CHAPTER IV
DEFEENCE POLICY

The Second World War was the last occasion in which there existed an almost integrated defence policy between Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth. Though war-time collaboration could not obviously continue in peace time, the Commonwealth undoubtedly remained an important factor in Britain's defence policy in the post-war years. The Defence White Paper of 1946 had this to say about co-operation in the field of defence during and after the War.

During the war, collaboration with the Dominions and India has been comprehensive, continuous and effective. The long accepted principle whereby His Majesty's Forces throughout the Empire have been trained, organized and equipped on the same basis, proved its value on the easy and whole-hearted co-operation which took place by sea, land and air, in all theatres of war, between men and women of many races. Behind the forces, collaboration in the field of scientific and technical development, and in the production of munitions and supplies of all kinds, was equally close and thorough. His Majesty's Government in the U.K. acknowledge to the full the tremendous efforts put forward in the common cause by the whole of the Commonwealth and Empire, and earnestly desire to continue in peace the full partnership so magnificently established in war. It will be necessary to consider with the Governments of His Majesty's Dominions and India the way in which the lesson of the war can be applied to promote consultation and collaboration in defence matters during peace. (1)

R.A. Butler expressed the view that the success of Britain's defence policy depended upon the extent to which the strength of the British Commonwealth was properly brought into play. He said that Commonwealth defence should be a joint affair and asked Britain to be a partner and not a universal provider.2


Anthony Eden felt that close collaboration between Britain and other members of the Commonwealth in defence was imperative. Selwyn Lloyd was categorical that "I should have thought it quite impossible to conceive of an adequate defence scheme without their assistance.... I am certain that public opinion throughout the Dominions and in this country is overwhelmingly in favour of effective co-operation, and while public opinion is in that frame of mind, practical steps should be taken to secure the necessary collaboration and co-operation".

Naturally, therefore, the British Government believed that her defence problems could not be viewed in isolation from those of the rest of the Commonwealth. Though she was prepared to lend her full support to any measure of collective defence organized under the aegis of the United Nations, she was keen to maintain and develop ways and means of collaboration in the defence of the Commonwealth. This co-operation had always taken "the practical form of promoting uniformity of organization, training and equipment of military forces, maintaining the closest possible touch between staffs, and interchanging officers in order to promote a common doctrine and outlook in military affairs". This in fact helped to chalk out common plans for military action, to co-ordinate munitions production, and also to co-operate scientists and technicians in research and

3 See his speech in the House of Commons on 5 March 1946. Ibid., col. 243.
4 Ibid., col. 272.
5 Cmd 6923 (1946), p. 10.
development. This perspective defence planning was very effective; it was the main subject of discussion by the representatives of the Commonwealth Governments in London during the spring of 1946.\(^6\)

All this showed that immediately after the war, Britain stood very much for maintaining close co-operation with the rest of the Commonwealth in defence matters. But in view of the enormous difficulties in being the chief co-ordinator of the defence of a vast area, she began to think in terms of regional plans for Commonwealth defence by encouraging regional defence associations.\(^7\) In the meantime, it was demanded in Britain that a balanced peace economy should be restored by all practicable measures, if necessary by way of cutting her defence commitments.\(^8\) But the Government could not yield to this demand, largely because of consideration for the interests of the Commonwealth and Empire. The Defence White Paper of 1947 therefore observed: "The safeguarding of communications is vital to the defence of the United Kingdom, and to the preservation of the links with the other parts of the Commonwealth and Empire, and requires, therefore, the maintenance of forces in various parts of the world".\(^9\)

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\(^6\) Ibid., p. 11.

\(^7\) In order to achieve necessary co-ordination in defence matters of the Commonwealth, Britain proposed the appointment of British Liaison Officers, on a reciprocal basis, in Commonwealth capitals so as to associate themselves with the Commonwealth Chiefs of Staff in studying regional security problems in appropriate regional centres. Ibid. In 1947 UK Service Liaison Staff was posted in Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

\(^8\) Cmd 7042 (1947), p. 4.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 5.
However, during the period immediately after the war, especially after the independence of the Indian sub-continent (which had a significant effect on Britain's defence capabilities in Asia and the Far East), Britain had effected a substantial reduction in the number of armed forces. Though Britain pulled out all her forces from the two new nations - India and Pakistan - immediately after giving independence, they were given adequate assistance in the establishment of their own defence forces. It is notable that Britain did this even though there existed no defence agreements between them and Britain. But, unlike India and Pakistan, when Ceylon got independence in February 1948, she was already in a mutual security pact with Britain, concluded in November 1947. How the Commonwealth was valued in Britain's post-war defence policy was made explicit in the Defence White Paper of 1948. It said:

The security of the United Kingdom is one of the keystones of Commonwealth defence, but equally, the United Kingdom alone, without the support of the Commonwealth, would lose much of its effective influence and power. If war should ever be forced upon us, besides defending these islands, we should have to play our part in defending the resources on which the Commonwealth must rely. The control of communications and of strategic key points is essential to the achievement of this aim. (12)

10 Cmd 7327 (1948), p. 2.

11 For the text of the Agreement see Cmd 7257 (1947). Strangely enough, in 1954, Sir John Kotelawala, Prime Minister of Ceylon, told the Ceylonese House of Representatives that he was afraid of the possibility of a communist invasion from South India. He said that that was one of the reasons why Trincomalee and Katunayake continued to be British naval and air bases in Ceylon and also why it valued the membership of the Commonwealth. See The Times, 8 September 1954.

REGIONAL MILITARY PACTS

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

Britain's declining power position in the world, especially after the independence of the Indian sub-continent, lead her to think in terms of regional defence arrangements with the help of the United States and other Commonwealth countries to ensure not only her own security, but also the security of other Commonwealth members.¹³ She preferred it to an all-embracing Commonwealth defence plan. The North Atlantic Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949, was the first major British commitment in terms of regional defence. By this treaty Britain shared the responsibility with the United States for defending Canada (among other members).¹⁴

A side effect of the Treaty was that it marked the beginning of a new thrust of American influence in Canada, which had its effects on British-Canadian relationship. Taking this aspect into consideration, a Conservative member, Heathcoat Amory, complained in the British Parliament, on 20 March 1950, that there was not enough Commonwealth co-operation in defence. He said: "The fact that there is very

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¹³ The unofficial Commonwealth Relations Conference in London in March 1945 developed the idea of regional defence pacts. See Sunday Times (London), 4 March 1945.

¹⁴ When the Treaty was proposed, L.S. St. Laurent, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, said in June 1948: "We feel that should war break out that affect the United Kingdom and the United States, we would inevitably be involved, and that there must be a great value in having consummated a regional pact whereby the Western European countries, Britain, the United States and ourselves would guarantee each others' security". See The Gazette (Montreal), 21 June 1948.
close co-operation between, for example, between Canada and the United States, is something in which, I am sure, we all rejoice. But the fact, which I suspect, that the co-operation between ourselves and Canada in relation to our armed forces is not as close as it might be, is one about which we have no ground for rejoicing". It is a fact that geographical proximity between Canada and the United States was conducive to growing American influence in Canada. But Britain did not anticipate the extent to which she was losing her influence on Canadian policies. However, Canada joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization because it was jointly sponsored by Britain and the United States.

ANZUS

The victory of the communist revolution in China alerted Britain over the security of Commonwealth countries of Asia and the Far East as well as of her Empire in South East Asia. The Korean crisis underlined the necessity of a stable arrangement to meet a possible Chinese onslaught. Added to this was the fear of the two Dominions in the Far East—Australia and New Zealand—of a Japanese attack. Realizing Britain's inability to answer promptly the threat and ensure their security single-handedly,


16 St. Laurent, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, said earlier in June 1948 that Canada was interested to become a member of a regional pact provided Britain and the United States were members of it. See The Gazette, 21 June 1948.
they sought closer co-operation and help of the United States. On 14 March 1950 Dr Evatt's successor, Percy Spender, stressed the necessity of some form of regional defence pact for the preservation of peace in South East Asia, and made it clear that such a pact "would be rather meaningless without the United States". Therefore he wanted Australia "to build up with the United States somewhat the same relationship as exists within the British Commonwealth".

To ward off the possible threat from Japan to Australia and New Zealand, these Dominions wanted that "Japan must never again be permitted to develop the means of waging war". But at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting of 1951, the two Dominions noticed a marked shift in the British attitude to Japan. In the face of the expansionist tendency of Communist China, Britain, to the dissatisfaction of Australia and

17 It may be noted that as early as 1946, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, Dr Evatt, declared that "Australian security is very largely dependent on our closest co-operation with the British Commonwealth and the United States of America". See Australia, House of Representatives, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 186, Session 1946, pp. 200-01. The idea gathered momentum in the ensuing years. For example, in July 1947, The Times observed that in Australia a feeling was gaining momentum that in the event of another war Britain would be so involved in the home defence against atomic weapons that it would be difficult for her to come to the help of Pacific Dominions in the Far East. See The Times, 6 July 1947.


19 Ibid., pp. 635-36.

New Zealand, felt that Japan should be allowed to defend herself against aggression. 21 Therefore Australia and New Zealand desired greater American involvement in their security problems. 22 This was achieved in signing the ANZUS Treaty on 1 September 1951, which came into force on 29 April 1952. But to get the Treaty signed, the two Dominions were forced to accept the Japanese Peace Treaty, 1951, which, they originally thought, was against their defence interests. Justifying his Government's stand, Richard Casey, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, said: "What we have to do... is to steer a path between the alternative perils of an aggressive and fully armed Japan which can again threaten single handed... and a defenceless and economically prostrate Japan that will present an easy prey to communism and which might become an important part of the general communist threat to world peace". 23 Thus ultimately, contrary to the original intentions, i.e., security from a possible Japanese threat, the Treaty turned out to be a deterrence to the communist threat.

It is worthy of note that ANZUS is the first military alliance a Commonwealth country forged with an outside Power, and excluding Britain. There was a great deal of criticisms in

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22 According to Percy Spender the British response to a Pacific Security Pact was rather cool. So Australia concentrated more to lure the United States to be a party to the Pacific security arrangement. See Percy Spender, Exercises in Diplomacy: The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan (Sydney, 1969), pp. 35–36.

Britain as well as in Australia and New Zealand over Britain's "exclusion" from the Treaty. At the initial stages, Britain was fully consulted on the proposed pact, but she was found to be lukewarm about a Pacific security pact. According to Percy Spender, Australian Foreign Minister, the version that Britain was deliberately excluded from the ANZUS was a 'myth'.

According to him, Britain had "never displayed any inclination to join in a Pacific security pact".

However, it appears that after the initial consultation, there did not take place meaningful consultation between Britain and the two Dominions on the proposed ANZUS Treaty. Percy Spender's account gives evidence that Australia was rather indifferent to British membership of the ANZUS Treaty. As Spender confesses: "I did not, it is true, invite the views of the United Kingdom. I had heard nothing from Bevin, but my judgement, right or wrong, was that she would not join any Pacific Security Pact, certainly not at that point in time, and if she would not, no useful purpose was to be served by asking Whitehall's views on what I was doing". But according to the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, it was partly

24 Percy Spender, n. 22, p. 68.
25 Ibid., p. 69.
26 Ibid., p. 68.
the American hostility to Britain's membership that kept Britain out of the ANZUS Treaty.\textsuperscript{27}

Undoubtedly, the Treaty aroused some hard feelings in the British Foreign Office. It may be recalled that when Britain stressed the need of Commonwealth defence through regional security arrangements, during the post-war period, she thought that her involvement in any such arrangement was a foregone conclusion. But the ANZUS Treaty quickly belied this belief. However, though, sentimentally, there was something to object to the attitude of the two Dominions in this respect, Britain was not unhappy over the new security arrangement for the two Commonwealth countries of the Pacific region. In fact, Britain was desirous of involving the United States in her global security arrangements, in view of her diminishing military position as a great military Power, and in view of her increasing inability to face single-handed, threats to the security of the Commonwealth and empire. However, officially Britain welcomed ANZUS as a "most useful contribution to agreed Commonwealth strategy",\textsuperscript{28} though she was not really happy over the manner in which it was brought about. According to the

\textsuperscript{27} See the statement of Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies on 23 July 1953. He said: "Australia sympathized with Britain's desire to be included in the Pact, but if the United States was not willing to extend membership to Britain, there was nothing that Australia or New Zealand could do about, short of denouncing the Treaty and this Australia would not do, nor did Britain wish her to do so". \textit{New York Times}, 24 July 1953.

British Vice-Admiral Sir Michael Denny, Britain welcomed the ANZUS because it relieved "the British Navy of a great responsibility for defence in the Pacific".\(^{29}\) To quote Kenneth Younger, "I think, undoubtedly, in Britain there was some disappointment that the Australians told that they would have to go ahead without Britain... Dulles was not prepared to link himself with Britain, which had old imperial commitments in the continent... I would say that it was accepted with good grace, but with some reluctance rather than it had actually supported it".\(^{30}\)

Winston Churchill was critical of the ANZUS Pact when he came to power again. On 17 June 1953, he told the House of Commons: "I did not like this ANZUS Pact at all. We did not have an entirely clean sheet in the matter when we took over power. I did not like it at all, and I am greatly in hopes that perhaps larger, wider, arrangements may be made which will be more satisfactory than those which are at present in force".\(^{31}\)

It was this desire for 'larger and wider arrangements' that lead to the formation of the SEATO, in September 1954, designed to

\(^{29}\) Freedom (London), 2 September 1953.

\(^{30}\) Kenneth Younger, Director, Royal Institute of International Affairs, in an interview with the author on 19 October 1970, in London.

meet the challenge of the expansionist tendencies of Communist China in South and South East Asia. But the fact is that the ANZUS Treaty did not prejudice Britain's warmth of feeling towards these two Pacific Dominions. And beyond this, the feeling continued to prevail in Britain that ANZUS or no ANZUS, Britain would automatically go to the defence of Australia and New Zealand, if they were attacked.

South-East Asia Treaty Organization

When the United States initiated the move for broader security arrangement for South East Asia through the SEATO, Britain readily expressed agreement in principle to its broad objectives, since it provided additional security to the region where Britain had colonial and Commonwealth interests. But she was not in a hurry to finalize the Pact, because, among other reasons, she wanted to get sufficient time to explore the possibilities of bringing all the Commonwealth members of South and South East Asia into the ambit of the new arrangement. This unenthusiastic outlook of Britain towards the proposed Treaty lead President Eisenhower to state publicly, on 19 May 1954, that "given co-operation in other quarters", the United States might undertake to forge the proposed pact without Britain. He said that the British membership would not be "indispensable" if Australia, New Zealand, and "some Asian countries" agreed to co-operate with the United States in this regard.33

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32 The Treaty was signed in Manila on 8 September 1954 and came into force on 19 February 1955. Member countries were Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Siam and the United States.

It was the considered view of Britain that any defence arrangement for South East Asia must have the understanding of the Colombo Powers.\footnote{34}{See Anthony Eden’s statement in the House of Commons on 23 June 1954. UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 529, Session 1953-54, cols. 432-33. The Colombo Powers were: India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia and Burma.} Britain knew that some Commonwealth countries in the region—especially India and Ceylon—were critical of the proposed Treaty, India far more strongly than Ceylon. Britain wanted some more time to cool off passions in these countries against the Treaty, so that they could be kept out of the orbit of influence of Communist China and the Soviet Union. During the Dulles-Eden talks on 12 April 1954 in London, Eden emphasized that if countries like India chose to remain outside such defence arrangement, they should be given "every opportunity to participate and should be kept well informed". Dulles was not inclined to entertain any such idea then.\footnote{35}{Anthony Eden, Full Circle (London, 1963), p. 144.} But in the end, the United States agreed first to approach the Governments of the Colombo Powers.\footnote{36}{Ibid., p. 143.} On 31 July 1954, Eden sent a very persuasive message to the Prime Ministers of the five Colombo Powers seeking their support for the Anglo-American Plan for collective security in the region. The message said:

Your participation would do much to determine the nature and policies of the projected organization.
I have always hoped to see the Asian Powers play a
leading role in the defence of South-East Asia. The area is of such importance and its peace is as yet so insecure, that we feel it vital to safeguard its peaceful development and ensure its stability.

Even if you feel that you must stand aside, therefore, I am sure you will understand why we, for our part, shall feel it right to go ahead with such countries as are willing to join us. Though we should still do our best to take account of your views, our task would be far more difficult without your participation, at least in some form. (37)

Besides, with a view to explaining the British stand and persuading these countries to join SEATO, Douglas Dodds-Parker, Britain's Foreign Under Secretary, went on a mission to all the Colombo Powers, including the three Commonwealth members of Asia. Only Pakistan sent a favourable reply to Eden's note and decided to send her representatives for talks on the Treaty.38 Though two influential Commonwealth countries - India and Ceylon - stayed away from the Pact, Britain's entry into the SEATO became inevitable in view of the fact that the entire area, where the United States was trying to dominate, was traditionally her area of influence. Therefore it was unthinkable for her to let this area of influence pass on completely into the hands of the United States. Britain's efforts to take the Commonwealth countries of the region into confidence through a policy of persuasion made the reactions of countries like India and Ceylon against the Treaty less violent than what it would have been if they had not been consulted. The British efforts to bring the

37 Ibid., p. 144.

38 The Statesman (Calcutta), 15 August 1954.
Colombo Powers into the SEATO were mainly because of her consideration for the three Commonwealth countries of the region. Britain thought that even if it failed to bring them within, her efforts would help at least to alleviate their resentment to the proposed Treaty. In that way she wanted to reassure that her participation in the Pact would not effect a rupture in the Commonwealth. Therefore, Britain was able to join the Treaty with a clearer understanding than what it was initially when the Treaty was proposed. She gave adequate attention to the views of Commonwealth countries of the region before she finally made up her mind to join.

Thus in SEATO Britain found an alliance to resist the spread of communism in South and South East Asia. The British objective behind this security pact was spelt out much earlier by the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, in a speech at the Columbia University (New York) on 11 January 1952. He said: "It should be understood that intervention by force by Chinese Communists in South East Asia – even if they were called volunteers – would create a situation no less menacing than that

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39 According to Prof. Northedge, SEATO was forced upon Britain in the face of very serious British reservations, partly from "the British fear that the SEATO would have the effect of hardening the breach between the non-aligned countries of the Commonwealth, especially India in the farthest, and aligned nations like Britain, Canada and Australia, which were committed to the Western side in the Cold War". P.S. Northedge Professor of International Relations in London School of Economics, in an interview with the author on 8 December 1970, in London.

40 Manchester Guardian, 1 July 1954.
which the United Nations met and faced in Korea". Therefore, Britain welcomed this move because of her conviction that it would serve as a bastion against communist expansionism in the region where she had vital Commonwealth and colonial interests. Moreover, through this Treaty, Britain was not only ensured the security of the region, but also felt a little relief in being able to shoulder responsibility for the defence of the Commonwealth in the region. This was so particularly after the announcement of the SEATO defence plan in Washington, in February 1955, when it was officially stated that Singapore would be the central base of the combined British-Australian-New Zealand air force, totalling 500 planes, and that in an emergency the American air units would use air fields in Singapore. The Treaty could remove the anomaly of Britain's exclusion from the ANZUS pact also. However, Britain considered SEATO as a major diplomatic achievement in the growing net-work of anti-communist security alliances throughout Asia. According to J. Hare, a former Minister in the Macmillan Government: "Britain's interest in SEATO was the security of Asian Commonwealth countries".

42 Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur), 11 February 1955.
43 J. Hare, now Lord Blakenham, in an interview with the author on 6 October 1970, in London. Mr Michael Stewart, Foreign Secretary in the Wilson Government also holds more or less the same view. Michael Stewart in an interview with the author on 9 September 1970, in London.
ANZAM

The little known ANZAM, brought into existence in 1948 was an agreement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand to consult and co-ordinate military planning and activities in giving protection to the two Commonwealth countries in the Pacific and Malaya. The term was used to describe the whole complex of British, Australian and New Zealand military arrangement in the area. It was designed to meet the possible challenge of an eventually rearmed Japan and also of the communist insurrection in Malaya. The agreement was informal and did not involve any firm commitment by the governments concerned. At the beginning, ANZAM defence planning was limited to the defence of sea and air communications in the region and the co-ordination was done at the service level. A little later, it was extended to cover the defence of Malaya. Much of the details of this British arrangement is not known, since the documents relating to it have not been made public. But rare public discussions reveal some of its main features. In a Press Conference in Canberra on 27 February 1963, General Richard Hull, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, reportedly said:

ANZAM was not a treaty or written agreement but a term used to denote consultative arrangements for co-ordinating the defence interests of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. No formal document of any kind existed but the arrangements had been in force for nearly

15 years. It covered no precise area, but related naturally to common defence interests in this part of the world. The deployment of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve Forces was determined under the ANZAM consultative arrangements. (45)

He said that it came into existence as early as 1948, and the Air, Naval and Land Forces of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya were under the command of the ANZAM Defence Committee. Broadly the British defence plans in the Malayan area were governed by ANZAM and SEATO. (46) However, the whole complex of this arrangement centered round the security of Australia and New Zealand, and Malaya, which, by and large, was a British responsibility.

In June 1953 it was reported that Sir Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, and Sydney Holland and Robert Menzies, Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Australia, discussed ANZAM with a view to put it on an operational basis. (47) The meeting took place in the light of the major change in the Far Eastern Strategic situation after the signing of the ANZUS Treaty. Following this, in October 1953, it was also reported that in a conference between Britain's Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John Harding, and the Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies and others, that the Australian Government was interested to make ANZAM complementary to the

45 Canberra Times, 28 February 1963.

46 See the statement of the British Prime Minister Macmillan, in Australia, on 5 February 1958.

47 The Times, 11 June 1953. At the meeting the UK Chiefs of Staff were present.
ANZUS and later to effect a liaison between the two which
would give Britain an effective link with ANZUS, so that ANZAM
could provide a link between Britain and the ANZUS.48

In February 1955, the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting
discussed the question of Commonwealth defence, giving special
attention to South East Asia and the Far East, and also of
defence of Africa. A measure they envisaged was the enlargement
of the ANZAM arrangement. The communiqué issued after the
meeting said: "In the course of the conference, representatives
of those Commonwealth countries which have special defence
interests in particular areas will meet together to review plans
for the defence of those areas. The first of these special
meetings was held this afternoon to consider defence
responsibilities under the North Atlantic Treaty and in Europe,
Africa, and the Southern Pacific".49 It may be noted that at
the meeting only the Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia and
New Zealand, and the Deputy Prime Minister of South Africa
were present, but no representative of the Asian members.50
This was so, partly because Britain was handling Commonwealth
defence arrangements on a regional basis, and partly because the
Indian and the Ceylonese Prime Ministers (their countries being
non-aligned) were not in favour of any regional defence
discussions under Commonwealth auspices.

48 The Times, 17 October 1970.
49 The Times, 2 February 1955.
50 Ibid.
ANZAM showed the nature of Britain's vigilance, without any formal agreement, against attacks on Commonwealth countries of the Pacific region as well as in South East Asia. Britain's direct interest in ANZAM was the security of Malaya, for which the ANZAM contribution was quite substantial. In the struggle against the communists in Malaya, Britain got the active assistance of Australia and New Zealand.\(^{51}\) Australian troops went into action in Malaya against communist guerrillas in Malayan jungle on 1 January 1956 and New Zealand troops on 22 January 1956. Even after Malaya's independence, the problem of communist guerrillas' and Malaya's inability to carry on the battle against them single-handedly and also to defend herself against external aggression necessitated continued British military presence in Malaya.\(^{52}\) Hence the military agreement between the two countries, known as External Defence and Mutual Assistance Agreement, signed before Malaya's independence.\(^{53}\) This Agreement, according to Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, made Malaya "indirectly connected with SEATO".\(^{54}\)

51 Cmd 8768 (1953), p. 17.

52 In the Malayan Legislature, Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman said on 2 October 1957: "It was realized by the representatives of the Federation Government that the resources of the Federation would not be sufficient to maintain an army which is strong enough to defend ourselves against aggression and at the same time carry on the fight against Communist terrorists which has menaced our territories for the last nine years". See Malaya, Legislative Council Debates, 1957, col. 3269.

53 For provisions of the Agreement, see Cmd 263 (1957), pp. 1-3.

54 Straits Times, 12 December 1958.
Commonwealth Strategic Reserve

As part of the arrangements for the defence of Malaya through ANZAM, Britain, in collaboration with Australia and New Zealand, created a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to be stationed in Malaya. The Times in a leading article, on 20 February 1953, suggested the need of a striking force to deter aggression. It said: "There is the supremely important task of keeping, and when necessary displaying, a large enough force of fighting men of all arms and trades to deter any possible aggressor from malicious experiments which could lead to general war".55 Similarly, in July 1954, another newspaper Scotsman also wrote strongly in favour of a strategic mobile reserve when the British troops withdraw from the Suez Canal Zone.56 In the British House of Commons, John Strachey stressed the need of establishing of a central Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to deter aggression.57 He suggested that the Reserve should "consist in its nucleus of an active force. It must have, say, at the very least, an active division of the standing army"; and should also have reserve divisions at a very high stage of readiness, capable of being sent abroad at short notice.58

55 The Times, 20 February 1953.
56 Scotsman, 29 July 1954.
58 Ibid., col. 638.
In August 1954 discussions on Commonwealth defence problems and the combining of Commonwealth armies into a complete fighting force, took place in England at the annual Commonwealth military Conference of the Chiefs of Staff of Commonwealth countries. The objective of the Conference was to discuss ways and means of improving co-operation among the armies of the Commonwealth.

At the Conference, opened on 20 August 1954, while Britain showed eagerness to build a strategic reserve in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand thought in favour of a strategic reserve for South-East Asian defence needs.

On 1 April 1955, the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, said that Australia proposed to "participate in the establishment in Malaya as a very important part of the Manila Treaty area, as a contribution to the defence of the Treaty area, of a strategic reserve in which the United Kingdom and New Zealand will participate". He said that this move was welcomed by the SEATO Council at its informal meeting of 7 April 1955. It is believed that Prime Minister Winston Churchill told the

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59 Johannesburg Star, 18 August 1954. New Zealand was represented by not the Commander in Chief but by the New Zealand Army Liaison Officer in London. See The Times, 18 August 1954.

60 The Times, 9 August 1954.


63 Ibid., p. 287.
Commonwealth Prime Ministers in February 1955 that Britain had created a powerful Strategic Reserve capable of being swiftly transported to danger spots in the Commonwealth. The Reserve was strengthened simultaneously when Britain withdrew from the Suez, and would be under the control of the local British command in Malaya, within the framework of the ANZAM understanding. Britain's statement on defence, in 1956, said: "In the Far East, the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have agreed to set up, and have contributed forces to, a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, containing naval, air and army elements, to be stationed in Malaya and Singapore for the defence of that area against aggression. Arrangements for the command of this Reserve and for joint planning have also been agreed and machinery established for this purpose". The Australian contribution to the Reserve was two destroyers or frigates, an aircraft carrier on an annual visit, additional ships in an emergency, an infantry battalion with supporting arms and reinforcements in Australia, a fighter air wing of two squadrons, a bomber wing of one squadron and an airfield construction unit. The British contribution to the brigade was two battalions.

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64 *Dawn*, 2 February 1955.

65 Ibid.

66 *The Times*, 17 August 1955.


69 Cmd 124 (1957), p. 5.
However, as in the case of ANZAM, the basic objective of establishing the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve was to strengthen the hands of Malaya. Since Malayan security was a British responsibility, though it fell within the treaty area of SEATO, she made special arrangements for it, with the co-operation of two other Commonwealth partners in the region. Though this arrangement was very much in force just before Malayan independence, Britain entered into a defence agreement with Malaya, in which, under Article 3, Malaya granted Great Britain the right to maintain in the Federation the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve for the purpose of assisting Malaya in the external defence of its territory and "for the fulfilment of Commonwealth and international obligations".70 The continued presence of the force after Malayan independence was based on this article of the treaty. There was no separate treaty for the continued presence of Australian and New Zealand forces of the Reserve. It was made possible by associating them with the Defence Agreement signed by Malaya and Britain.71 Australia was associated with it by a letter of 24 March 1959, the contents of which were acknowledged in a reply of 21 April 1959 by the Government of Malaya (received by the Australian High Commissioner in Malaya). The letter said:

As you know, the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve referred to in the (United Kingdom-Malayan) Agreement, includes

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Australian forces which are, or may from time to time be, serving in the Federation. Accordingly the various provisions applicable to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, in particular the provisions dealing with the status of forces, apply in respect of these Australian forces. (72)

MILITARY BASES

During the post-war period, Britain maintained a large network of military bases in and around the Commonwealth countries, partly to facilitate the control of her major sea routes and partly to ensure the security of the Commonwealth and Empire. In Australia, Britain, in collaboration with Australia, established an experimental rocket range, at Voomera, with a view to making it the principal Commonwealth centre for trials of supersonic guided weapons.73 Britain’s Air Chief Marshal, Sir William Dickson, after a brief visit to Voomera in October 1952, said that it was the finest bombing range in the world and most elaborately equipped for testing new weapons.74 According to Britain’s Field Marshal Sir John Harding, “Voomera was an universally important and valuable defence asset for the whole of the Commonwealth and free world”.75

The important naval, military and air bases that Britain maintained during the period under review (which had greater

72 Quoted in Alan Watt, n. 68, p. 62.

73 Cmd 8768 (1953), p. 17. Later it was developed as a research centre of missile systems, including air-to-air, air-to-ground and ground-to-ground missiles.

74 The Times, 27 October 1952.

75 The Times, 9 November 1953.
relevance to the security of the Commonwealth) were Simonstown, Suez, Trincomalee and Katunayake and Singapore. Though Britain decided to leave the Simonstown naval base in 1955, in order to enable South Africa to expand her navy, the Agreement in this regard guaranteed the maintenance of the base by the Union and its use by the United Kingdom and its allies in times of war, whether South Africa itself was neutral or not. And Britain agreed to have joint responsibility with the Union for the defence of the sea routes around South Africa. Similarly when Britain left the Suez Canal base, in 1956 on the basis of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement on 19 October 1954, she retained the right to come back, if peace in the area was threatened, though this did not mean much, as subsequent events showed.

The naval base and air force station in Ceylon - Trincomalee and Katunayake respectively - were the other major British bases in the Indian Ocean, forming a buckle in the long line that linked Britain with the Pacific until about the middle of the 1950s. Together, they formed another pillar of British defence strength at the cross roads in the Indian Ocean. But, as in the cases of Simonstown and Suez, in the wake of local nationalism in Ceylon, Britain could not continue in the bases for long. She handed over the control of these bases to Ceylon in 1957.

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76 Cmd 9520 (1955).
77 Ibid.
78 Cmd 9586 (1955).
79 The transfer took place on 15 October 1957 for Trincomalee, and on 1 November 1957 for Katunayake. See Manchester Guardian, 16 October 1957 and The Times, 2 November 1957. Ceylon agreed to pay a compensation of £1,650,000 to Britain over a period of five years for the fixed assets there.
The loss of these important bases in a span of three years created a big void in Britain's defence arrangements; between Cyprus and Singapore, Britain had no bases of her own. But the loss could hardly diminish British interest in the security of Commonwealth countries in the region. When the talk of British withdrawal from Ceylon bases was in the air, Britain was looking for alternate arrangements to compensate the loss in the region. In April 1956, Lord Mountbatten, the First Sea Lord, visited British naval bases East of Suez in an attempt to look for alternatives for Trincomalee and Singapore. It was reported that he suggested Cockburn Sound in Australia, as an alternative for Trincomalee. The other steps she took to compensate these losses were to develop Aden, lying half way between Britain and Singapore, as a staging post and also as a nerve centre to meet the Commonwealth security needs in the Indian Ocean and further East. Similarly Britain concluded an agreement with the Maldivian Government to use Gan, one of the Maldivian Islands, as an air field. This made the air route from Britain to the Far East avoid the territories of India and Ceylon. The development of the army and air force bases in Cyprus was the other major arrangement Britain made for the defence of the Middle East, the gateway of the Commonwealth. Singapore also assumed

80 The Times, 16 April 1956.
81 The Times, 26 May 1956.
great importance in Britain's Far East defence strategy. Since the loss of Trincomalee and Simonstown, Singapore became the only naval base the Royal Navy had with full dockyard facilities. Moreover, it was the biggest British service base outside England. 84 The Tengah Airfield in Singapore, completed in 1961, was Britain's most modern and important air base in South East Asia. Britain considered these bases valuable for resisting communist expansionism, which, she believed, was threatening almost all the Commonwealth countries of South and South East Asia since 1950. The value of these bases to New Zealand and Australia was commented upon by a leading British newspaper in 1961. It wrote that a decision to abandon Singapore "would be a severe shock to Australia and New Zealand who, although in fact relying on the United States to defend them, might feel they had been abandoned".

However, as in other aspects, the Suez crisis had a disenchancing effect on the British outlook on maintaining military bases abroad. Besides a big blow to the British naval and air communications with the Far East, the loss of Suez marked the beginning of loss of British interest in the East of Suez. In the years that followed, Britain closed down a good number of strategic bases in the region. In July 1957 she closed down Royal Air Forces bases, in Sekkong in Hong Kong, by saying that it was of little value against a Chinese attack. 86 In November 1957,

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84 As early as 1948 Singapore was made the Headquarters of the British Pacific Fleet. See The Times, 10 June 1948.

85 "Britain East of Suez", The Observer, 12 November 1961.

86 Daily Telegraph, 9 July 1957.
she decided to close down the naval dockyard at Hong Kong. 87 Again, she decided to close down Malta naval base from 1 August 1958. 88 Indeed, these measures indicated a definite shift in Britain's Far East defence strategy and also in the military policy. The Manchester Guardian in an editorial wrote: "The Government's decision to close down the naval dockyard at Hong Kong in the course of the next two years is a matter for regret, rather than for consternation. It breaks a long and honourable link". 89 But officially, Britain never acknowledged this shift in her attitude towards the Far East defence. In April 1959, Duncan Sandys, British Defence Minister, said in Wellington that Britain would maintain her military forces east of Suez for at least another five years. 90 He said: "Please don't cast doubts on the continuation of the British base in Singapore. Singapore is the pivot of the British military position in the Far East and we have no thought of changing it". 91

There is no doubt that Britain's active interest in maintaining a net-work of military bases at strategic points was to reassure the security of the Commonwealth as well as of her colonies. In keeping these 'outposts' of the Commonwealth in her hands, Britain was in a position to mobilize forces at short

87 The Times, 29 November 1957.
88 The Times, 8 March 1958.
89 "The Hong Kong Dock Yard", Manchester Guardian, 2 December 1957.
90 Daily Telegraph, 7 April 1959.
91 Ibid.
notice in any emergency, for possible use in any member of the Commonwealth. Besides protecting sea routes, her deep commitment in and around South East Asia was to give adequate protection as much to the Commonwealth countries as to her political, economic and strategic interests from the communist and other threats. This was a main British objective in maintaining bases east of Suez, though it was not an economic proposition for her. Of course, Britain was encouraged to play this role by the identical attitude of the United States to contain Communist China within its territory.

The British presence in the bases of the area was of some benefit to the United States, because if Britain had relinquished bases such as Aden or Singapore, it would have had a limiting effect on the American freedom of action and manoeuvrability there at the time of a crisis. Britain's long-standing association with some of the countries in the area and the American collaboration with her were important factors helpful to the United States to intervene in international crises, from these bases, without creating much local opposition. But Britain's special advantage was that she was in a position to intervene temporarily in situations of local disorder, while for the United States it was possible only when a communist threat was apparent. As Maurice Zinkin writes:

There is ... one threat which may make it necessary for Britain to continue to make a contribution to the defence of Commonwealth countries in the Indian Ocean long-term,

and that is the threat from China. This may well be the worst of all threats to world peace over the next generation. Great Britain cannot simply abandon Commonwealth countries, all of which are either poorer or smaller than herself, to face it on their own, so long as they continue to have a desire for assistance. On the other hand, if the threat is to be from China, it cannot be met by Britain on her own. So major a danger to half a continent and to the world balance of power, must be met by the free world as a whole, perhaps with, at least, the tacit help of the Soviet Union as well. (93)

CONSULTATION AND CO-OPERATION

The Korean Crisis

The Korean crisis is an outstanding example in which Britain could successfully co-ordinate Commonwealth opinion and measures during the period under review. It would appear that deterrence of aggression and the maintenance of peace were the main objectives of Britain's defence policy till 1950. But the Korean war in 1950 gave a new dimension to her policy in relation to the Commonwealth since it overshadowed the threat of communist expansionism in Asia. During the course of the war, Britain and other Commonwealth members held more or less identical views. All of them responded to the call of the United Nations Security Council "to furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and restore international peace and security". 94 In fact, there was a move

93 Maurice Zinkin, "The Commonwealth and Britain East of Suez", Ibid., p. 214.

in London to evolve a common Commonwealth policy on the Korean crisis, when the Commonwealth High Commissioners met there during the last week of June 1950. But this could not be evolved, because there were some differences of opinion between Britain and a few other members of the Commonwealth – notably India.

However, in response to the call of the UN Security Council for assistance against aggression, the British Government announced on 27 June 1950, the decision to place its naval fleet in Japanese waters at the disposal of the United States authorities to operate it on behalf of the Security Council in support of South Korea. Following Britain, Canada sent three destroyers and an air transport squadron, and Australia, two naval vessels and a fighter squadron. Though India and Pakistan extended their moral support to the UN measures to resist aggression, they did not extend any military assistance. While India sent a medical unit from her defence forces, Pakistan limited her

95 New York Times, 30 June 1950. Patrick Gordon Walker, the Commonwealth Secretary, met the High Commissioners at the House of Commons on 29 June 1950 and explained to them the need for a 'joint Commonwealth policy' in the Pacific during the emergency.


97 Canada, Department of External Affairs, Canada and the Korean Crisis (Ottawa, 1950), p. 27.


contribution to a gift of 5,000 tons of wheat.  

Despite their condemnation of North Korean aggression, Britain and India took a special care to see that the conflict was not escalated into a Third World War.  

They brought forward some suggestions for the cessation of hostilities. As a solution to the problem, India suggested the admission of China into the United Nations. But Britain did not favour the idea of mixing up of issues like the admission of Peoples Republic of China into the United Nations with the Korean crisis. This view was supported by Australia and Canada. The difference between the two approaches was that, while Britain wanted to settle the problem on the basis of the vacation of aggression, India wanted to prevent further escalation of the Korean conflict and to create an atmosphere for a negotiated settlement.

100 See the statement of the Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on 11 October 1950. Pakistan, Constituent Assembly (Legislature) Debates, vol. 2, Session 1950, cols. 480-2; and also the speech of Ahmed S. Bokhari, Pakistani representative to the United Nations on 29 August 1950. He told Trigve Lie, the UN Secretary General, that Pakistan was unable to send ground troops in view of the Kashmir question. See New York Times, 30 August 1950.


A sudden change in the atmosphere became visible when the Eight-Power resolution recommended that the UN Force might proceed beyond the 38th Parallel to unify and rehabilitate Korea. This led to a marked division of opinion in the Commonwealth. While the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Pakistan supported the resolution, India opposed it on the ground that crossing of the 38th Parallel would lead to a larger conflagration. At a press conference, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said: "We think that the United Nations forces should not go beyond the 38th parallel in Korea till all other means of settlement have been explored". However, the UN General Assembly passed the resolution on 7 October 1950, with 47 votes in favour 5 against and 7 abstentions. India was one of the abstainers. The Assembly passed it on the basic assumption that the People's Republic of China would not actively intervene in Korea. But this belief was quickly belied. The news of Chinese intervention in Korea upset all the calculations of Britain and other Big Powers. Britain took the initiative to allay the fears of China. Her Charge d'Affairs in Peking, Hutchinson, delivered a note to the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the effect that China's boundary would certainly be kept inviolate. India supported this British move. One effect of the Chinese intervention was that

106 The Hindu, 1 October 1950.
107 For the text of the resolution, see GAOR, Session 5, Resolution 376 (V).
108 Cmd 8366 (1951), pp. 21-23.
it brought the older members of the Commonwealth - particularly Britain and Canada - closer to their Asian partners, especially India.

On 30th November 1950, Prime Minister Attlee announced his decision to visit Washington in order to exchange views with President Truman on the current international problems, especially in the context of widespread anxiety that American nuclear weapons might be used in the Korean war. On the eve of his departure for Washington, Attlee had a meeting with the Commonwealth High Commissioners in London, who appraised him of the views of their respective Governments. At the Conference in Washington, held between 4th and 8th December 1950, the British Prime Minister told the American statesmen that he had been in close touch with the Asian members of the Commonwealth and that it was his conviction that the United Nations ought to look at the problem from the point of view of the Chinese communists too. It is to be noted that during the conferences, the Commonwealth Ambassadors in Washington were kept in close touch with the daily developments.

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1951 helped the members to iron out their differences on the Korean question. Since the adoption of the 7th October 1950 resolution

by the General Assembly, the differences between the older members and the newer members, particularly India, on the issue were becoming more and more pronounced, and embarrassing to Britain. It is true that Britain was not in a position to depart radically from the stand taken by Washington. But at the same time, in the interests of the Commonwealth, Britain could not afford to ignore Commonwealth opinion also. When Britain was thus on the horns of a dilemma, she had a good opportunity at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference to probe the inner feelings of the member countries, on the one hand, and make them understand the British position, on the other. The general feeling was that war with China should be avoided. Commenting on the conference, The Round Table wrote that it gave the United Kingdom an opportunity to escape from the dilemma by a diplomatic manoeuvre.\footnote{113 The Round Table, vol. 41 (March 1951), pp. 200–1.}

Though Britain supported the United States resolution branding China as an aggressor, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 February 1951, by 44 votes to 7 with 9 abstentions,\footnote{114 GAOR, Session 5, Resolution 498 (V). Britain, Canada and Australia voted in favour of the resolution, while India against and Pakistan abstained.} the British delegate, Gladwyn Jebb, had his own doubts regarding the wisdom of condemning China as an aggressor. This was in deference to the opinion expressed by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in January 1951 that "we must do what we can to understand those who appear to differ from us". Therefore, he
voted for the resolution after making the provision for sanctions in it dependent on further efforts to come to an agreement with China.\textsuperscript{115} The British delegate explained his Government's stand that his Government deplored the action taken by the Peking Government in Korea and felt that it was only right that the United Nations should take full cognizance of it. Therefore it welcomed that part of the resolution which branded China as an aggressor. But with regard to the question of action against China, he expressed grave doubts on it.\textsuperscript{116}

By the end of May 1951, it was clear that both the belligerents were in favour of a cease-fire, probably because of the revelation that total victory for any one of them was impossible. By then Britain was maintaining constant touch with other Commonwealth members, exploring the prospects of a cease-fire in Korea.\textsuperscript{117} The arrangements for cease-fire were eventually agreed upon and negotiations began from 10th July 1951. The armistice agreement in Korea came into force on 27 July 1953.

The First Commonwealth Division

The Korean war provided a valuable experience in the integration of troops and other accessories from different Commonwealth countries, first as independent brigade groups, and later as the First Commonwealth Division. The British Commonwealth

\textsuperscript{115} Cmd 8159 (1951), pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{117} The Hindu, 3 June 1951.
Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker, said on 1st May 1951 that all the British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and Indian (medical) contingents serving in Korea would be united to form the First Commonwealth Division, United Nations Forces. He said that the Commander of the Division would be a British Officer, A.J.H. Cassels, who was the Head of the United Kingdom Service Liaison Staff in Australia, and the Division would be under the operational control of the United Nations command. But for purposes of non-operational control, it would be under General Sir Horace Robertson, Commander-in-Chief of the British occupational forces in Japan. He said nostalgically that Parliament should welcome the opportunity which the formation of the Division would provide for British forces to serve again with the forces of other Commonwealth partners. The formation of the Division took place on 28 July 1951. In actual performance, the Division was functioning operationally under the American command and administratively under the Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Forces, Korea. Commenting on the performance of the Division, a British White Paper said:

The achievements of the First Commonwealth Division and of the Commonwealth naval and air forces in Korea form an outstanding example of Commonwealth co-operation.

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119 Ibid.

in defence. The Division includes units from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with an ambulance unit from India. United Kingdom, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand naval forces continue to work closely together under the United Nations command and air force units from the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa are operating in Korea. All these units have won the highest praise for their efficiency and determination. (121)

For Britain, the achievements of the First Commonwealth Division and of the Commonwealth naval and air units in the Korean theatre provided an outstanding example of Commonwealth co-operation in defence matters.122 But the First Commonwealth Division, formed in July 1951, ceased to exist on 16 November 1954, and its place was taken over by a new formation of about one-third of its size, but still kept the earlier title "First Commonwealth Division", with units from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.123 There was a certain uniqueness in the function and operation of the Commonwealth Division:

Never before had so many varied units from so many Commonwealth countries been joined together to form one field formation. No one who has been associated with this force or who has served in it either in peace or war can have failed to catch something of the great spirit which prevailed in it at all times and sometimes under the most adverse conditions. History will record its achievements in battle. We shall remember for a long time what it did for a clearer understanding and closer comradeship between the many Commonwealth countries which contributed. (124)

121 Cmd 8768 (1953), p. 17. It was also commented at the Camberley military Conference of the Commonwealth Chiefs of Staff. See The Times, 21 August 1954.


123 Cmd 9395 (1955), p. 3.

124 Ibid.
The Division ceased to exist in March 1956 and its Headquarters, located in Japan was closed down. But the United Kingdom still maintained one infantry battalion, as part of the United Nations forces in Korea under a new title "Commonwealth Contingent Korea". 125

The formation of the Commonwealth Division was the symbol of unity among the Commonwealth countries in solving international problems, in which they had no direct involvement. It is estimated that, during the Korean campaign, a total of 74 warships of Commonwealth navies and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service operated off Korea for varying periods. They comprised 34 ships of Royal Navy (including 4 aircraft carriers and 6 cruisers), 16 ships of Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service, 1 hospital ship, 9 ships of Royal Australian Navy (including 1 aircraft carrier), 8 destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy and 6 Frigates of the Royal New Zealand Navy. 126

A salient feature of the Korean crisis was that Britain's consultation with the Commonwealth was constant and effective. During the crisis, there was near unanimity at every stage between Britain and other partners of the Commonwealth, and among them Britain sought a general consensus. But more important was the impact of the crisis on Britain's defence policy. It made her realize the threat from Communist China to the security of the

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125 See the statement of Mr Head, Secretary of State for War, on 16 February 1956. UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 548, Session 1955-56, col. 287.

Asian members of the Commonwealth and her own colonies there. Britain evolved a new defence policy designed to resist communist expansionism. The 1953 Defence White Paper divided Britain's defence programme mainly into two parts. (1) Her overseas obligations and commitments "in resisting the communist campaign known as the Cold War". (2) The preparations Britain must make together with the members of the Commonwealth and her allies "against the risk that communist policy, whether by accident or design, might force us to defend ourselves against a direct attack".\footnote{127}

\textbf{At the Technical and Professional Levels}

At the technical and professional levels, the Commonwealth was a dominant factor in Britain's defence planning. During the period under study, Britain remained the centre of specialized training for forces of various Commonwealth countries. In reciprocity, Britain also sent officers to the staff colleges in Canada, Australia, India, Pakistan and New Zealand.\footnote{128} Exchange of officers and scientists of different cadres between Britain and other Commonwealth countries was part of this general programme. In 1960, about 1000 British officers were serving in the military forces of independent countries.\footnote{129} It enabled her to share technical knowledge and experience with other Commonwealth countries.

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\begin{itemize}
\item 127 Cmd 8768 (1953), p. 3.
\item 128 Cmd 8768 (1953) and Cmd 9075 (1954).
\item 129 \textit{Sunday Times}, 14 August 1960.
\end{itemize}

Britain was one of the principal suppliers (and in some cases, the only supplier) of military equipment and stores to other Commonwealth countries. Standardization of military equipments between Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth facilitated co-operation between them in defence matters. As a result of the close, liaison maintained at the service level with other Commonwealth countries, Britain could achieve standardization of equipment, weapons and training techniques, to a considerable extent.

Joint Air and Naval exercises, between Britain and other Commonwealth countries, which were regular and frequent, were part of the technical co-operation. They helped each other to study the operational and flying techniques. In an effort to promote the integration of naval research programmes, the Deputy Chief of the Royal Naval Staff and the Chief of Royal Naval Scientific Service visited some Commonwealth countries like Australia and New Zealand in 1953 and 1954. Following this, a Commonwealth Naval Conference was held at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, in 1957, to enable the Commonwealth Chiefs of Naval Staff to study the aspects of the naval strategy and tactics, and also to strengthen further the liaison among the Commonwealth navies. A striking instance of Britain's feeling of oneness with other countries of the Commonwealth was that when

132 For details of such joint exercises see Cmd 8476 (1952), p. 5; Cmd 8769 (1953), p. 4; Cmd 9079 (1954), p. 4 and Cmd 674 (1959), p. 10.
there was a suggestion in 1955 for an extension of Royal Dockyards in England, opinion was aired in the British Parliament that instead of extending them, it would do greater service if fresh ones were established in other parts of the Commonwealth. Thus throughout the period under study, Britain maintained her lead in the Commonwealth naval forces. Besides, as part of her co-operation with other air forces of the Commonwealth, British aircrafts paid periodical visits to other Commonwealth countries.

A close liaison was maintained between Britain and the Commonwealth on land forces too. The British Army Estimates of 1953 revealed that there was constant pressure on Britain from the other Commonwealth countries to exchange information on training matters and to assist them by allotting vacancies at the military schools of Britain. This close liaison was strengthened by meetings between the Chiefs of the defence forces in Britain and of other Commonwealth countries. In 1953 there took place meetings of the Military Staffs of Britain, Australia and New Zealand to consider defence problems in the Pacific and Far East. Following discussions of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in June 1953 the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff visited Australia and New Zealand to hold discussions with other Chiefs on defence strategy of the area. He visited Canada also. The First Sea Lord visited India and


Pakistan. Apart from this, Britain had helped to build up forces of some new Commonwealth countries like Ghana and Nigeria also by loaning or seconding officers and non-commissioned officers and in assisting their training. In 1959, the First Lord of the Admiralty conferred with the naval authorities of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and India on the work of the Far East Fleet. He paid visits to Malaya and Canada also. British policy was thus stated: "The Government will seek to maintain and foster close co-operation in defence matters generally with members of the Commonwealth. This will continue to be effected by normal inter-Governmental consultations, frequent meetings of Chiefs of Staff, the exchange and secondment of officers, the supply of training facilities and regular conferences of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee for Defence Science".

It is evident that Britain's defence policy was not wholly a national policy, but an intra-Commonwealth policy. In view of the decline in the relative power, Britain envisaged a policy of regional defence arrangements to ensure the safety of both her own as well as other Commonwealth countries. In forging such arrangement, she found common cause with many other members of

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137 Cmd 669 (1959), p. 5.
Commonwealth. Resistance to communist expansionism in Europe and Asia became the plank of the general policy of Britain and certain other aligned Commonwealth nations. The communist take-over in China in 1948, and the indication that Russia was turning her eyes towards Asia and Europe, gave a new impetus to British defence strategy in Europe, Asia and the Far East. NATO gave the pattern for other defence organizations to ensure the security of the free world. NATO in Europe was followed up by SEATO (1954) and the Baghdad Pact (1955) in Asia. While NATO made Canada a formal ally of Britain, SEATO tied her up with other Commonwealth members, except India and Ceylon. The Baghdad Pact (later CENTO) also reassured Pakistan's security against communist attack. It is believed that British diplomats often reassured people of Australia and New Zealand that one of the factors behind Britain's commitment in South East Asia was their security.\(^{140}\)

While Britain agreed with the overall objectives of these organizations - containment of communism - Britain desired these organizations to be more broadbased, which could evoke the support of the non-aligned countries like India and Ceylon. Despite patient efforts, Britain failed to bring these countries under the umbrella of these organizations because of their firm commitment to the policy of non-alignment, and partly because of their belief that the Communist China did not pose a threat to their security. At the unofficial Commonwealth Relations

Conference in Lahore in 1954 India argued that there was no
clear evidence to convict China of aggressive tendencies, and
therefore there was no need of a special security arrangement
for the Pacific. The attitude of the Indian Prime Minister
Jawaharlal Nehru, then was: "I am not interested in defence.
The best defence is friendliness". India rectified this error
of judgement in 1960, when Jawaharlal Nehru discussed the
aggressive designs of China with Harold Macmillan when the former
was in London to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting.

Thus the emergence of new non-aligned nations in the
Commonwealth not only weakened Britain's defence potential, but
also made it less possible to have an integrated policy for the
Commonwealth as a whole. Therefore, by the beginning of 1950s
itself, Britain encouraged other Commonwealth countries to rearm
themselves to lessen the burden on her. Though India and
Ceylon, in principle, kept out of these alliances, their security
was of no less concern for British statesmen.

141 The Conference was convened to discuss the question whether
there existed a threat to the security of the Commonwealth

142 The Hindu, 23 June 1956.

143 Sunday Times, 1 May 1960.

144 This was stated by Patrick Gordon Walker, Commonwealth Secretary,
on 12 December 1950. See UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary

145 The attitude Britain adopted during the Chinese attack on India
in 1962 and also during Indo-Pakistani war in 1965, when China
gave ultimatum to India (which are outside the purview of this
analysis), give ample evidence to this effect. During the
Chinese attack on India, Prime Minister Macmillan told the
House of Commons on 30 October 1962: "The British Government
supports the decision of India to defend her frontiers... What
they ask us to do - to help them - we will do". The Times,
31 October 1962.
In the strategic location of Britain's military bases, in and around Asia and Africa, one can see her consideration for the security of Commonwealth countries. Her control over important bases like Aden, Hong Kong and Singapore, for example, was an asset to the security of the Commonwealth countries of Asia, Africa and Far East in so far as it enabled Britain to go quickly to the aid of these countries, if and when required. She believed that she had a special peace-keeping role in the Indian Ocean and considered that her military posts east of Suez were outposts of Commonwealth defence. In fact, the presence of the British air, sea and land power in the area virtually insulated Malaysia from dangers, both internal and external.

An inevitable result of Britain's declining power position was the greater involvement of the United States in the security arrangements of other Commonwealth members, which had a weakening effect on Britain's influence on other Commonwealth countries. The American penetration was so deep that her observers were present at the three week secret Commonwealth conference of senior military officials, in London, in April 1950. Through the military pacts most of the Commonwealth members became allies of the United States. Britain herself became increasingly dependent on the United States for security. But as Professor Miller states, her dependence on America was tempered by agreement.

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146 The Hindu, 8 May 1950. All Commonwealth countries participated. Participants were India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

147 Miller, n. 71, p. 187.
So she could not effectively stop this development, which substantially weakened her influence on other Commonwealth countries. The American involvement in Canada was massive and influential, so that, to an extent, it made the British influence on Canada peripheral. The result was that even Dominions like Australia and New Zealand, who had strong sentimental attachment with Britain, began to treat America on a par with Britain. But interestingly enough, these developments failed to dissipate the British interest in Commonwealth's defence problems.

The maintenance of a uniform pattern in the organization of defence forces in the Commonwealth, their training, and the standardization of military equipments were other influential factors induced Britain to strengthen the military potential of the Commonwealth. During the period under review, the armed forces of most of the Commonwealth countries adopted the British pattern. The regular consultation and co-operation on defence matters, particularly the exchange of information between Britain and the Commonwealth on armaments that each possessed, the exchange of technical and other personnel and the joint naval and air exercises, and the British assistance to them bear testimony to the depth of British concern for the Commonwealth defence. It may be noted that when Britain was

148 Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, disclosed this in New Delhi, in 1956. See *Dawn*, 6 March 1956.

149 The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science was a main forum of exchange of information between Commonwealth countries, specially on defence research and developments.
contemplating drastic reduction in her military expenditure, in the wake of the Suez fiasco, she did not propose to do so at the cost of Commonwealth defence. The resolution moved in this regard, in the House of Commons, on 13 February 1957, by the Minister of Defence, Duncan Sandys, said: "This House welcomes the intention of Her Majesty's Government to meet the essential needs of defence, and our Commonwealth and international responsibilities, while reducing expenditure and demands upon manpower". 150

But by the end of the period under review, Britain began to pay increasing attention to Western Europe, and therefore the emphasis on her strategic planning also gradually began to swing from the Commonwealth to Western Europe. The pro-European trend favoured greater concentration on NATO, and also on a strategic reserve, capable of great mobility, to meet the defence needs of her allies and friends in Asia and the Far East. Prime Minister Macmillan said, in February 1958, in Melbourne, that while Britain's policy was to share the defence burden in Europe, she intended to keep substantial land, sea, and air forces in the East. He wanted the British forces outside Europe a balanced one, and the naval force east of Suez a task force consisting of a carrier and supporting force, based on Singapore, "capable, if need arises, of acting alone". He said that in a major war, in South East Asia

Britain would act with SEATO. "Britain and Australia stand shoulder to shoulder with our great ally the United States. I am convinced that this co-operation must remain the cornerstone of our defence policy in South East Asia as in Europe and the Middle East". In his opinion, the task of the Commonwealth countries was to counter not only military aggression but political and economic penetration, and to prevent uncommitted countries from going over to the communist camp. Britain's defence policy, in the succeeding years, was governed by this basic outlook, in which Commonwealth consideration was a conspicuous factor.

151 Manchester Guardian, 6 February 1958.