

## **MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS, 1944**

*(London, 1-16 May)*

### **DECLARATION SIGNED BY THE FIVE PRIME MINISTERS**

We, The King's Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, have now, for the first time since the outbreak of the war, been able to meet together to discuss common problems and future plans. The representatives of India at the War Cabinet and the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia have joined in our deliberations and are united with us.

At this memorable meeting, in the fifth year of the war, we give thanks for deliverance from the worst perils which have menaced us in the course of this long and terrible struggle against tyranny. Though hard and bitter battles lie ahead, we now see before us, in the ever-growing might of the forces of the United Nations, and in the defeats already inflicted on the foe, by land, by sea and in the air, the sure presage of our future victory.

To all our Armed Forces who in many lands are preserving our liberties with their lives, and to the peoples of all our countries whose efforts, fortitude and conviction have sustained the struggle, we express our admiration and gratitude. We honour the famous deeds of the Forces of the United States and of Soviet Russia, and pay our tribute to the fighting tenacity of the many states and nations joined with us. We remember indeed the prolonged, stubborn resistance of China, the first to be attacked by the authors of world-aggression, and we rejoice in the unquenchable spirit of our comrades in every country still in the grip of the enemy. We shall not turn from the conflict till they are restored to freedom. Not one who marches with us shall be abandoned.

We have examined the part which the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations should bear against Germany and Japan, in harmony with our Allies. We are in cordial agreement with the general plans which have been laid before us. As in the days when we stood all alone against Germany, we affirm our inflexible and unwearying resolve to continue in the general war with the utmost of our strength until the defeat and downfall of our cruel, barbarous foes has been accomplished. We shall hold back nothing to reach the goal and bring to the speediest end the agony of mankind.

We have also examined together the principles which determine our foreign policies, and their application to current problems. Here too we are in complete agreement.

We are unitedly resolved to continue, shoulder to shoulder with our Allies, all needful exertions which will aid our Fleets, Armies and Air Forces during the war and thereafter to make sure of an enduring peace. We trust and pray that the victory, which will certainly be won, will carry with it a sense of hope and freedom for all the world. It is our aim that, when the storm and passions of war have passed away, all countries now overrun by the enemy shall be free to decide for themselves their future form of democratic government.

Mutual respect and honest conduct between nations is our chief desire. We are determined to work with all peace-loving peoples in order that tyranny and aggression shall be removed or, if need be, struck down wherever it raises its head. The peoples of the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations willingly make their sacrifices to the common cause. We seek no advantages for ourselves at the cost of others. We desire the welfare and social advance of all nations and that they may help each other to better and broader days.

We affirm that after the war a World Organization to maintain peace and security should be set up and endowed with the necessary power and authority to prevent aggression and violence.

In a world torn by strife, we have met here in unity. That unity finds its strength, not in any formal bond but in the hidden springs from which human action flows. We rejoice in our inheritance of loyalties and ideals, and proclaim our sense of kinship to one another. Our system of free association has enabled us, each and all, to claim a full share of the common burden. Although spread across the globe, we have stood together through the stresses of two World Wars, and have been welded the stronger thereby. We believe that when victory is won and peace returns, this same free association, this inherent unity of purpose, will make us able to do further service to mankind.

*16 May 1944*

Winston S Churchill, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

W L Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada

John Curtin, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia

Peter Fraser, Prime Minister of New Zealand

J C Smuts, FM, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa