

Non-Aligned nations propose U.N., Third World debt reforms at summit

by Lydia Cherry and Ramtanu Maitra

The 10th Non-Aligned Movement heads of state summit ended Sept. 6, with the twofold plan to create mechanisms to intervene against Anglo-American control of the United Nations, and to create a special panel of economists and others who would determine how to reduce the crushing debt burden faced by the vast majority of the movement's member-nations.

That the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has remained intact at all was seen by many as an accomplishment, insofar as Egypt had led an initiative to disband it, and the power structure of the new world order would prefer it not exist. The country of Indonesia—on whose soil this movement began 37 years ago—now holds the official chairmanship. If NAM moves from the talking stage into an actual center of power for the developing sector, it will be greatly to the credit of the united effort of Indonesia, India, and Malaysia, a triumvirate which played distinct, but clearly complementary, roles at the summit in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Not surprisingly, wire service and press coverage of the meeting has gone to great effort to claim that "Malaysia stole the show from host Indonesia." This concerted press effort appears to be an effort to divide these two countries by attempting to play upon the respective egos of Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed and the senior East Asian

statesman, Indonesian President Suharto.

Indeed, the British weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review* set the stage with a tongue-in-cheek cover story Aug. 20, headlined, "Malaysia's Mahathir: New Voice for the Third World," which dubbed Mahathir "a little Sukarno," referring to the outspoken Indonesian President who played an instrumental role in the formation of NAM in the mid-1950s. Mahathir is quoted at the summit having to respond to this media-created game: "I am not that great even in Malaysia. I am just little Mahathir . . . I just say what is truthful, and I hope that people will not find that painful." During the Non-Aligned summit, India sat back somewhat to let Indonesia and Malaysia run with the ball—Malaysia, being the more radical, got the necessary points out on the table, while Indonesia sought for a consensus.

Exactly how effective the Anglo-Americans have been in dividing developing sector countries was reflected once again in the question of Iraq. Though both Indian and Malaysian leaders, while they were in Jakarta, issued strong statements expressing concern about the Bush administration's insane "air exclusion zones" in northern and southern Iraq, the movement was unable to reach a consensus in the final document on member Iraq, the country that George Bush has pledged at all costs to destroy.

The resolutions which Iraq had attempted to have passed were consistently blocked by Anglo-American-controlled countries in the Arab world. In addition to addressing the unlawful "no-fly zones," Iraq had presented a document urging the summit to "express grave concern over the serious results caused by continued United Nations sanctions against the Iraqi people, especially children, whose mortality rate has increased." Neither was reflected in the final document.

Recalling the early days

Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao noted that it was fitting that the summit be held in Indonesia "in a time when the world around us is again in transformation. It was in Bandung [Indonesia] 37 years ago that the seeds of African, Asian, and Latin American political consciousness germinated and later transformed themselves into the sapling of non-alignment in Belgrade in 1961. We pay tribute in the words of Indonesia's gifted poet Joko Darmono: 'As we edge along the narrow path in bare feet, pilgrims to the memory of those



Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed warned against a revival of western colonialism.

The relevance of the Non-Aligned

The tenth Non-Aligned Movement summit was held in the midst of a raging debate over whether NAM, in the present context, can be considered a valid movement. The draft declaration, prepared prior to the summit and since amended, reflected this debate. The declaration tried to dispel this doubt while admitting that “the demise of the Cold War and East-West polarity have given rise to doubts in some quarters concerning the continued validity and relevance of non-alignment.”

Although the concept of non-alignment arose in the postwar era when the United States and Soviet Union were confronting each other—which with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, is no longer the state of affairs—the debate fails to take into account all the dynamics, especially the fact that, although the idea of non-alignment came into existence at the height of the Cold War, it did not arise because of it. The reality is, as the Bandung Conference in 1955 clearly laid out, that non-alignment is essential in order to maintain independence, sovereignty, and equality of states. The issue of “sovereign equality” is also the basis of the United Nations Charter and U.N. membership. It is the basis of the centuries-old concept of sovereign nation-states. It is this age-old, accepted foundation principle of the state system, affirmed by international law, that is increasingly neither observed nor respected, except in rhetoric.

The 10 principles which came out of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955 contained what was relevant then, and what is even more relevant today. The declaration urged the nations to have respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; to give recognition to the equality of all races and

to the equality of all nations, large and small; and to abstain from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.

The idea of mutual cooperation, which later came to be known as South-South cooperation, first came to light at Bandung. Calling for mutual assistance in technical training, scientific education, and establishment of multi-lateral trade and payments arrangements, the Bandung Conference urged the attending nations to establish national and regional banks and insurance companies.

There is no question that the basic principles on which the NAM was established remain far from being practiced in today's unipolar world. An Indian journalist put it best: “The West did not disband NATO because the Soviet threat from the East had collapsed, New threats have been invented and new missions are being sought for the western alliance. The same holds true for NAM.”

What are these new threats and new missions in the case of the Non-Aligned Movement? King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan has proposed that, at a time when economic groupings are replacing military blocs, the role of NAM in bringing about the establishment of a new international economic order assumes even greater importance. Clearly, the most striking common factor of the majority of NAM member nations is their economic backwardness and dependent status in international economic relations.

In addition, NAM members are facing new threats, expressed by Malaysia, Indonesia, and India. Leaders from the three countries describe a concerted campaign by the U.S. and Europe to erode national sovereignty and intervene into the affairs of developing nations, by means of supposedly defending human rights, democracy, and the environment. Charges of human rights violations often come from reports prepared by non-governmental organizations, sponsored by politically and financially powerful academic foundations, which become the basis for governmental intervention later.

who gave us birth.’ ”

Rao added that 30 years ago, “we were also at a turning point of history—the world then seemed to teeter at the edge of a nuclear catastrophe.” The Indian prime minister went on to quote the words of one of the fathers of India and the Non-Aligned Movement, the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, describing the world as he saw it in 1961, and noted the almost eerie similarity to the current period. Nehru had said: “The most fundamental fact of the world today is the development of new and mighty forces. We have to think in terms of the new world. There is no doubt that imperialism of old-style colonialism will vanish. Yet, the new forces may

help others to dominate in other ways over us and, certainly, over the underdeveloped and backward. We have to build in our own countries societies where freedom is real. Freedom is essential because freedom will give us strength and enable us to build prosperous societies.” In the current period, Rao said, “we have to learn to scrutinize every advice. . . . There are other dangers lurking in the shadows—dangers to which developing societies are particularly prone.”

Suharto's reform proposals

President Suharto's speech on behalf of the host nation was carefully worded with constructive concepts. He pro-

posed the establishment of a high-level working group of the Non-Aligned Movement to formulate a plan to restructure the United Nations, and to be entrusted with the continuous liaison and coordination with the U.N. secretary general. Suharto insisted that NAM "take a firm stand on the question of conditionalities," noting that in practice, "industrialized countries unilaterally set these conditionalities and often expand their scope to cover questions of democracy and human rights, applying only their own criteria which may not be appropriate. The same is true in the case of defense spending. On this form of unilateralism, I sincerely believe that the Non-Aligned Movement must take a firm stand." Suharto also called for the "liberating benefit of debt cancellation" for the least-developed countries of the movement, and a plan to deal with the crushing debt burden of the developing world as a whole. All three points were given prominence in the final, seven-page Non-Aligned Movement document.

Concerns about the 'new world order'

Mahathir elaborated his concerns about the Anglo-American new world order by noting that "recent history must surely convince us that a unipolar world is every bit as threatening as a bipolar world." He severely criticized western policy on the Balkans, saying that the western attitude toward "the daily killings of the Bosnians stands in stark contrast to the response to the alleged killings of the Kurds" by the government of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. "The ending of the Cold War and East-West confrontation raises the question as to whether neutrality has any relevance in world affairs. Where before we had the option to defect to the other side, now we have none. Our new option is to submit or resist. Both involve a loss of leverage, and weak nations with no leverage can only become weaker." Mahathir called on the Non-Aligned to "pool what little strength we have in order to avoid what amounts to a revival of the old western colonialism."

On the U.N., Mahathir called for restructuring the Security Council. "We do not need more permanent members with veto rights. We need fair representation, if not on a basis of population, at least on a basis of a combination of relevant factors." What to do with the United Nations was a major subject in Jakarta, and there was apparently agreement among Non-Aligned Movement members that the five permanent members of the Security Council must lose their veto power, and that council membership must be redefined. The permanent five—the U.S., Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union—were the victorious powers in World War II.

That Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was on hand in Jakarta was an extremely unusual occurrence in itself. Changing the course of the U.N., now strongly Anglo-American controlled, rather than being simply swallowed up by it, is a very large task that the 108 members of the NAM have outlined. A functioning Non-Aligned Movement might at some point conclude that it would make more sense to simply shut it down and start over again.

Colombia's Gaviria faces corruption probe

by Andrea Olivieri

Colombian President César Gaviria Trujillo is currently scheduled to be questioned by an investigating commission of the Colombian Senate in late September, regarding his responsibility for the July escape from prison of cocaine drug lord Pablo Escobar. The interrogation was scheduled after a bloc of opposition congressmen, backed by several legislators from Gaviria's own Liberal Party, demanded it.

The decision to question Gaviria, albeit at the presidential palace and behind closed doors, was forced by a growing insistence among certain political circles that the head of state be held accountable for his appeasement policy toward Escobar, which not only paved the way for the drug cartel's retrenchment and the drug lord's inevitable "escape," but more significantly, for the thorough infiltration and corruption of the institutions of government by Escobar's minions (see *EIR*, Sept. 11, p. 32).

The rising clamor for his political scalp forced President Gaviria to admit to "political responsibility" for the Escobar debacle during a nationally televised interview Sept. 1. And yet, just as in Brazil, where President Fernando Collor's ill-timed appeal for a patriotic show of support turned into a mass outpouring of demands for his impeachment, so too did the Colombian President's televised "confession" trigger a series of calls for a "political trial."

An embarrassed Gaviria was forced to make a series of emergency phone calls to the Colombian press the next day to "clarify" his statements. He was also obliged to send a letter to the Liberal Party directorate explaining that, "under Anglo-Saxon law," political responsibility falls under the rubric of "checks and balances" and must be distinguished from "impeachment." Clearly, the problems facing his Brazilian colleague are weighing heavily on Gaviria's mind these days.

A false peace

A particular irony of the current crisis facing Colombia is that while the U.S.-backed plea-bargain arrangement with Escobar was allegedly designed to bring peace to the country after nearly a decade of bloody narco-terrorism, Gaviria's "peace" offered nothing more than a temporary respite to Escobar's army of narco-assassins. As a recent, post-jail interview with the drug trafficker and mass murderer confirms, the narco-terror will resume the moment the government steps out of line.