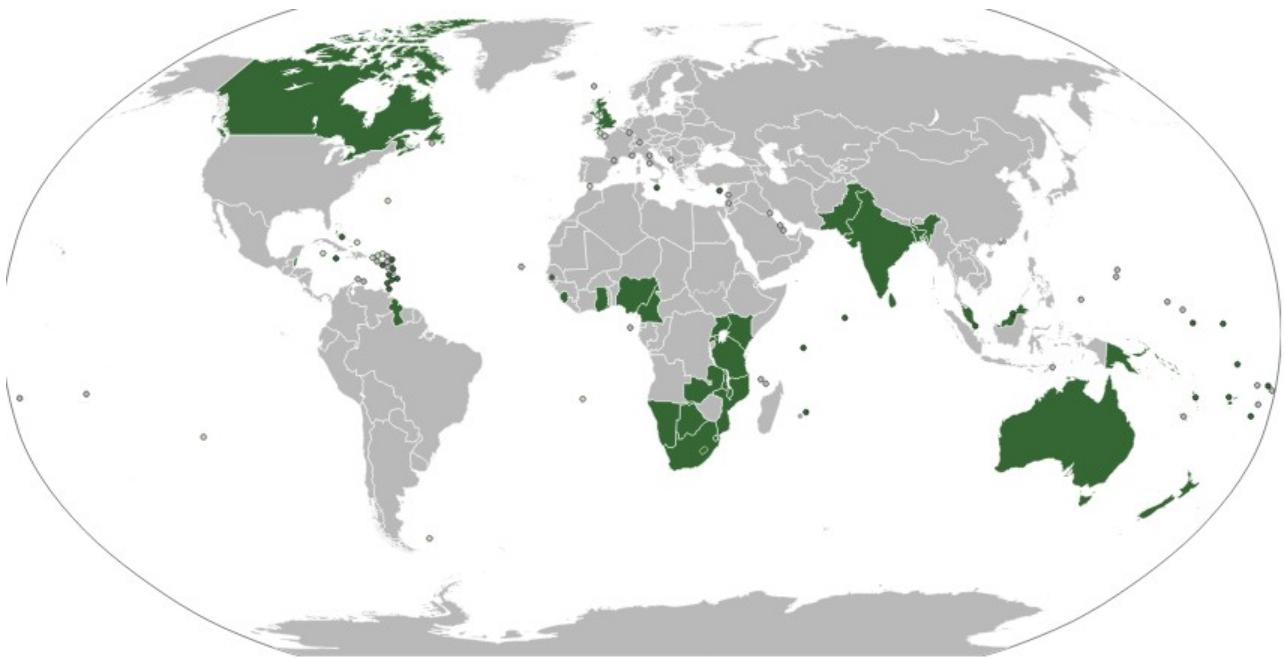




At the start of the 20th century, Germany and the United States began to challenge Britain's economic power. The enormous strain on Britain's resources during the two world wars accelerated the decline of the empire. During the 20th century, India and many other territories achieved independence from the empire. The transfer of Hong Kong to China in 1997 marked the true end of the British Empire.

After independence, many former British territories joined the "Commonwealth of Nations" (formerly the "British Commonwealth"), a free association of independent states. The United Kingdom is now one of 56 Commonwealth nations, and together they are known as "The Commonwealth". The Head of the Commonwealth is King Charles III. He is also the head of state of 15 member states, known as the Commonwealth Realms, while 36 other members are republics and 5 others have different monarchs.



**The Commonwealth nations (2020)**

**Sources:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth\\_of\\_Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member\\_states\\_of\\_the\\_Commonwealth\\_of\\_Nations#Current\\_members](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_states_of_the_Commonwealth_of_Nations#Current_members)