



The Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the Commonwealth Secretary General Mr. Shridath Ramphal addressing a press conference in New Delhi after the conclusion of CHOGM.

Mrs. Gandhi defends stand on Grenada

From Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Nov. 29.

Taking the position that there has to be mutual accommodation in the interest of consensus, the Prime Minister today said the outcome of the Commonwealth conference represented a step forward. This was her reply to those who described the final communique and the statement on economic action as representing a climb-down to the position taken by India, and on certain issues by the non-aligned movement under her leadership.

Addressing a press conference, along with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Shridath Ramphal, soon after the conclusion of the week-long summit this evening, Mrs. Gandhi explained that India's position in favour of structural changes in the international financial institutions and withdrawal of foreign troops from Grenada — to take two issues — remained unchanged. It was clear that she regarded the national position taken by India on various issues, as different from the formulations, which, as she said, were finalised with the need for consensus uppermost in the minds of the participants.

The press conference, lasting nearly an hour, was attended by a large number of foreign media persons who had come to cover the conference. Their queries related to the moderate tone of the final documents, the stand on Lebanon, and East-West tension, the stance of South Africa internally in relation to its neighbours and to Namibia, apart from the economic problems facing the developing countries, and the implications of the U.S. invasion of Grenada.

'Taken one step'

Was she satisfied with the outcome? She was not a person who would be satisfied but

even then she felt that the final declaration was good. India's goal was very clear but "we can't make it in one sweep. We have to go forward step by step and we have taken one step".

Her replies to specific issues were in keeping with this approach. Dealing with the problem of restructuring of international financial institutions, she said: "It was universally recognised that these institutions came into being in a totally different situation, that the world had changed, the economic situation in both the developing and industrialised countries was a new phenomenon and that these institutions were limited in their functioning because of their structure. That is why we wanted change.



CHOGM
New Delhi 83

If we can't totally change, we can see how it can be done gradually".

According to her, there was an advance in the sense that certain people who were opposed to changes were now agreeable to a study on how these institutions could be made more effective. Mrs. Gandhi was noticeably cautious in her reference to these institutions. Obviously, she did not want her words to be construed, as had happened in the past, as a reflection on their present functioning. She pointedly qualified her plea for changes with the words: "I am not criticising them".

Difference of opinion

The same line of reasoning was evident, as she responded to queries on Grenada, particularly on why there was no reference to the U.S.

aggression. She conceded that there was a difference of opinion among the participants, particularly among the Caribbean representatives and said the use and choice of words had been determined by the compulsions of consensus. She would have preferred, she said, an explicit call for the withdrawal of foreign troops because what had happened was highly disturbing. However, according to her, there had been no compromise in the final communique on principles. "It is a change of word here and there. It does not weaken our position".

Mrs. Gandhi appeared to attach great importance to the conference's call to the U.S. and the USSR to end their nuclear confrontation to preserve peace and security in the world, and the resolve of the participants to do their utmost to reverse the arms race.

The Commonwealth, in fact, all mankind shared the concern at the growing aggression between the two superpowers, said Mrs. Gandhi, expressing the hope that reason and wisdom would prevail.

At another stage, she said that "we are for resumption of dialogue and hope that the present atmosphere of confrontation would be reversed and people would talk with less mistrust". The Goa declaration speaks of the practical contribution by Commonwealth countries in encouraging the superpowers to resume a genuine political dialogue. Does it mean that a collective move can be expected in future? The reply came from Mr. Ramphal who said the Commonwealth did not always act in a collective way but through its member countries, and whether it was the initiative of the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau or steps by other countries, these would be in keeping with the sentiments expressed in the

Concern for small States

From G. K. Reddy

NEW DELHI, Nov. 29.

The Commonwealth heads of Government concluded the seven-day conference today voicing their strong opposition to the "increasing tendency towards interference and intervention in the internal affairs of other States by political and economic means" which posed a serious threat to the security and freedom of smaller nations.

The 59-paragraph joint communique, issued at the end of the conference, called for adequate steps to safeguard the security of small States in the wake of the recent events in Grenada and directed the Secretary-General to undertake a study, drawing on the resources and experience of the Commonwealth countries, on the special needs of such States consonant with the right to sovereignty and territorial integrity that they shared with all nations.

Wide range of subjects: The communique, shorter than those issued at previous Commonwealth conferences, dealt with a wide range of subjects, from Kampuchea and Afghanistan, Grenada and Cyprus, and Namibia and West Asia, to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, Central Africa and the Pacific region, the law of the sea and the arms race, besides functional cooperation among the member-countries in various fields like education, technical exchanges, food and agriculture, health, employment, women's welfare and development.

The Commonwealth leaders did not specifically name the United States nor called for an immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Grenada, but expressed the hope

that the island would soon have an elected Government that would be able to function "free from external interference, pressure or presence of foreign military forces".

"The emphasis should now be on reconstruction and not recrimination", it was stated, while welcoming the establishment of an interim Government in Grenada and assuring it of a sympathetic response from other commonwealth countries to any request for assistance in restoring normality in the island State. There was no mention in the communique of the formation of a Commonwealth Caribbean police force under the auspices of the U.N. to help maintain order in Grenada after the withdrawal of the U.S. forces, but the directive to the Commonwealth secretariat to look into the special needs of small States included consideration of this suggestion in the context of the appeal made to the Caribbean States for an early return to the spirit of fraternity and cooperation that had been so characteristic of this region.

Appeal to superpowers: The Commonwealth leaders recalled the special appeal made by them in their Goa declaration to the two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, to enter into a genuine political dialogue to end the nuclear arms race.

After Grenada which attracted maximum attention at this conference, the second issue that came in for detailed discussion was Namibia against the background of a possible threat from South Africa to Angola, despite the refusal of the Commonwealth heads, including the British and Canadian Prime Ministers, to ac-

cept the logic of a linkage between the demand for Namibian independence and the Cuban presence. The U.S. came in for sharp criticism for its unabashed support to the Pretoria regime by insisting on withdrawal of Cuban troops as a pre-condition for Namibian independence.

A substantial part of the communique was devoted to Southern Africa, where apartheid was the root of the explosive situation prevailing there. It called for majority rule in South Africa on the basis of free and fair exercise of adult franchise and to end the white racist policies of intimidation, exploitation and discrimination, rejecting the fraudulent referendum held recently to give an aura of representative character, if not respectability, to the present regime there.

Support for Cyprus: The next issue that received considerable attention in the communique was Cyprus, since the Commonwealth leaders were almost unanimous in their strong disapproval of the unilateral declaration of independence by the Turkish minority, which was described as "legally invalid" and politically untenable. They appealed to the international community not to recognise this secessionist entity and do everything possible to assist the U.N. to annul it in terms of the latest Security Council resolution.

The five-nation group — consisting of India, Australia, Guyana, Nigeria and Zambia — that had been set up to work in close concert with the U.N. in securing the implementation of this resolution met today before the conclusion of the conference as a symbolic gesture of its support for Cyprus. The Cypriot President, Mr.