

I mention this particularly in connection with the points of conflict between some of the smaller states. The situations in the Middle East and Southern Africa, for example, though both at the moment showing some hopeful signs of settlement, are of such a duration as to cause considerable anxiety about the social and political stability of the areas, even if agreement is reached.

The room for manoeuvre under the Roman arch of nuclear stalemate has also allowed the countries of the third world an opportunity to use their influence in world forums in an increasingly forceful way. The Group of Seventy-seven, the term adopted by the third world countries acting as a bloc in international meetings -- now numbering well over a hundred -- has become a determining influence in international meetings. And one has to remember that that bloc includes such diverse countries as Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia. No longer can the countries of the developed world reach agreement on the direction of world affairs without recourse to the governments of the third world bloc which represent such a large portion of the world's population.

But in the past decade the disparities between the developing countries have grown enormously. The fastest rates of economic growth in the world are to be found in some of these countries. Oil, of course, has accounted for much of this. The almost unimaginable wealth of some of the oil producing countries places them in a vastly different position from that of some of the other developing countries. And the impact of rising oil prices -- great though it has been in the industrialized world -- has been well nigh crippling to many countries in the Group of Seventy-seven.

But oil does not account for all the economic progress in the developing world. Singapore, for example, with nothing in the way of natural resources at all, has now achieved a per capita income equal to that of Ireland -- the country now chairman of the European Community, the Malaysian economy is one of the fastest growing in the world, and we all know what the South Koreans have been able to do.

At the other end of the scale, some of the third world countries seem to be making no noticeable progress at all in solving their economic problems. At the most basic level of sheer survival, some countries are falling behind in food production per capita, even while their populations continue to grow. Zambia, which I visited this summer, for example, used to be a substantial exporter of food. Today it can no longer meet its own requirements. These factors, to some extent foreseeable ten years ago, are stark realities today.