

A Review of the Report of the Brandt Commission[@] in View of Future World Order

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It would not be an over-exaggeration to say that the present state of the international environment is much characterized by uncertainties. Politically, after a short lull through detente we are again witnessing turmoil between the East and the West; divisions within these respective blocs are also more in evidence; and moreover, cross-ideological marriage of convenience for the sake of the maintenance of the balance of power among the more powerful countries for illusive periods have become symptomatic of this age. Economically, also, the crisis in the monetary field, accentuated by the virulent character of international recession and inflation, as well as disparity both in growth and aspirations between the North and the South have added more to the recent nature of international perplexity.

One author has rather succinctly diagnosed the cause of the current state to the collapse of the political and economic equilibrium established after the Second World War. According to him, the assumptions of the post-War system, which was in essence "Atlantic-centered, United States-protected, and New York-financed," have proved to be invalid by the current nature of world affairs. The post-War system as originally envisaged was based on four assumptions: it was believed that Atlantic cooperation was both possible and desirable and that

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@ North-South: A Program for Survival; The Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the Chairmanship of Willy Brandt (London: Pan Books, 1982).

European unity (Japan included) would remain the main ingredient of that cooperation; secondly, "it was postulated that a liberal and self-adjusting free trade system, based on stable and fixed monetary rate, would eventually emerge, and in that system the advance countries would continue to enjoy steady access to relatively inexpensive raw materials...d"; thirdly, it was assumed that the communist bloc would remain outside the new international system; and lastly, it was also expected that the developing countries would continue to remain fragmented and dependent on the developed countries, to which they would continue to export their raw materials while importing more finished goods.¹

But today, however, due to the nature of the international environment none of these elements can be taken for granted. The assumed Atlantic cooperation within the US leadership has shown signs of fragmentation in many instances. For example, France's decision to withdraw from NATO, West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, and even the European powers refusal to grant landing permissions to US warplanes being flown to Israel during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War reflected this unilateralism.² Economically, also, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s with its fixed monetary rate under the aegis of the dollar signalled the demise of the "New York-financed" structure and the rise of the Japanese Yen and the West German Deutchemark.³ Thirdly, the presumed ostracization of the Soviet bloc economy have also proved to be incorrect with the increasing level of economic interaction between this group and the outside world.⁴ And, finally, the anticipated passive behaviour of the developing nations have also evolved contrary to expectations. The energy crisis created by a group of developing countries, OPEC, was only one instance of the dramatic resistance posed by this group to the old system.⁵ Moreover

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1. See, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Recognizing The Crisis," Foreign Policy, No 17, Winter 1974-75, pp. 63-66.
 2. For a discussion of the problems within the Atlantic alliance faced by the Nixon Administration in the early 1970s, see, Henry A. Kissinger, The White House Years (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1979), pp. 380-452.
 3. The monetary crisis are best explored in the following two articles: Harold Van Buren Cleveland, "How The Dollar Standard Died," in Richard N. Cooper, ed., A Reordered World: Emerging International Economic Problems (Washington, D. C.: Potomac Associates, 1973), pp. 65-74; and Richard N. Cooper, "The Future of the Dollar" *ibid.* pp. 75-91.
 4. See, Morris Bornstein, "East-West Economic Relation and Soviet-East Europe: Economic Relations," in The Soviet Economy: Continuity and Change (Colorado; Westview Press, 1982), pp. 193-215; and Marshall I. Goldman, "Soviet Trade Policy," Current History, October 1981, pp. 84-87, 102-103.
 5. See; Walter Laqueur, Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), in particular Chapt, 6, "The Oil Weapon," pp. 223-252; and Walter Levy, "World Oil Cooperation or International Chaos," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 690-713,

on a broader scale, the coalescence of 122 countries under the rubric of the "Group of 77" and the types of demands they have recently made of the international economic structure may altogether have been inconceivable in the immediate post-War period.

On the other hand, for the smooth functioning of the intricate web of the nation-state system, it is but natural to try to develop a new international structure to replace the defunct one. In this regard, the creation of a viable system-- that is one which may be relatively longer lasting--, will depend on the ability to devise a framework which can reflect properly not only the new economic powers of states, but also the political and military equilibrium along with the rising expectations of nations of the contemporary age. This kind of holistic approach to the management of the international system have in the past been possible only in the aftermath of major wars whose results have made it conducive for the well-off powers to look after the newly created structures (i.e. the Concert of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, and the post-World War I and II systems.) In the absence of war as a catalytic agent a substitute must be found to encompass these elements in the peaceful process of negotiation. Whether or not any formula conceived for the management of the future system may possibly be viable will therefore depend on how well they can address these aspects of the problem.

II

As a study which directs its attention in redefining the future of North-South relations within a new international system, the Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt falls short of fulfilling the requirements on both these accounts. Firstly, due to the limitation imposed by the "Terms of Reference" (pp. 296 -287) of its objective to international development issues, the Report concentrates on only the economic and social factors, which as a consequence makes the recommendations to appear as if to be functioning in a vacuum devoid of any consideration of the other variables. And, secondly, in developing an argument for the required catalytic agent to make possible the necessary conditions for implementing its objectives, the Report seems to place its faith too deeply on the abstract notion of both the developed and developing countries accepting the suggested outline of international cooperation for the purpose of "mutual benefit," and thus almost negates in its consideration the likely effect of the selfish and rigid nature of the nation-state system which in the past has made even the best of intentions for international cooperation impracticable.

In dealing with the socio-economic issues, the Brandt Commission's Report divides the problems into two brackets. The first one, relating to the developing countries, is given greater

emphasis due to the enormity of the perceived crisis. According to the Commission, the common maladies of underdevelopment (with conditions ranging from acute state of poverty, food shortage, over population, energy crisis, etc.) is considered tackable, if not soluble, provided sufficient international support is funneled to these developing nations (see: p. 52 and Chapter 4 and 5) and if these nations also themselves prepare the infrastructure to absorb the assistance properly.* This kind of dualistic approach—with money as one of the panacea to the problems of underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the demand for a preconditional domestic structure within the developing countries responsive to the international environment, on other—fails however to distinguish between elements which though desirable may not be possible within the real world. For example, it is hard to contemplate that when even during the United Nations Development Decades the developed countries failed to respond to the proposed target of 0.7 percent of the GNP as assistance to the developing countries, that today, even in more difficult times, these countries of the North will be moved to pour in additional billions of dollars recommended by the Commission. Moreover, the suggestion that the domestic structure become complimentary to the external environment appears to underlie the false notion that priority within the developing countries will be given to aid receiving structures and that the other variables dictating the political interests of nations and leaders will automatically become subservient to it. If this measure was by any means feasible to the slightest degree, it does not take much of an imagination to surmise that the amounts of aid received by the developing nations in the past would have already created some small wonders compared to the present reality.

Similarly, the position of the Commission regarding the North-South relationship also becomes less palatable because of its failure to distinguish between the desirable and the possible elements within the framework of contemporary international relations. In such sensitive area as the dialogue between these two broad groups, the emphasis given by the Commission for the *desirable* solutions to the differences between the parties goes nowhere near in providing the *practicable* formulas for bringing the parties together as hinted in its theme of defining a "Program for Survival." As it is, the recommendations are heavily laden with proposals in favour of

* The Report explicitly states that is not the intention of the Commission "to suggest that changes in domestic policy must be a prior condition for reforms in the global system." (p.126) But since the guideline of the "Terms of Reference" requires that the Commission "pay attention to the responsibilities of developing countries in their domestic policies, to match the efforts for international economic and social justice with efforts to promote the ends among their own population" (ibid) and its own recommendations later states that complimentary socio-economic structures be prepared by the developing countries (see, pp: 127-140), the real position of the Commission appears to belie the earlier rhetoric.

the South, which may in the process make it more difficult for the North to accept the position of the Commission as being "independent" in terms of consenting to a common and acceptable formula for compromise. For instance, the tilt in favor of the South seems to have been pre-ordained even before the work of the Commission had started because by the "Terms of Reference" of its work, the Commission appears to have been bound "to pay careful attention to UN resolutions on development problems and other issues explored in international fora in recent years." (p.296) Since the majority of nations of the Third World have already come to dominate most of the UN General Assembly resolutions--of which the most important one calling for the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO)⁶ remains the pivotal one in the aspirations of the developing countries--and since the position of the Group of 77 and the Nonaligned nations also appears to have received considerations in its deliberations, the position of the Commission was therefore an almost foregone conclusion.

This connection is further discernable in some of the major areas of study covered by the Brandt Commission. The recommendations relating to commodities appears to have been influenced heavily by agreements reached during the last two meetings of UNCTAD IV and V,⁷ in terms of defining commodity policies, reducing tariff barriers of the developed countries for goods from the developing countries, the need for price stabilization agreements, and also in creating the Common Fund for commodities development of the developing countries. (See, Chapter 9 and 11) Similarly, the proposed sharing of technology, control of Transnational Corporations, (Chapter 12) and the demand for greater power sharing by the developing countries within the International Monetary Fund (p. 218) also appears to have had their genesis within the movement started by the countries of the South.

Compared to this pro-South inclination of the Brandt Commission, its handling of the socio-economic issues as related to the developed countries of the North is even less tenable. This is so because in an interdependent world of today the favorable terms ascribed to the developing countries by the Commission at the cost of more powerful elements, such as the developed

6. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2626 (XXIV). Also see, Resolution 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI) containing the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, and Resolution 3281 (XXIX) on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. For a closer analysis of these resolutions see, Alfred Møzeles, "Mutuality and Conflict of interest in the North-South Negotiations," Trade and Development; An UNCTAD Review, No. 2, Autumn 1980, pp. 18

7. See Joan Edelman Spero, The Politics of International Economic Relations (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1980), pp. 177-183.

countries, seems to hinge upon the fulfillment of the idealistic aspirations of the Report rather than in sorting out the real problems by taking cognizance of the power disparity between these two groups. As a consequence of the almost spurious premises on which the logics are based, the two arguments advocated for the role of the developed countries by the Commission also suffers from this weakness.

For example, despite the relatively well-off status of the developed countries in the world today (or because of it), the common denominator of both these arguments appear to be focused upon the need of these countries to make some form of sacrifices for the interest of the global welfare. The first argument, drawn from the global ecological movement of the late 1960s and the 1970s, in general, and the Report for the Club of Rome,⁸ in particular, tacitly appears to accept the finite nature of the world ecosystem and suggests that the industrialized nations change their current habits so that the less privileged nations of the world may also benefit from the earth's resources. By way of elucidation, the Report takes, among other things, such issues as disarmament and world energy consumption to hammer out this theme. While it reasons that part of the \$ 450 billion used in annual world military expenditure be diverted towards development purposes and that the industrialized countries which consume around 82 per cent of the world oil produced today alter their lifestyles with new energy conservation practices (p. 163), nowhere does the Report propose a credible formula which would encourage the privileged countries to relinquish their current status with a substitute that would provide them with either an alternate means of security or bring them the enjoyment of plentiful energy use that they have become accustomed to this day. This kind of a call for sacrifice from the powerful and the privileged without proper inducements amounts to nothing more than wishful thinking on the part of the Commission's recommendations.

The second argument, which is supposed to represent the core logic behind the Commission's proposals, is based on the notion that as much as the South needs the North for development purpose, the developed countries of the North also need the South for their own prosperity. The concept of "mutuality of interest", developed basically from the interdependent character of the contemporary world, is amplified to new heights with some recent cases. For instance, the Report points out that without the large amounts of petro-dollars placed in the commercial banks of the developed countries by OPEC in the post-1974 period recession would

8. Donella H. Meadows, et. al., The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind (London: Pan Books, 1974).

have been much worse if "recycling" of these funds had not turned into export order for the northern manufacturers. Taking the same period, the Report sites an OECD study to show that due to the availability of these funds, the trade with the South also helped create an additional 900,000 jobs every year between 1970 and 1979 in these countries. (p.67) In addition to these factors, the Report asserts that the massive transfer of funds from the North to the South will in the long run increase world-wide trade, ensure a steady supply of commodities from the South; create "major benefits to the North in making financial and other arrangement to encourage energy exploration, research and development in the South"; bring benefits from the development of energy and other minerals by the Transnational Corporations in the Third World countries; preserve the environment ; and also enhance the stability of international food supplies and prices. (see, pp. 68-74) On the whole, the Report holds that with the concept of "mutuality of interest" serving as a catalytic agent a "Genuine Society of Nations," which would require nations "to exercise mutual restraints among themselves, and in particular to be concerned about the less fortunate members of such a society" (p.75), will eventually emerge.

By placing its faith on nations acting on perception of their common interests, as opposed to conflictual interests in their relationship, the Commission again appears to be misjudging the international realities. Although it cannot be denied that there are forces working to bring about greater cooperations among nations, the perennial nature of conflictual relationship inherent in the differing conception of national interests of the multitude of states continues nevertheless to dominate the relations among nations—particularly, as we shall see, in reference to the North-South issue. As such, by only examining the peripheral cases of likely cooperation among states, the Report appears to be misdirecting its attention again to the desired ideal environment, rather than to the realities of the world as it is today. The effect of this approach in turn creates a large gulf between the aspirations expressed in the recommendations of the Report and reality.

A cursory glance at some of the areas covered in the Report will reveal these discrepancies.

- The Report endorses the proposal of the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development held in 1978, which suggests that 20 per cent in research and development should take place in the Third World by the year 2000, as opposed to 3 per cent today. (p.199) Although the Commission provides some credible reasons why the developing countries need this study, it is however unlikely that without some direct benefits (either in political, economic or security terms) the industrialized nations will be moved to divert their capital

for some distant gain as argued in the concept of "mutuality of interest".

- The Report argues that "The developing countries do not have an adequate share of the responsibility for decision-making, control and management of existing international and monetary institutions..." (p. 223) and goes on to call for a greater role for these countries within such institutions as the IMF. (p.275) Although this suggestion is supportive of the spirit behind the NIEO, its objective however misses the central point relating to the structural basis of the IMF. As the international body was originally conceived in the post-Second World War period, the responsibility of member nations in terms of their voting strength were commensurately based on the power distribution in the international arena.⁹ The present call for power sharing without substantial alteration in the power equation, particularly in reference to the majority of developing countries, makes it unlikely that the dominant members of the IMF will readily relinquish their current hold just for the simple reason of providing the South a greater voice in such an institution.
- The Report suggest tax measures to raise international revenues from international trade, arms trade, international investment on hydrocarbons and exhaustible minerals, on durable luxury goods, military spending, consumption of energy, traded crude oil, international air travel and freight transport, or from the use of the "international commons"— ocean fishing, offshore oil and gas, sea bed mining, the use of space orbits, radio and telecommunication frequencies and channels. While on the side it concedes that some difficulties may be encountered, it goes on nevertheless to point out that the yield from such levy would amount to \$ 250 million from 1 per cent of international passenger and freight transport, about \$7 billion from a 0.5 per cent levy on international trade, and that sea bed mining could probably raise around \$ 500 million by middle or late 1980s. (p.242).

Although all these points are theoretically attractive in terms of raising international revenues, this process of lumping together of a whole variety of issues is both unrealistic as well as deceptive in its logic. Firstly, many of the areas which have been suggested as possible targets have traditionally been considered matters within the sovereign rights of states and thus any moves in this field may be considered by an infringement on their authority. Secondly, the Report fails to distinguish between new areas such as the "international commons" which are more susceptible to negotiations and older issues on which the industrialized nations may adamantly refuse to bargain over. To take

9. See, Richard N. Gardner, Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy: The Origin and Prospects of Our International Economic Order (New York: McGraw Hill, 1969.)

a case, the negotiation over the riches of the sea bed had been made possible precisely because it was an unexplored area and did not fall under the authority of any nation as such. Moreover, if this area represented the new trend of international taxation, which the Report seems to suggest, it can also be argued that the recent conclusion of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in fact represented the limitation of such concepts. Looking back, this contention is supported by the fact that since the Declaration of Principles by the General Assembly of the sea bed and ocean as the Common Heritage of Mankind, in 1970,¹⁰ there had been constant efforts by the developing and developed coastal countries to increase their individual gains at the cost of commonality. The inclusion of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 miles as the domain of the coastal countries and the rights of private companies of the industrialized countries to competitively exploit the resources of the sea bed through the "parallel system" of mining are just some instances which exemplify these cases.¹¹ In addition, if we take into consideration the fact that it took over eight years to finally come to an agreement on the terms of the treaty and that the United States in the end voted against it along with three other nations,¹² then it appears that as much as the taxation system may be desirable it is also equally difficult to agree upon them given the present world structure. And, finally, not the least relevant point is the problem of enforcement of laws relating to international taxation. This enigma has in the past plagued many grandiose schemes in international relations, and even if some agreements do materialize in this area, it is unlikely that it will transcend this hurdle easily.

— In dealing with an emergency programme on energy, the Report recommends that while the major oil consuming nations should agree to hold down energy consumption to agreed targets, oil exporting countries should "assure levels of production and agree not to reduce supplies arbitrarily or suddenly unless the circumstances are beyond their control." (p.279) While the first aspect of this proposal has already been discussed, it is important to note regarding the latter aspect of the programme that it appears to ignore the causes behind the "energy crisis" of the 1970s and seems to place its faith on a simple *quid pro quo* approach in resolving this problem.

10. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2749 (XXV).

11. For a discussion of these and other hurdles faced by the Third Law of the Sea Conference, see, John R. Stevenson and Bernard Oxman, "The Third Conference On The Law of The Sea: The 1974 Caracas Session," American Journal of International Law, Vol. 69, No. 1, January 1975, pp. 1-30; and Elliot L. Richardson, "Power Mobility and the Law of the Sea," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 58, No. 4, pp 902-919.

12. In addition to the U.S., the other countries voting against the adoption of the Treaty were Israel, Turkey, and Venezuela. See, "Sea Law Convention Adopted," The Times of India May 2, 1982, p. 15.

If we sort-out the issues carefully, it is easy to discern the fallacies of the contention. First, it was not all of the oil exporting countries, but a particular group of oil exporting countries, i. e. OPEC, which created the oil crisis as we know of it today. Secondly, the objective in the confrontation which the OPEC members sought were not limited to economic issues only, but also linked to political criteria. For example, as a movement which received its original impetus from the fervor of nationalism, the strategy of the group tried to do away with the monopoly of the oil cartels and their home countries (mostly Western nations) which had been reaping the major benefits from the oil business. Moreover, the timing of the confrontation in 1973 were coordinated by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), within OPEC, to coincide with the Fourth Arab-Israeli War in order to have not only the maximum impact on prices but also to force the policies of the major oil consuming nations to politically isolate Israel.¹³ And, lastly, as a culmination of the above points, the aim of these countries in raising oil prices and reducing production were *inherently a part of their strategy of maneuverability* which made their approach more credible, thus guaranteeing success in the end. When considering this issue from this perspective, it is therefore unlikely that the oil exporting countries, especially OPEC, will surrender their tool maneuverability--which has given them a greater role in world politics--for the recommended *quid pro quo*--which may in turn constrain it.

It is only fair, however, to note that the Commission also creates its own defense for the far-fetched nature of the recommendations in different passages of its Report. Willy Brandt, in the Introduction, says that the objective of the Commission's study is to create "a new type of relationship which could accommodate all nations." (p. 10) Furthermore, the Report also concedes that the major problems, between the North and the South are political rather than economic (see, p. 124), but nevertheless it goes on to add that although some of the proposals may be ahead of current thinking "the understanding of their interrelationship [through the notion of mutuality of interest] will strengthen the will for change." (p. 60) The irony of this defense is that while the Report underlines the severity of the problem by claiming that the next 20 years will be decisive in determining the future of mankind, (pp. 271, 276) most of its own formulas in resolving the problems are themselves too esoteric in comprehensively dealing with the problems being

13. In his latest memoirs, Henry Kissinger discusses in detail the strategies of the OPEC nations and the impact it had on Middle East diplomacy during the 1973 War. See, Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Unheaven* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), pp. 871-895. Also see; Insight Team of the London Sunday Times, *The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Double Day and Comp., 1974), particularly the section entitled "Enter the Oil Weapon," pp. 347-366.

faced today, or for that matter in realistically dealing with issues within the century.

This tendency of the Report of the Brandt Commission of deviating from squarely confronting issues in a realistic manner diminishes some valuable contributions made by the Commission in its study. For example, the use of an impressive array of data to demonstrate the plight of the poor as well as the need to act upon it urgently loses its potency with the unrealistic proposals submitted by the Commission. Other more plausible suggestions, such as the creation of a UN Committee for Development Planning, with the objective of acting as a "brain trust" in advising the UN and other international institutions engaged in development and international economic cooperation (p. 261), may also fail to obtain the required impetus to get the scheme moving as a consequence. Moreover, its more laudible recommendation in calling for a greater South-South cooperation—including the decision of the Arusha Ministerial Meeting (1979) recommending Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC) and also regional cooperation among them (pp. 134-135)—, and a summit meeting of selected twenty-five world leaders to thrash-out some of the major problems facing the world today may also have already been adversely affected by the nature of the Commission's recommendations.

From the vantage point of hindsight, we can today see that the experience of the Cancun Conference of October 1981, more than exemplified this dual, but contradictory, nature of the role played by the Commission's Report. On the one hand, as a summit meeting of 22 world leaders which originated from the recommendations of the Commission the meeting marked a historic "break" through in the sense that the leading representatives from both the North and the South sat together to begin a "dialogue" on some of the basic problems facing mankind today. On the other hand, the meeting also proved to be illusive because beyond the point of assemblage it demonstrated that the Report was nowhere successful in bringing the parties together through a common platform on any of the issues explored by the Commission. For instance, the roots of failure had been embedded in the strategies of parties as they were being developed. On July, in the Ottawa Summit of the seven richest industrial nations, President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher had vowed to put a stiff opposition to the Report of the Brandt Commission, presumably because of its pro-South inclination. In New York, the South had also held its preparatory meeting through the "group of 24" and drawn up a list of issues to be discussed at Cancun. But, later, as the foreign ministers of these 22 chosen nations met to decide the *modus operandi* of the high level meeting it became clear that the United States would fully play out its earlier commitment and that the summit would not go beyond, in the words of Secretary of State Haig, "interpersonal relationship between heads of government who haven't met." Finally,

as the meeting concluded, even with the simple Mexican document which identified five basic areas of "dialogue" (aid, trade, food, energy, and monetary and financial resources), no significant agreement could be reached between the North and the South aside from the fact that both sides agreed to continue the dialogue in some future date.¹⁴

In the long run, however, there may be a few lessons to be learned from such an exercise as from the Report of the Brandt Commission. The first lesson may be that it is not sufficient for such a group of distinguished people to argue the plight of the needy without realistic proposals to implement them. In politics, and in particular in international relations, good intentions have never sufficed in addressing injustices or asserting the rights of people and nations. Secondly, proposals relating to broad reforms in international social and economic structures also need to take cognizance of power distribution among nations. This aspect is particularly important if the power that is to be challenged happens to be that of the more predominant group of nations. And, thirdly, an unbalanced study of an "Independent Commission", such as that of the Brandt Commission, can in a way provide ammunition for the verbosity of one group, i.e. the South, and alienate another group, i.e. the North, and thus in the process may widen the gap among these countries rather than narrow it down to an irreducible minimum level where compromises may be possible. When this happens, it is all but too obvious that the Commission's own objective has become self-defeating.

III

In terms of future world order, and within this framework the future of North-South relations, one cannot but help speculate what other approach might have been more suitable from such a study as that of the Brandt Commission's. It is possible to conjecture, from what has already been discussed, that a different perspective may altogether have created a more conducive environment for the dialogue between the parties. In this sense, the point of departure from the method adopted by the Commission would have been to try to operate as a truly "independent" body unconstrained by the "Terms of Reference" and geared with the objective of bringing the parties together through a common and balanced platform that would take into consideration both the power balance as well as the divergent views of the respective groups. Although this in itself would not have been a simple exercise, the recommendations originating from a study of this nature might conceivably have been more acceptable in facing the common problems than the more divisive approach taken by the Brandt Commission.

14. See, Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Cancun Summit: Hot Air and Crumbs," India Today, November 15, 1981, p. 171.

If we re-examine the North-South issues from this perspective, we can see that this topic, in its basic, is nothing but a struggle between the developed and the developing nations to reach a future equilibrium which will redefine a new state of relations among them. Looking back, although we can find different aspects of the issues dating back to even some decades, i.e. trade, it is only recently that the whole gamut of issues have come together for discussion under the current rubric of the North South dialogue. This aspect, in a way, suggests the newness of the whole negotiation. The North, in this sense, was only recently induced to come to an understanding that agreements between the two parties must be sought not because of any moral commitment, but because of certain pressures the South had been able to utilize against the Northern interests. Thus, when the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, conceded to a North-South dialogue on energy only at the height of the oil crisis in his address to the United Nations in 1973, he was in essence recognizing the threat then evoked by the OPEC nations.¹⁵ Since then the policies of the developed nations in general have tried to assuage the threat from the South by taking an almost inflexible position on most of the issues. On the other hand, the South has been diplomatically successful in broadening the areas of dialogue with the assistance of OPEC from that originally submitted by Kissinger to include all major areas of interactions between the two groups. International forums, such as the Nonaligned movement and the United Nations, have also been used by these nations to legitimize the issues in their favor.¹⁶ In this regard, while the South has used the rhetoric of "justice" in calling for the NIEO and the North has tried to demonstrate its recalcitrant position on them, both in an overall perspective nevertheless represent only the first stage of negotiation where the ultimate positions are likely to alter in the end. Towards this direction then, of assisting negotiations, it is only to be hoped that *another* gathering of international personalities, as in the 18 member Brandt Commission, will again reconsider the issues but this time with the *aim of bringing the parties together through some suitably balanced alternatives* in the days ahead.

15: See, Bharat Wariavwalla, "Rich-Poor Relationship: Fragile Interdependence," in Ramashray Roy ed., Politics of International Economic Relations (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1982) p. 45.

16: See, K. B. Lall and S. D. Muni, "Nonalignment and the New International Economic Order," in K. P. Mishra and K. R. Narayanan, eds., Non-Alignment in Contemporary International Relations (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1981), pp. 135-158.