

Will the British Commonwealth succeed in global power play?

by Mark Burdman

The British monarchy and its minions spared no efforts, during a series of British Commonwealth events in London and Edinburgh on Oct. 22-27, to propel the Commonwealth into the role of dominant global power for the 21st century. The policy content of these meetings would ensure, however, that the success of any such British power play over the coming years, would amount to a pyrrhic victory. The array of globalist, free trade policies that the Commonwealth countries agreed to, as codified in an "Economic Declaration" adopted in Edinburgh, would ensure, under the conditions of global financial instability and economic breakdown that the world is now going through, a global collapse that would bring the Windsors and their allies down with it.

The pursuit of this globalist package can only accelerate a process *within* the Commonwealth structure itself, of various nations asserting their prerogative as sovereign nation-states, to protect their populations against the ravages of "globalization," "free trade," and the like. Such fissures within the Commonwealth structure were already visible during the week of Commonwealth events, as developing sector Commonwealth nations rallied to defend Nigeria against attempts to impose sanctions on that keystone African nation, and showed resistance to the British on numerous other fronts.

These fissures were all the more problematic for the Windsors, because they occurred after a series of shocks to the royal family in recent weeks. The first, as *EIR* has documented, was the anti-Windsor reaction that erupted in Britain and elsewhere in the world, in response to the monarchy's abominable behavior after the murder of Princess Diana, in Paris on the night of Aug. 30-31. The second, was the challenge mounted by Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, prime minister of the Commonwealth-member nation of Malaysia, in his blasts against George Soros, the mega-speculator who is one of the managers of the Queen's private fortunes. The third, was the disastrous results of the Queen's mid-October tour through Commonwealth nation India, where she suffered one humiliation after another, and drew the hostility of the Indian media and political class (see *EIR*, Oct. 24, "Queen's Disastrous Trip to Pakistan, India Threatens Commonwealth Meet").

Queen Elizabeth and her advisers were hoping that the Commonwealth meeting would be the occasion for them to

rebound from such reverses. But, it is more than likely that exactly the opposite result will ensue.

Royals, royals everywhere

The first of the two events, was the first-ever Commonwealth Business Forum, held in London on Oct. 22-23, and co-sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat, Her Majesty's Government, and the London *Financial Times*. At this meeting, senior business and financial figures from a number of Commonwealth countries devised a battle plan to place the Commonwealth into a commanding position, in controlling world investment and monetary and financial flows. This was followed by the Oct. 24-27 extravaganza in Edinburgh, at which 51 government chiefs, the largest such gathering in history, attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), the first to take place in Britain in 20 years, and the first ever to be formally addressed by the Queen. There too, a stress was placed on building the Commonwealth into the number-one economic-financial power for the coming years; for the first time, the Commonwealth countries issued a specific Economic Declaration, outlining their aims.

The Edinburgh event was carefully orchestrated, stage-managed, and controlled by British officials. Discussion of several important issues was limited, or aborted, at least in public. The monarchy was there, in full force. Not only was there the Queen's formal address, and the presence of the Royal Consort, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. But also in attendance were leading figures of the royal family, including Royal Heir Prince Charles, and Anne, the Princess Royal.

The Tony Blair government put enormous energy into building up the Commonwealth. In every forum imaginable, "Tinny" Blair has been insisting that the Commonwealth is essential to reinforcing what he characterizes as Britain's "pivotal role in world affairs." The Blair government has been much more publicly committed to strengthening the Commonwealth, than was the previous John Major government. In his speeches at both the London and Edinburgh meetings, he kept reiterating his strong personal enthusiasm for the Commonwealth.

Opposition grows

What remains unclear, is whether that neo-imperial drive will prevail over the efforts of certain of the nation-states that constitute the Commonwealth membership, to promote policies favorable to the preservation of their sovereignty and the economic well-being and prosperity of their populations. Readings from various developing sector nations, indicate that a bloc, more or less formal, has taken shape, comprised of India, South Africa, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Malaysia, and perhaps others, which want to assert control over the direction of Commonwealth policy, and make it an institution that would better reflect the wishes and policies of developing nations.

Both Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir and Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral insisted that they would not allow the “reforms” embodied in “globalization” approaches, to devastate their national economies. In fact, Mahathir forced through a pledge that the Commonwealth would “study how countries can be protected from the destabilizing effects of market volatility, including those resulting from speculative activities.” Malaysia’s Foreign Minister Abdallah Badawi explained to the press, that twelve heads of state at the meeting had intervened to express their sharing Mahathir’s “concern over the pressures of globalization, especially on the developing world.”

There were voices of protest raised about other issues. First, on Nigeria, the British had to content themselves with a postponement of punitive actions, for one year. And, Nigerian spokesmen do not seem to be particularly impressed by the prospect of sanctions. As Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi (who did not attend the meeting) quipped to the press, “The Commonwealth is not something we will miss when we are not members.”

Also, from Africa, came the demand for justice regarding restitution of land seized by British colonialists. This was put forward by Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe, who called for Britain to hand over 5 million hectares (12 million acres) of land, seized 100 years ago forcibly by settlers, to the farmers there today. If anyone should pay compensation, he added, it should be the British.

Finally, the issue of leadership, or control, over the Commonwealth was raised, at least indirectly. The secretary general of the Commonwealth, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, a Nigerian, provoked anger and embarrassment when he said, “The head of the Commonwealth is, at the moment, the British monarch.” Although he quickly corrected his statement, by insisting the Queen would be around for some time still, the comment was correctly interpreted as a proposal that leadership be handed over to members other than the British. Rumors had it that South Africa’s President Nelson Mandela and Malaysia’s Mahathir, would be eligible candidates.

But, any approach to “take over the Commonwealth from within,” suffers from an obvious axiomatic flaw, akin to a goldfish swimming in a goldfish bowl, and demanding that the water be changed, while the bowl remains the same. The

Commonwealth, intrinsically, is a rotten institution, controlled at all key points—whether it be the vast Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, or any of the other of the entities that are part of the Commonwealth’s global spider-web of organizations—by the British, or by British-run operatives. There is no chance of “reforming” it. Better that India, Malaysia, and other nations remove themselves from the Commonwealth altogether and form a new “Alliance for Development,” of developing nations committed to a just, new economic order.

A paean to globaloney

The Edinburgh CHOGM summit issued its Economic Declaration under the title, “Promoting Shared Prosperity.” As the title suggests, the verbiage attempts to make some rhetorical gestures, to appease the developing sector nations which make up the vast majority of the Commonwealth population. There is sorrow expressed about global poverty, “growing inequality,” and “obstacles that prevent developing countries playing their full part in shaping the evolution of the global economy.” There are also a few concessions made to such Commonwealth dissidents as Mahathir, as in the above-mentioned issue of speculative activities.

But, the content of the document is overwhelmingly the kind of globaloney that one would expect from an institution that is seeking to become the *primus inter pares* among “globalist,” supranational institutions.

The first point reads: “Today’s globalized world poses both opportunities and challenges. Expanding trade and investment flows, driven by new technologies and the spread of market forces, have emerged as engines of growth. At the same time, not all countries have benefitted equally from the globalization of the world economy, and a significant number are threatened with marginalization. Globalization therefore needs to be *carefully managed*, to meet the risks inherent in the process” (emphasis added).

In the “Conclusion” section, Point 11 asserts that “we agree to enhance the Commonwealth’s role, in building consensus on global economic issues. . . .”

Much of the body of the document recites the formulas so familiar in the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, and so on. For example, following the stress in Point 3 on the need for “good governance,” Point 9 reads: “We underscore the importance of good governance including increased openness in economic decision-making and the elimination of corruption through greater transparency, accountability and the application of the rule of law in economic, financial, and other spheres of activity. We endorse the request by our finance ministers to the Commonwealth secretary-general, to establish an expert group to work on these issues.”

As *EIR* has documented, “good governance,” “elimina-

tion of corruption,” and “greater transparency” have become buzz-words in the supranational institutions’ drive to undermine the sovereign capability of nation-states to protect their domestic manufacturing and wealth-creating activities, and to open up these nations for further looting, all in the interest of so-called “free trade.” A British Privy Council-controlled entity entitled “Transparency International,” has been placed in charge of overseeing this effort.

In line with this, it is noteworthy that the speaker who received the most kudos at the London Commonwealth Business Forum, was Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the notoriously corrupt and murderous thug who has done more than any African leader to make his country transparently lootable for City of London and Commonwealth interests.

Under the subtitle “Trade,” Point 4 asserts: “We welcome the progress made in recent years, in dismantling trade barriers and establishing a rule-based international trading system.” But, more efforts must be made to “strengthen the multi-lateral trading system, within the framework of the World Trade Organisation.”

The anti-U.S.A. ecologist bloc

Particularly odious is Point 10, under the subtitle “Environment.” Here, full backing is given to the British-orchestrated “global warming” hoax, and to the upcoming Kyoto Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on

Climate Change, centering around “significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.” The document also endorses the “Agenda 21,” the ecologist manifesto that was adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and then reaffirmed at the June 1997 Special Sessions of the UN General Assembly.

It was on that latter occasion, that British Prime Minister Blair and his cabinet launched an all-points offensive against the United States on the “global warming” matter. If there were any doubts that the British monarchy and the Blair regime are intending to deploy the Commonwealth against the United States, these should be dispelled by an article in the Oct. 25-26 London *Financial Times* “Weekend” section, published as the Edinburgh CHOGM summit was taking place. Under the title “Why the U.S. Should Join the Commonwealth,” *Financial Times* senior commentator Joe Rogaly wrote: “It is a pity that the U.S. is not a member of the Commonwealth. If it were, the 54-nation association . . . could suspend or even expel it. That would teach Washington a lesson. It might then take serious action to curb emissions of greenhouse gases.”

This could be on the pattern of how South Africa was sanctioned by the Commonwealth, on the apartheid issue, Rogaly wrote. South Africa first resigned the Commonwealth, to avoid being expelled, but, in the post-apartheid era, it was readmitted. “Would that this huge assembly of nations, the home of a quarter of the world’s population, could similarly repel and re-embrace Uncle Sam. Decisive action turned South Africa black. It might turn the bewhiskered old gentleman green.”

Rogaly went on: “The above fancy is not quite as other-worldly as it looks. As an English-speaking former colony, America is well qualified for member of the (British) Commonwealth. So is Ireland, most of whose inhabitants would gag at the thought of such a reversal of history. Yet [Irish President] Mary Robinson nudged the prospect into the Irish consciousness in a speech delivered towards the end of her term as President. . . . You never know. Stranger things happen. If Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Rwanda, and others can, why not the Irish and the Americans? It might help if the post of symbol of the Commonwealth was relinquished by the monarch of the United Kingdom, in favor of an elected figurehead.”

Rogaly exulted how vast the scope of the Commonwealth is, and advised: “Resist the temptation to label the result, ‘the British empire.’ We do have to acknowledge that the colonial past persists, albeit in mainly beneficial form. Most of the countries [in the Commonwealth] share similar accounting techniques, legal and administrative systems, and common aspirations, as to justice and the rule of law. . . . The majority are linked by overlapping networks of professionals. . . . Its secretary-general is Nigerian, his deputies Indian, Canadian and British. More than that would have to be offered to entice the U.S. and Ireland to knock on the door.”

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