

North-South or East-West

by Allan Gotlieb and Jeremy Kinsman

Policy issues in today's world are part of a complex architecture. This article does not propose an architectonic view of world affairs. However, it is increasingly difficult to keep sets of issues separate. International interdependence is conceptual as well as economic. So, in our architectural structure, we enter a North-South door, only to find ourselves travelling on an East-West corridor, and vice-versa. There is a risk of real confusion if we do not settle on what it is we are trying to deal with. This article cannot give a perfect shape to a world whose anxieties are often formless. But it does try to separate some of these issues from some of the others, so at least we can try to agree on what we in the West are trying to deal with.

For many years after the last war East-West issues dominated the foreign policy preoccupations of Canada and our Western allies. By the early 1970s, détente had permitted other emphases. The Third World and the North-South dialogue drew an increasing amount of our attention. More recently, détente has been replaced by strained and more adversarial East-West relations. The focus of some of the strain has been the security interests of the West in the Third World. For some, particularly in the US, North-South has become principally an East-West matter. For others in the West, this represents a dangerous misreading of what is really going on in the Third World: the North-South set of issues need less East-West coloring, not more.

There are differences on North-South, differences on East-West, and differences over the junction between the two sets of issues. Differences of view, primarily between the US and Europe, reside in differences in history, in world role, in preoccupation, and, to some extent, in purpose. Difference of assessment is not an unnatural or an unhealthy feature of the Western Alliance. Indeed, it is one of its strengths. But we need to make better use of instruments for discussing these differences frankly and for evaluating their impact on world events.

First, on North-South issues, we have always accepted the argument that it is in our self-interest that developing countries should get a fairer break from the international "system," that it is an act of the head as well as of the heart. Increasing economic interdependence is the framework for integrating developing countries more firmly into the international system on terms acceptable to them, so as to avoid extremes of political instability in the strategically key areas of the Third World.

For most practitioners and observers of Canadian for-

ign policy, these are basics, *idées reçues* in our policy repertoire, with considerable support in the public at large. This has been the case as well for several other Western countries, the "like-minded": the Scandinavians, the Netherlands, and often enough, Australia and New Zealand, countries who share Canada's middle-power commitment to the multilateral ethic, in part as an assessment of where we are politically most influential.

Heads versus hearts

While the larger European countries have not been quite as engaged by North-South issues, each has, on and off, been more or less supportive of most of the central propositions which have made up the consensus agenda for North-South relations over the years. The Italians have almost always been so; the French often enough, and while they have displayed traditional reticence about multilateral action, the Mitterrand government is activist on all fronts; the Federal Germans have been quite constructive in recent years, and the British have been promoters of the dialogue in starts and stops.

Moreover, the French and British in particular continue to have basic national interests at play in their former colonies. Some of these interests are in fact increasingly folded into the foreign personality of the European Economic Community, which is more and more of a political-economic weight in the major Third World countries, even though specific bilateral deals are still made with the Germans, the French or the British. The entry of Spain and Portugal into the Community and political changes in those countries will undoubtedly bring important parts of Latin America closer to the Community as well, making it a globally imposing factor in relations with developing countries everywhere. Japan is a case apart, but is determined to be a consensus player.

Thus, all of the countries in the industrialized West are committed to the North-South dialogue on terms which have developed in international discussion, though with

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