

The thing that will shake them up is Mexico. You can take seven countries in the developing sector and push them over the edge, and the White House might not notice, even with United States banks screaming. But if one of those countries is Mexico, then it is a different story. Mexico is the only Third World country that Reagan knows exists. So the easiest thing is to force Mexico to the edge and that is already happening. That would panic people. You get a crisis in Mexico caused by their debt problems and their poor development policies, you plunge the country into chaos right on our border, and you have several other countries close to the margin as well, then you get people screaming for a new Bretton Woods from all sides. It is already starting to happen in Mexico, like I said. Just read the newspapers or look at the TV. It is going to get much worse. That will ring the bells in the White House. Mexico alone could do it.

Interview: Sridath Ramphal

From an interview conducted by EIR's Peter Rush with Sridath "Sonny" Ramphal, Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth, on July 20 at the SID conference.

EIR: There have been numerous articles in the Latin American press recently about the possibility of a debt bomb, where Latin America would use its debt situation as leverage to force some kind of debt reorganization. Have you heard any discussion of this kind of possibility?

Ramphal: I believe that the established agents in governmental positions are refusing to come to grips with the problem of international debt, and it is in that kind of vacuum that all kinds of approaches, some of them quite scary, will emerge. We have all been trying to emphasize the enormity of the debt problem, that there should not be a conspiracy of silence, which is the normal bankers' reaction: "Don't talk about it, it'll only get worse." But everybody knows that it is so bad that you know you have to talk about it because you've got to do something about it. We should come to grips as an international community with the enormous volume of debt. Otherwise, you will respond to one crisis today, say Poland, somebody else tomorrow, and you can handle a few; and then bang, there will be a crash, and you'll be back in the 1930s, and this is a situation in which we ought to be more intelligent.

EIR: What solutions do you see?

Ramphal: I think we have to impress the international community—this is what the Bank of International Settlements was saying—they are after all virtually the central bankers to the world banking system, and they were saying things are getting out of hand. But what to

do about it is the question.

EIR: What about debt renegotiation?

Ramphal: The banks wouldn't make that suggestion . . . I haven't got a blueprint, but the next step is, having recognized it, for North and South, creditors and debtors, together to sit down and recognize that we've got to negotiate this thing on a global basis.

EIR: Was Mr. McNamara's proposal the first you'd heard of his new bank?

Ramphal: No, the idea of an international central bank is one that the Brandt Commission has specifically proposed. However, I was glad to hear Mr. McNamara, I thought, in effect, endorse it. We think this is an important development.

EIR: How would the central bank actually work?

Ramphal: Again, it's a matter for negotiations. But the concept that just as a financial community at the national level needs the regulatory agency of a national central bank, so increasingly in an interdependent world we need a regulatory agency or an international central bank, properly structured, professionally run, so as to save the world from these recurring economic crises.

EIR: But how would it deal with these obvious questions of national sovereignty over currency?

Ramphal: I think that is the real challenge that faces us in the '80s and beyond. We have to come to terms—the Third World in particular, those with newest sovereignty, are most jealous of it—with the fact that we're living in a different kind of world, interdependent. . . .

EIR: How would the currency be differentiated from SDRs, for example?

Ramphal: Well, SDRs are clearly something for which the time has come. The Brandt Commission made it quite clear that they thought SDR should be used more effectively, and they are under the control of the IMF.

EIR: How would the currency of the central bank be different from SDRs?

Ramphal: No, it would be akin to SDRs.

EIR: Would it be like the IMF's SDRs?

Ramphal: That's right.

Interview: Dudley Seers

From a July 19 interview with Dudley Seers, a British subject and guiding light of the SID, conducted by Peter

Rush at the Baltimore conference:

EIR: In your speech you suggested that rather than a global village we might have continental villages. Are we moving toward a world in which continental blocs replace the era of the two superpowers?

Seers: I see two different points being asked: are things moving in that direction, and should they move in that direction. I think the answer to both is a qualified yes. We *are* trying to work in that direction, and are trying to break down some of the old scenarios, because they get in the way of one's thinking.

Let's concentrate on the case of Europe, which is the one I have studied. I believe the outside world is forcing it to become more unified, to work out common policies, such as on the Middle East, where it has a rather vague policy, but there are common policies emerging. There are many issues, the pressure of Japanese trade on the one hand and U.S. economic conflicts on the other, over the gas pipeline, over loan policies toward Eastern Europe, trade with Eastern Europe, and so forth, and also steel, on which European governments feel that by combining together on a common policy, they have more leverage in the world. The point I am making is that culturally, I think Europe feels more coherent not so much because there are inside movements for this, but because of outside events. People like Khomeini and so on make Europeans feel they have more in common, and realize they are different from Argentinian generals.

EIR: At the same time there is a tendency about which you have written that seems to be the opposite of this, the growing importance of smaller, ethnic groups.

Seers: In a way, the smaller groups have more of an opportunity in a continental context. For example, the Basques are happier in a European community than in the Spanish monarchy. It provides a partial solution to a regional problem. But I think to complete Europe logically you need Eastern Europe. So in the 1980s there is the question of the digestion of southern Europe, and it will certainly take the whole of the decade, in order to solve the policy problems and the money that needs to be spent and changes in institutions and voting in the Community and so forth. All those will take time. But the 1990s will be a period, I believe, of increasing links between the Community and Eastern European countries. Whether that will take the form of them joining or not, I don't know. You see, there are all sorts of treaty associations already, with Rumania for example, as there are with Turkey, so there are linkages which are more or less formal. I think ideally, I don't see that the socialist camp issue is such a tremendous one, providing that everyone accepts more or less the same rules of the game as far as pricing policies, monetary policies, and so forth. I definitely think this is possible.

EIR: You think the Soviets would go for this? Would

there be a quid pro quo?

Seers: Yes; I would see this linking with the breaking up of NATO. I think you can see a logical pathway to this. I think it [breakup of NATO] may well come about and then the Russians will be a lot less apprehensive.

EIR: We have the danger in the Middle East, especially if Khomeini defeats Iraq, of a balkanization of the Middle East, into a number of ethnic groups, the Kurds and so on. Lebanon looks like it may end up in two or three countries. . . .

Seers: That may not be entirely wrong. You see, some of these countries are very artificial, and many African countries are purely colonial creations, and they have the problem of irreconcilable groups, in Uganda, in Nigeria between the Yorubas and Ibos, and so on. These are not natural nations. I come back to this idea of cultural community.

EIR: Do you see it as a healthy development if certain ethnic and language families were to become political entities, rather than the nation-states they are now encased in?

Seers: I would think it would be. I think that although in a way any structural change does give an opportunity for external forces, political, economic and so forth, I think the resistance to the wrong type of development, wrong techniques, wrong assumptions, is better with a common ethnic base. I think the Basques may resist it more easily than the Spanish.

EIR: So would a Basque nation be preferable?

Seers: I would think so. I think as a general proposition there should be cultural cohesion in political groups. Now we have within the European Community the possibility of distinguishing between the economic groups and the political groups. I mean a Basque nation wouldn't make economic sense, but it would make political sense.

EIR: If it didn't make economic sense, how would it function?

Seers: Well, it still would deal with a lot of issues, all forms of local issues, while still keeping within Europe, its doors open to European trade, European capital movements.

EIR: What you are describing sounds similar to an idea going under the name "Europe of the Regions," used by the Pan-European movement, a right-wing group.

Seers: I also feel that, and I realize that this is a dangerous thing to say in some audiences, that this distinction between left-wing and right-wing is becoming much less important compared to the distinction between those who set the importance of cultural cohesion and nationalism high, and those who don't.