

## THE STRANGE ANIMAL CALLED 'NAM'

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### NON-ALIGNMENT DESPITE END OF COLD WAR?

When the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was launched in the early 1960s during the height of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War, it was the largest single political grouping of developing nations taking a unified stand at the United Nations.

But the Western world was sceptical of its credibility because it was perceived as seemingly pro-Soviet and implicitly anti-U.S. in its approach to global politics.

Junius Jayewardene, a former president of Sri Lanka and a one-time chairman of NAM, perhaps unwittingly reflected a Western view when he remarked in 1979 that "there are only two truly non-aligned countries in the world: the United States and the Soviet Union." All other countries, he pointed out, are "aligned" either to the one or the other.

When Cuba assumed the NAM chairmanship from Sri Lanka in September 1979, the *New York Times* laid down a strict editorial guideline in its coverage: that NAM under Cuba's leadership should always be described as "the so-called Non-Aligned Movement." And the reporters did. The *Times* refused to concede that Fidel Castro was the leader of a truly "non-aligned" country credible enough to lead the politically-diverse Movement -- even though one of the qualifications for NAM membership was the absence of foreign military bases or troops on native soil.

Cuba has once again taken over the chairmanship of the 118-member NAM, with an ageing and ailing Castro at the helm. But in the absence of any exceptionally strong Soviet (now Russian) political and military ties, Cuba may now be more acceptable to the West and the Western mainstream media.

Since NAM was primarily a creation of the Cold War era, some Western political analysts have argued that the Movement should have died when the Cold War ended in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.

But an Asian diplomat points out that no such drastic measure was envisaged for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which was also a creation primarily of the Cold War. "If NAM has no reason to exist after the Cold War," he argues, "so should be the fate of NATO." But NATO, he says, has been strengthened, not diluted, since the end of the Cold War.

Mouin Rabbani, a political analyst and contributing editor to the Washington-based Middle East Report, says that NAM was never a homogenous group of states and much less an alliance.

"So, I think it would be wrong to dismiss it on account of its character as a group of diverse entities whose interests conflict as well as converge," Rabbani told IPS. **[Continued on page 2]**

Voices of the South on Globalization is a monthly newsletter intended to inspire a meaningful North-South Dialogue by raising awareness for global interdependences and by offering a forum for voices from the South in the globalization debate. Each edition will present short analyses or commentaries from a Southern perspective on one particular issue of the globalization process.

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Needless to say, he added, the relative weight and influence of NAM was stronger during the Cold War era, for a variety of reasons. It is also true that it has been a largely dormant and ineffective force since the Cold War ended.

"Nevertheless, I think it has the capacity to recoup at least some of its lost influence and role, and this in turn reflects the changing international situation, particularly one of growing global opposition to and increasingly outright rejection of U.S. policies towards the third world."

As the prospects for a unipolar world continue to fray, it stands to reason that those blocs like, for example, NAM which stand for a different agenda will be in an improved position to press their agendas and concerns, he added.

An 88-page NAM declaration adopted at the close of the summit in the Cuban capital Sep. 15. Prepared primarily by Cuba and current chair Malaysia, the declaration covers a wide range of subjects, including political issues such as the Middle East peace process, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, along with social and economic issues such as trade, South-South cooperation, international migration, drug trafficking and corruption.

#### **Singapore's Reservations**

But the only subject that has triggered a political dispute was the Middle East -- primarily the recent invasion of Lebanon by Israel. Singapore, a longstanding member of NAM, had expressed strong reservations over what it called an "unbalanced and one-sided view" of the Lebanon war.

The draft declaration expressed strong condemnation of the Israeli military aggression against Lebanon but failed to mention that the invasion was triggered by the actions of Hezbollah, including the abduction and kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers.

Ambassador Vanu Gopal Menon of Singapore told IPS ahead of the Havana Summit that NAM would lose its credibility if it is not seen as being politically objective in its declaration.

Menon told a meeting of NAM's Coordinating Bureau in New York earlier: "We are sympathetic to the situation in Lebanon. We have been following closely and with deep concern the developments on the ground in Lebanon and have contributed in our own way to help the Lebanese people."

"So there is no question of my delegation's support for the rights of the Lebanese people. Equally, our support for the NAM and its principles and objectives is firm," he added. Menon also said that the "issues before us are salient." NAM should have a view, he argued, "but this view has to be considered, objective, and reflect reality."

However, he noted a "disturbing trend within the Non-Aligned Movement" -- that it seems less inclined to listen to the views of all its members, much less consider their proposals. "We tried repeatedly to propose amendments to the text. However, we were not allowed to do so," he added.

Asked if NAM had played any significant role in the Middle East peace process, Rabbani told IPS: "With specific respect to Palestine the NAM has, despite its internal contradictions and differences, in fact played a key historical role in placing the question of Palestine at the centre of the international agenda and providing international legitimacy to the Palestinian national movement."

He said that the many achievements of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) at the United Nations during the 1970s, for example, would have been unthinkable without the critical contribution of NAM in this respect.

"While I do not think the NAM is currently -- indeed has never been -- in a position to take decisive measures to resolve the question of Palestine, I do think it can once again play an important role in placing this item on the international agenda and, not less importantly, influencing the manner in which this question is placed on the agenda," Rabbani said. Specifically, he pointed out, decolonisation has always been at the heart of NAM's agenda.

Also known in the summit corridors as the Havana Declaration, the text notes that "the developing countries will be marginalized if they are not capable of defending their priorities, sharing their concerns and efficiently drawing up their own actions to guarantee that their interests are duly taken into account".

"Our unity and solidarity will only be relevant if the NAM continues carrying out an active, important and constructive role in international relations, with the aim of achieving the establishment of a fairer and more equitable world order," it adds.

The "intentions" of the "new era" include the promotion of multilateralism in the face of unilateralism or hegemonic pretensions; respect for all human rights, including the right to development; confronting the doctrine of preemptive war and the classification of "countries as good or evil", based on unilateral criteria.

When rejecting terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations", the NAM added that this "should not be placed on the same level with the legitimate struggle of the peoples under colonial or foreign domination and foreign occupation for their free determination and national liberation".

– **Thalif Deen** | IPS UN Bureau Chief

**"NAM AN ALTERNATIVE TO NEO-LIBERAL AGENDA"****INTERVIEW WITH THENJIWE MTINTSO, SOUTH AFRICA'S AMBASSADOR TO CUBA**

*In a Q&A interview with Terra Viva – a virtual newspaper of IPS during the 14th Non-Aligned Summit in Havana September 11-16 – South African Ambassador to Cuba, Thenjiwe Mtintso said NAM represents solidarity and support for the African people and Governments in their struggle against poverty and underdevelopment in order to achieve their NEPAD goals and the Millennium Development Goals. Also NAM is a forum of political harmonization and given the current situation (political in Africa) the issue of stability will be discussed.*

*Q: Why so much importance has been given now to the necessity of revitalizing NAM? In other words: Why is it so necessary that NAM gains now more presence at the international fora and what are the objectives?*

Ambassador: NAM was formed during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions at the height of the Cold War.

It was formed on the principles of promotion of mutual interest and cooperation; need to respect justice and international obligations and the respect of fundamental human rights and of the objectives and principles of the UN Charter.

Some of these imperatives still remain though the Cold War is replaced by a unipolar world. Smaller, poorer and underdeveloped countries still have to work together for both development and survival of their nations.

It is imperative to revive and strengthen the Movement in such a way that it acts efficiently in the defence of the interests and priorities of its member countries in today's International situation. The major challenges that need to be addressed are:

Poverty and underdevelopment, imbalance in economic and political power, peace and security, the growing threat of terrorism and unilateralism.

*Q: What is South Africa expecting from the new Chair?*

Ambassador: As a country one of our expectations from the new Chair and the Summit in general is to strengthen the relationship between the Group of 77 and China and the Non Aligned Movement to work together in order to fight poverty, and underdevelopment, maintaining peace and stability and restructuring the global exercise of economic and political power.

Others include strengthening NAM itself, to use its experience, especially on meeting needs of people and solidarity with others to ensure strong South-South relations and to strengthen the committee on Palestine and the resolution of its problem.

*Q: What distinguishes Havana Summit from other meets?*

Ambassador: Because of the urgency of the issues, current threats to poorer nations due to poverty, imbalance of power, etc. Poorer underdeveloped countries need and depend on each other for development and survival of their nations. This is already recognized but the urgency is now on strategies to survive and develop.

*Q: Africa is the continent with more representative countries within NAM. What should a region that requires so much for its development expect from this Summit?*

Ambassador: NAM represents solidarity and support for the African people and Governments in their struggle against poverty and underdevelopment in order to achieve their NEPAD goals and the Millennium Development Goals. Also NAM is a forum of political harmonization and given the current situation (political in Africa) the issue of stability will be discussed.

*Q: This movement was born into a bipolar world, facing a "Cold War" between the Communist bloc, led by the USSR and the Western Bloc, led by the US. Things are very much different today. In this context, what should NAM represent?*

Ambassador: NAM represents a hope for developing countries, faced with the goals yet to be reached and the many new challenges that are arising; the Movement should maintain a prominent and leading role in the current international relations in defence of the interest and priorities of its member States.

It is important that the Movement continues to be in the front line of struggle to change and transform the present unjust international order. NAM is an alternative to the neo-liberal agenda of the so called unipolar and global order.

– Patricia Grogg | IPS- Terra Viva

*Important Links:*

<http://www.ipsterraviva.net/TV/Noal/en/default.asp>

<http://www.cubanoal.cu/ingles/index.html>



## IN SEARCH OF A NEW ROLE

*The NAM Summit concluded by adopting the Havana Declaration which calls for revitalising the Movement to give it continued existence and enable it to play a decisive role in the international arena. Will it succeed? Among long-term members of the NAM there are serious doubts. But the ideals of NAM, as laid down by India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (see picture below), it is believed, are still relevant. Nehru championed the cause of NAM together with Egypt's Nasser, Ghana's Nkrumah, Indonesia's Soekarno and Yugoslavia's Tito.*



It was with this in view that India's current Prime Minister Manmohan Singh decided to take part in the Havana Summit after weighing the pros and cons that might accrue to India's relations with the U.S.

Summing up Indian journalist Sanjay Kapoor said: "There was understandable apprehension in

the foreign office about how to countenance the new radicalism of the Non-Aligned Movement. They painstakingly explained to media persons accompanying the prime minister that there was no way that India could have 'side-stepped' the summit, as the evolution of India as a nation state was closely linked to NAM. "There would be a sharp backlash and public outrage against us ducking the NAM," claimed foreign service sources.

Their ambivalence found expression in newspapers that are generally not kind to Third World causes. Some of them questioned why Singh was going to Havana at all. The government particularly feared the dim view that the Left parties would take if it stayed away from Havana.

There were suggestions that the prime minister, before he agreed to fly to Havana from Brasilia, should fly past the Cuban capital and land in New York and take part in the United Nations General Assembly. Cognisant of its anti-imperial legacy and the ideological sustenance the NAM movement had provided to India, Prime Minister Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi both overruled these suggestions and committed India's participation in the summit. Both of them made it clear that relationship with any country would not be at the expense of the other (read the U.S.).

Taking a decision to visit Havana was the easy part. Perhaps, more difficult was how to traipse through the minefield that geography, history and contemporary politics had contributed in creating.

Singh, in a news conference in the aircraft, hoped that the NAM would not divide nations and instead promote peace. He expressed desire that the summit would be non-confrontationist in which India would serve as a bridge between the NAM countries and the industrialised West.

"This was a new formulation for which there were no real takers as the agenda of the summit had been clearly set, first by the statements of the Foreign Minister of Cuba, Felipe Perez Roque," wrote Kapoor.

Analysing the relevance of NAM, Yuba Nath Lamsal, a journalist from neighbouring Nepal wrote: "Critics, even during the height of the Cold War era, had dubbed NAM a non-acting movement as it was engaged in "more barking than biting. Despite being called a Non-aligned movement, majority of its members, in one way or the other, were aligned with either of the two power blocs. Majority of them were pro-Soviet Union and used this forum to bash the Western world, especially the United States, according to critics."

Even in the recently concluded Havana conclave that was held in a low profile, some countries like Bolivia, Iran, Cuba and North Korea used the forum to launch a crusade against the United States, calling on the Third World countries to unite against Western hegemony. However, majority of them were moderate -- India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Chile and Peru -- that pushed for more reconciliatory measures with the West and bridge the disparity between the North and the South in collaboration with the developed countries, Lamsal said in an editorial in *The Rising Nepal* newspaper.

The conclave was unanimous on the need for collective efforts in tackling global challenges like poverty, backwardness, terrorism, AIDS, unfair trade and economic disparity between the North and the South. These issues pose a bigger threat than ever before. However, the poor countries have neither the resources nor the commitment to fight against these devils without the support of the developed nations, he wrote..

At the same time, there is a broad consensus that the Third World countries must work together with resolve. The spectre of poverty is especially dangerous. The number of poor people has multiplied, and the scourge of terrorism has afflicted almost every region in one way or the other. Trade imbalance and economic disparity between the rich North and the poor South have increased. Against this background, the Non-aligned Movement needs to change its rhetorical approach and adopt a more action-oriented campaign, said *The Rising Nepal*, the country's leading English language newspaper. **(Continued on page 5)**

## NAM REVIEWS BANDUNG PRINCIPLES

*Inspired by the Bandung Principles and the purposes which brought into being the NAM during the Belgrade Summit in 1961, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries meeting in Havana, stated under Para 8 the Purposes of the Movement in the present international situation. 'Voices of the South on Globalization' lists some of the major points.*

- a. To promote and reinforce multilateralism and, in this regard, strengthen the central role that the United Nations must play.
- b. To serve as a forum of political coordination of the developing countries to promote and defend their common interests in the system of international relations. ( . . . )
- f. To promote and encourage sustainable development through international cooperation . . .
- g. To encourage the respect, enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, on the basis of the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity, avoiding politicization of human rights issues, thus ensuring that all human rights of individuals and peoples, including the right to development, are promoted and protected in a balanced manner. ( . . . )
- k. To promote the strengthening and democratisation of the UN, giving the General Assembly the role granted to it in accordance with the functions and powers outlined in the Charter and to promote the comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council so that it may fulfil the role granted to it by the Charter, in a transparent and equitable manner, as the body primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
- l. To continue pursuing universal and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, as well as a general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control and in this context, to work towards the objective of arriving at an agreement on a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time to eliminate nuclear weapons, to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. ( . . . )
- p. To promote concrete initiatives of South-South cooperation and strengthen the role of NAM, in coordination with G.77, in the re-launching of North-South cooperation, ensuring the fulfilment of the right to development of our peoples, through the enhancement of international solidarity.
- q. To respond to the challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities arising from globalization and interdependence with creativity and a sense of identity in order to ensure its benefits to all countries, particularly those most affected by underdevelopment and poverty, with a view to gradually reducing the abysmal gap between the developed and developing countries.
- r. To enhance the role that civil society, including NGO's, can play at the regional and international levels in order to promote the purposes, principles and objectives of the Movement.

**(Continued from page 4)**

It added: "In the present changed international power equation, this Movement should immediately take the initiative to reshape its role and model to cope with the new situation if the movement is to be made vibrant." Even some of the staunchest critics of the Movement agree that the ideals of the NAM are still relevant -- perhaps even more relevant -- as the world has been ravaged by civil unrest and conflict, disparity and distortion.

The relevance of NAM was underlined by the Gulf News when it quoted from UAE Foreign Minister Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan's address to the closing session of the NAM Summit: "The global political and economic developments entail us to develop and reform the Non-Aligned Movement so that it can address them and enable it to actively participate in decision-making..."

Cautious optimism about the NAM Summit outcomes was echoed by the Nation News Barbados. It said: "With or without Fidel Castro's return to the helm of power, Cuba is now set to provide, for the next three years, leadership for the Non-Aligned Movement that seems to recognise the value of change in changing times from when it was created 45 years ago."

The newspaper wrote: "A very big surprise observer was the world's outgoing top diplomat, Kofi Annan, who took the opportunity, following a private meeting with Fidel Castro, to underscore his own support for fundamental reforms of the United Nations. Particularly, as he said, in the functioning of its Security Council which, he feels, should be made more responsive to less power-wielding "for the sake of the developing world and for the sake of the United Nations itself..."

Commenting the response of the U.S. mainstream media, the newspaper said: "Not surprisingly, some mainstream American media were focused on the so-called 'Bush bashing' at the summit and in making unflattering comments specially reserved for leaders of their president's designated 'rogue' states -- like Venezuela, Syria, North Korea, Iran and, of course, the host, Cuba."

But a summit like the one that just ended and for which the leaders and heads of delegations of almost two-thirds of the UN's membership considered it obligatory to attend, should be viewed more broadly and objectively, it added.

-- **Jaya Ramachandran**

**VITAL FACTS ABOUT NAM**

The term "Non-Alignment" itself was coined by Indian Prime Minister Nehru during his speech in 1954 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In this speech, Nehru described the five pillars to be used as a guide for Sino-Indian relations, which were first put forth by the contemporaneous Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. Called Panchsheel (five restraints), these principles would later serve as the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement. The five principles were:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

**SUMMIT LOCATIONS AND DATES**

- 1st Summit: Belgrade, September 1-6, 1961
- 2nd Summit: Cairo, October 5-10, 1964
- 3rd Summit: Lusaka, September 8-10, 1970
- 4th Summit: Algiers, September 5-9, 1973
- 5th Summit: Colombo, August 16-19, 1976
- 6th Summit: Havana, September 3-9, 1979
- 7th Summit: New Delhi, March 7-12 March, 1983
- 8th Summit: Harare, September 1-6, 1986
- 9th Summit: Belgrade, September 4-7, 1989
- 10th Summit: Jakarta, September 1-7, 1992
- 11th Summit: Cartagena de Indias, October 18-20, 1995
- 12th Summit: Durban, September 2-3 September, 1998
- 13th Summit: Kuala Lumpur, February 20-25, 2003
- 14th Summit: Havana, September 11-16, 2006

**NAM MEMBER COUNTRIES**

Afghanistan	Gabon	Niger	Somalia
Algeria	Gambia	Nigeria	South Africa
Angola	Ghana	North Korea	Sri Lanka
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada	Oman	Sudan
Bahamas	Guatemala	Pakistan	Suriname
Bahrain	Guinea	Palestine	Swaziland
Bangladesh	Guinea-Bissau	Panama	Syria
Barbados	Guyana	Papua New Guinea	Tanzania
Belarus	Haiti	Peru	Thailand
Belize	Honduras	Philippines	Timor Leste Togo
Benin	India	Qatar	Trinidad and Tobago
Bhutan	Indonesia	Rwanda	Tunisia
Bolivia	Iran	Saint Lucia	Turkmenistan
Botswana	Iraq	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Uganda
Brunei	Jamaica	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	United Arab Emirates
Burkina Faso	Jordan	São Tomé and Príncipe	Uzbekistan
Burundi	Kenya	Saudi Arabia	Vanuatu
Cambodia	Kuwait	Senegal	Venezuela
Cameroon	Laos	Seychelles	Vietnam
Cape Verde	Lebanon	Sierra Leone	Yemen
Central African Republic	Lesotho	Singapore	Zambia
Chad	Liberia		Zimbabwe
Chile	Libya		
Colombia	Madagascar	<b><u>NAM OBSERVERS</u></b>	
Comoros	Malawi	Armenia	El Salvador
Congo	Malaysia	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan
Côte d'Ivoire	Maldives	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kyrgyzstan
Cuba	Mali	Brazil	Mexico
DR Congo	Mauritania	China	Paraguay
Djibouti	Mauritius	Costa Rica	Serbia
Dominica	Mongolia	Croatia	Ukraine   Uruguay
Dominican Republic	Morocco		
Ecuador	Mozambique		
Egypt	Myanmar		
Equatorial Guinea	Namibia		
Eritrea	Nepal		
Ethiopia	Nicaragua		

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