

interests of both groups, Canada has thus often found itself playing an "honest broker" role in multilateral negotiations. We have consistently sought to stimulate movement and to conciliate the conflicting views of industrialized and developing countries.

Our capacity to play this "bridge-building" role between countries of the North and South has also been enhanced by our political ties. We are a member of the industrialized West with strong ties to the United States, Europe and Japan. We participate in the annual economic summits of the major industrialized countries. Yet we are a middle power with membership in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the "likeminded" group of Western nations which share common concerns about developments in the Third World.

We also have ties to developing countries in all parts of the world. Given our lack of a colonialist past and of geopolitical ambitions, developing countries are sometimes less suspicious of Canadian motives than they may be of those of some other industrialized countries. Moreover, a number of associations, particularly the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, have provided us with unique windows on the concerns of developing countries.

Finally, there is the impact that a distinctive international role has had on Canada's sense of itself. In a widely diverse country with strong regional identifications, and with a bilingual and multicultural society, I firmly believe that a strong international presence has in fact helped solidify a national Canadian identity and self-perception in a global context.

Current international scene

I should like to turn now from my perception of Canada's role in the North-South dialogue to the international scene today. When the Round Table met in Ottawa in 1980, we were looking forward to 1981, as the "year of the summits". At the Ottawa Summit of the seven major industrialized countries, North-South issues were high on the agenda. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the Cancun Summit last autumn, these questions were pre-eminent. Most recently at Versailles, these issues were again addressed.

In the late 1970s one repeatedly heard the complaint that negotiations languished for lack of political will. In the early 1980s, these issues were repeatedly discussed at the highest political level. What impact have these meetings made? What was accomplished?

I would certainly not claim that all the world's economic woes have been grappled with since we last met. No one meeting, or even series of meetings, could be expected to do so. Certainly, Cancun was never designed to be a decision-making or negotiating conference. It is also difficult to assess with any certainty the specific impact of one meeting or another on the ultimate course of world events; and certainly the seeming
