of the Harare Declaration, adopted by the full CHOGM, which sets out principles and priorities for the association. Heads of government also endorsed criteria for Commonwealth membership and considered plans for the review of the secretariat. Each item merits some comment.

Restatement of Commonwealth Principles

The Harare Declaration reaffirms the Commonwealth's commitment to principles of peace, economic development, observance of international law, support for human rights, and opposition to all forms of racism which were set out in the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles adopted by the Singapore CHOGM in 1971, but it adds some new emphases, notably on democratic values and respect for human rights. The document is rather wordy, but it does contain in paragraph 9 a specific reference to just and honest government' as one of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth. This could serve as a marker for identification of future failure to measure up, but it remains to be seen how effective it will be. The well-established Commonwealth convention that internal affairs of members are not discussed is reflected in the Harare Declaration which restates that the Commonwealth is 'a voluntary association of sovereign independent states, each responsible for its own policies.'⁹ But if the association is to retain credibility, as Chief Anyaoku has been at pains to emphasize," it cannot ignore gross violations of human rights by its own members, and it must demonstrate a commitment to democratic

regimes which are representative of and accountable to their citizens. Living up to these commitments may also be relevant to continued receipt of development assistance. The Harare Declaration refers to 'the extension of the benefits of development within a framework of respect for human rights,' reflecting Canadian and British intimations that aid policy and human rights considerations could be linked.

Priorities for the Commonwealth

The Harare Declaration lists ten areas of concentration for the Commonwealth in the years ahead: protection and promotion of democracy and human rights; equality for women; universal access to education; action to bring democracy and the end of apartheid in South Africa; promotion of sustainable development and alleviation of poverty; extension of the benefits of development (as noted above); protection of the environment; action to combat drug trafficking and abuse, and the spread of communicable diseases; help for small Commonwealth states in tackling economic and security problems; support of the United Nations in the search for peace, disarmament, and arms control.

Paragraph 10 of the declaration contains the only specific example of action in respect of this very extensive agenda. It notes that improved Commonwealth co-operation could include strengthening the association's capacity 'to respond to requests from members for assistance in entrenching the practices of democracy, accountable administration and the rule of law.' The idea of a standing facility to monitor elections, put forward by Ramphal in his 1989 Report to Heads of Government, was not adopted; instead responses will continue to be handled on an ad hoc basis. But already a useful repertoire of practice has developed: in the last two years Commonwealth observer groups have monitored elections in Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Zambia, and there are further requests in the pipeline. While there are other groups and agencies which undertake similar work, the shared traditions and experience of member countries should make the Commonwealth a particularly appropriate body to call on for help.

This raises the possibility of other special Commonwealth strengths. Looking at the worthy, but daunting, agenda set out in the Harare Declaration, it might be wise for the Commonwealth to select a limited number of areas for emphasis. This would also help in projecting an image of accomplishment rather than rhetoric. Education is surely at the heart of Commonwealth concerns and could be given a higher profile; help for small states is also an important consideration for a body which has such a large number of members in this category. It is also arguable that Commonwealth functional co-operation, espe-

cially in skills enhancement, however 'dull' in media estimation, deserves to be highlighted. It is in this area, after all, that Commonwealth co-operation has a direct and beneficial impact on people's lives. Given the new vigour of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era, the need for the Commonwealth 'to help the world negotiate,' to recall Sonny Ramphal's memorable phrase, is no longer apparent, but there are pressing needs in the developing countries which the Commonwealth can help to meet.

Membership

The Commonwealth now has 50 members in all parts of the world (see Appendix A). Pakistan rejoined in 1989 after an 18-year absence, while Namibia became the fiftieth member on attaining independence in April 1990.¹² Forty-six Commonwealth members can be classed as developing states.

Any discussion of membership raises the question of further expansion. Until now a relationship with Britain (or other Commonwealth country) has been the passport to admission, and there would be no problem in readmitting South Africa under a democratically elected representative government. But the new emphasis on democracy and human rights suggests closer examination of eligibility in future. Receipt of an application for membership from Cameroon, plus the possibility of other applications – perhaps from Mozambique which has enjoyed a special relationship with the Commonwealth as a front-line state – made clarification of criteria for joining a necessary exercise. The recommendations of the High-Level Appraisal Group were endorsed by the full CHOGM at Harare.

The historic links and shared traditions which form the basis of Commonwealth membership limit future expansion and avoid a loss of identity and distinctiveness for the association. Admission, or readmission, will be contingent on adherence to the values, principles, and priorities set out in the Harare Declaration. Membership entails acknowledgment of the role of the British monarch as head of the Commonwealth, use of English as a working language, and acceptance of the Commonwealth 'style' of informality and consensus. Members must also be willing and able to participate in Commonwealth consultation and in co-operative programmes such as the CFTC and the cot.

The procedure is for applications to be sent to the Commonwealth secretary-general who then consults all members either by correspondence or, if convenient, at a CHOGM. Cameroon was not admitted to Commonwealth membership at Harare but its application could presumably be reviewed at a future date if it adopted a fully democratic, multi-party system.

The Secretariat

The secretariat and its associated agencies play a key role within the Commonwealth, and any wide-ranging review of Commonwealth roles must include consideration of the secretariat's efficiency and cost-effectiveness in handling existing responsibilities as well as its capacity to respond to changing priorities. Organization, the calibre of personnel, and staff morale are all important — as is the provision of adequate financial support.

The secretariat's basic tasks are to service heads of government, ministerial, and other official meetings and to facilitate intergovernmental co-operation and consultation, but, as pointed out earlier in this essay, its range of activities has greatly expanded over the past 27 years. The establishment of the CFTC as an operational arm was particularly important in making funds available for programmes of practical assistance. The secretariat has, however, remained quite small. Its budget is approximately \$16 million" and the staff complement is 410 men and women drawn from all parts of the Commonwealth. In recent years efforts have been made to increase the number of women in senior posts. Staff work on contract; there is no career service, and recruitment has to strike a balance between the merits of continuity and the need for 'new blood.'

With 24 years in the secretariat and with a unique knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, the new secretary-general was well-placed to undertake reorganization and revitalization on assuming office in July 1990. It was unfortunate, therefore, that the planned meetings of the High-Level Appraisal Group were twice postponed so that the report of the working group of officials and the secretary-general's own Strategic Action Plan were not considered by heads of government until the eve of the Harare CHOGM. The decision to employ outside management consultants to review the organization of the secretariat imposed a further delay. The consultants' report and revised material from the secretariat itself will be considered by senior officials when they meet in Kampala late in 1992, and it will be 1993 before restructuring is put into effect. At the same time continuing economic recession in developed Commonwealth countries militates against increased financial support for the secretariat; the preference is for redeployment of existing resources.'

There is no doubt that some reorganization is overdue. The early pioneering days at Marlborough House are long past and the secretariat has grown like Topsy over the years. Better integration of its work both laterally and vertically would be advantageous for both efficiency and morale. These are issues which the management consultants and senior officials will address with the advice of the secretary-general and

his senior staff, and it is important that they get it right. The secretariat needs to sustain its reputation as a well-managed operation which makes the very best use of existing resources.

In the past the secretariat has always responded to governmentally approved proposals for task expansion: indeed it has often been the source of such proposals. But its very limited resources, both human and material, reinforce the argument that within the overall compass of the Harare Declaration's list of objectives a sharper focus is needed on high-priority items. The secretary-general noted in his 1991 report to heads of government that resources could be re-allocated from 'activities of diminishing importance to those of new priority.' There is, however, a limit to reallocation possibilities, and inadequate financial support could seriously undermine the secretariat's ability to deliver a satisfactory level of service.

Future Prospects

Predictions about the future of the Commonwealth have generally been gloomy and wrong, and the turbulent state of the contemporary international system suggests extreme caution in forecasting. But over the past 40 years the Commonwealth has shown a surprising capacity to respond to changing circumstances and a resilience to internal stress. Continuity is perhaps made more likely because the association has acquired characteristics of other international organizations: regular summit meetings, a secretariat headed by a secretary-general, and a set of principles to which members are committed. It also has its distinctive features: shared experience and administrative traditions, a common working language, and some success in preserving a style of its own. As an association it links countries of north and south and provides a kind of club within which views can be expressed, ideas shared, and advice sought and given on a confidential basis. And it offers a multilateral framework within which bilateral links can be readily cultivated – a point which officials in national bureaucracies acknowledge as one of the benefits of the Commonwealth connection. It also provides a range of services which are extremely useful to its Third World members, particularly the smaller ones. As noted, these services depend on the continued willingness of the wealthier members to pay for them. But they, too, are beneficiaries. John Holmes once wrote that the Commonwealth 'has been more than appears to the public eye,'¹⁶ and his perceptive observation remains true today. Whether it is in informal consultation between governments or in the skilful exercise of quiet diplomacy by the secretary-general, the Commonwealth offers channels

for communications and, at times, a support system not replicated elsewhere.

The end of the period which found Britain at odds with the majority of other members – and eventually with all of them – should ease internal strains. It will also reduce the intensity of media coverage. But restored consensus does not automatically translate into new vitality, and reduced media coverage may be a mixed blessing. It may be wise for the Commonwealth to avoid excessive claims for significant role-playing while making full use of opportunities to contribute in a practical way to international co-operation and to the efforts of members to move to the institution of democratic processes. In the long run one would hope that monitoring elections and advice about the introduction of democratic modes would not be required anywhere in the Commonwealth.

Finally it may be noted that the Commonwealth is fortunate – and unique among international organizations – in having an unofficial, non-governmental dimension.¹⁷ Professional bodies, educational exchanges, sport and cultural activities which have a Commonwealth connotation reinforce the 'official' Commonwealth and help to build people-to-people links of enduring kind.

APPENDIX A: Commonwealth Membership 1992

Member	Joined	Member	Joined
Antigua & Barbuda	1981	Kenya	1963
Australia	1931	Kiribati	1979
Bahamas	1973	Lesotho	1966
Bangladesh	1972	Malawi	1964
Barbados	1966	Malaysia	1957
Belize	1981	Maldives	1982
Botswana	1966	Malta	1964
Britain		Mauritius	1968
Brunei Darussalam	1984	Namibia	1990
Canada	1931	Nauru*	1968
Cyprus	1961	New Zealand	1931
Dominica	1978	Nigeria	1960
The Gambia	1965	Pakistan	1989
Ghana	1957	Papua New Guinea	1975
Grenada	1974	St Kitts & Nevis	1983
Guyana	1966	St Lucia	1979
India	1947	St Vincent &	
Jamaica	1962	the Grenadines	1979

Member	Joined	Member	Joined
Seychelles	1976	Trinidad & Tobago	1962
Sierra Leone	1961	Tuvalu*	1978
Singapore	1965	Uganda	1962
Solomon Islands	1978	Vanuatu	1980
Sri Lanka	1948	Western Samoa	1970
Swaziland	1968	Zambia	1964
Tanzania	1961	Zimbabwe	1980
Tonga	1970		

* Nauru and Tuvalu are Special Members who do not send representatives to heads of government meetings and are not assessed for contributions.

Notes

- i. Members of the group (all of whom had hosted Commonwealth summits) were Australia, Bahamas, Britain, Canada, India, Jamaica, Malaysia (chair), Nigeria, Singapore, Zambia.
- z. The formula devised for India applied to all Commonwealth countries. The process of review when a change from monarchy to republic was sought allowed discussion of South Africa's apartheid system in 1961 and led to its 'forced' withdrawal from membership.
3. Detailed accounts can be found in M. Doxey, *The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Contemporary Commonwealth*, Macmillan, 1989; W.D. McIntyre, *The Significance of the Commonwealth, 1965-1990*, Macmillan, 1991.
4. Against the advice of Arnold Smith. See his *Stitches in Time: The Commonwealth in World Politics*, General Publishing, 1981, 143-6.
5. Assessed contributions to the CSC and CYP for 1991-2 were \$1.3 M and \$3.4m respectively.
6. Exemplified at a press conference attended by the writer where, in response to a query about her reaction to the fact that 49 other heads of government differed from Britain on sanctions policy, Thatcher replied 'I'm just sorry for them.'
7. Its members are Australia, Canada (chair), Guyana, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
8. See *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global System*, Report of a Commonwealth Consultative Group, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 1985.
9. The \$2.7m. provided by Canada for the first five years included a contribution from the British Columbia government. Britain is the other major donor.
10. Harare Declaration, para. This wording is also found in the Singapore Declaration.

- Emeka Anyaoku, 'Fulfilling the Promise of Commonwealth Declarations.' Address at Commonwealth Trust, 5 September 1991.
12. Fiji's membership was stated by the 1987 Vancouver CHOGM to have lapsed with its change from monarchy to republic which denied full citizenship rights to Fijians of Indian descent.
 13. See Stephen Chan, 'Actors, Issues and Instruments in the post-Thatcher Commonwealth,' *New Zealand International Review*, XXVII, no 1, 1992, 9.
 14. The secretariat benefits from some CFTC funds which support its work in providing fellowships and training and other welfare-related fields.
 15. See the Harare Communique, para. to, which states that governments will consider making appropriate contributions to the secretariat if it emerges, after the review, that additional resources are still required.
 16. 'The Commonwealth and the United Nations,' in W.B. Hamilton *et al*, eds, *A Decade of the Commonwealth 1954-64*, Duke University Press, 1966, 365.
 17. The Commonwealth Foundation, an autonomous agency funded by member governments, was set up at the same time as the secretariat to promote co-operation and interchange among Commonwealth non-governmental groups and organizations. Robert Stanfield was chairman of the Foundation, 1987-97

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