

Britain now 'mediates' North-South relations

by Uma Zykofsky

In the period leading up to the Oct. 22 North-South summit of select heads of state, British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington has been deployed by the Royal Family to restore the power of the City of London in economic, political, and monetary affairs through the institution of the Commonwealth. According to experts in the Commonwealth Secretariat, Carrington's activities and the hectic tour schedule of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson are part of a scheme to make the British Commonwealth framework "a seed-crystal for a global order" to be deliberated at the Cancun summit.

The Commonwealth is an organization of former British colonies with the British monarchy at its head. It coordinates policies in international affairs as a bloc representing a combination of countries now in the developed and developing sector. The Commonwealth is scheduled to hold its own heads of state meeting in Australia from Sept. 30 to Oct. 10 and Commonwealth Secretariat sources in London view these discussions as "setting the precedent for Cancun, especially in terms of specifics, which the Mexico meeting may not be able to discuss in and of itself." Of the 22 countries that will be at Cancun, seven members are Commonwealth nations—India, Guyana, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Tanzania, Canada, and Great Britain. The British expect this grouping to provide a framework for coordination of British interests across North-South lines.

According to experts at the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, Lord Carrington's strategy is a quiet but effective positioning of Britain's global interests. It involves putting Carrington in the "middle" of two extremes: the "free-enterprise" voices of the Reagan administration versus the "globalist," redistributionist social democrats. "In the end Carrington will work something out with Haig quietly," one analyst explained. "The U.S. will come along in tow. They always do. The big tough U.S. is run by the British Foreign Office. They are humiliated, manipulated, and embarrassed. Carrington is a master at this, a real royalist at heart. Wouldn't it be funny if what emerged was a global British Commonwealth of sorts with the U.S. either sitting outside hurting or even begging to come in?"

The planning of the Commonwealth strategy began at the Institute for Development Studies at Sussex University as far back as July 10, 1980 when 30 "eminent international intellectuals and policy makers" met to focus attention on the Brandt Commission's North-South Report and the "followup needs for global negotiations." Among those present were Shridath Ramphal (now Commonwealth secretary general), the Club of Rome's Aurelio Peccei, Enrique Iglesias (currently chairing the U.N. Non-Renewable Energy Conference at Nairobi) and IDS's top planner, Richard Jolly.

According to Commonwealth sou



Commonwealth leaders at a conference in Jamaica.

ber Australia meeting will focus on food, financing, energy and trade—areas that will come up at the Cancún summit as well. To maintain the supranational enforcing capabilities of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the Commonwealth secretariat is telling developing countries that credit, from private banks, will be at exorbitant interest rates and short term; it is therefore in the so-called “interest” of the Third World to favor a “greater global role for the IMF and World Bank.”

Each aspect of the much talked about “new international economic order” has been profiled at IDS and its sister organization the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations. “Cooperation” instead of “confrontation” is the perspective Lord Carrington is promoting, in line with the Tavistock profiling. “Carrington, unlike the dominant forces in the U.S. understands the South. He knows Latin America, he knows OPEC, He’s helped bring about some movement in the U.S. State Department, if you view the tone of some of the internal evaluation papers for the North-South meeting being written in Washington,” the same analyst confided.

Canadian role

Carrington’s ace in the hole is Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, a leading world federalist and a North-South veteran since the 1974 period. Canada is uniquely positioned as far as the Commonwealth is

concerned. It is a member of that group and can thus influence key “South” countries such as India and Nigeria. Its large financial and banking interests in the Caribbean, particularly in Jamaica, interface with the U.S. private sector and raw materials interests. Through this, Canada has a channel to the Reagan administration and political capabilities in the volatile Caribbean.

On a personal level, Trudeau has built an image of great “concern” for North-South affairs. According to Canadian sources, he was key in persuading Reagan to attend the October summit and has spent the last six months touring the world to make the Cancún meeting a “success.” He is currently in Africa, at the U.N. Conference on Non-Renewable Energy Sources, where he has spoken and committed Canadian money for Third World energy development. Trudeau has scheduled in the next few weeks visits to Tanzania, Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, and finally Australia for the Commonwealth summit.

Since June, Canada has set up two new think tanks to deal with North-South problems. One of them is the Futures Secretariat, chaired by Canadian Foreign Minister Mark MacGuigan. MacGuigan happens to be a close friend of U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig. By the time the Cancún summit starts, one IDS-connected Third Worldist predicted, “Trudeau may end up in the extraordinary position of acting as spokesman for the South and the North.”